A **ROUTLEDGE** FREEBOOK

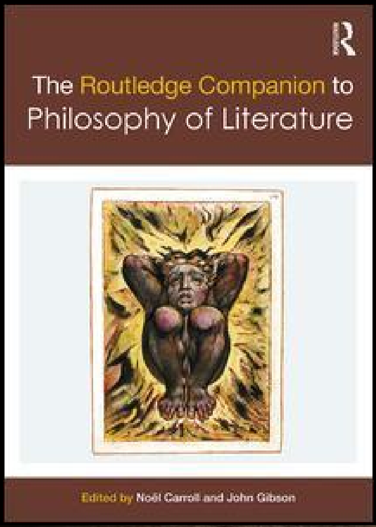
Six Viewpoints on Aesthetics

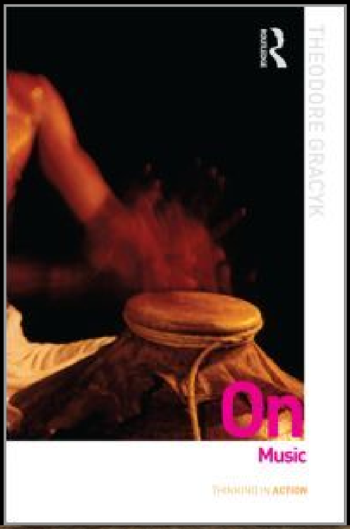
Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

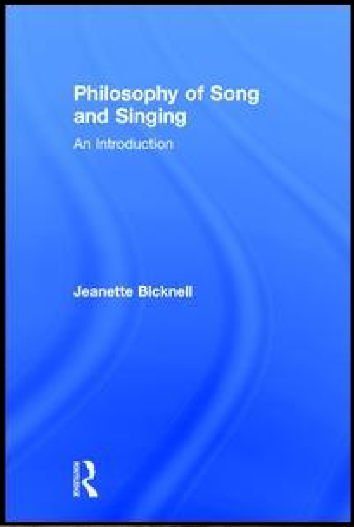
TABLE OF CONTENTS

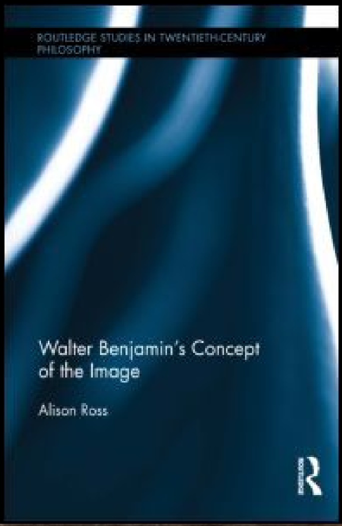
MAKE SURE YOUR PHILOSOPHY LIBRARY IS COMPLETE

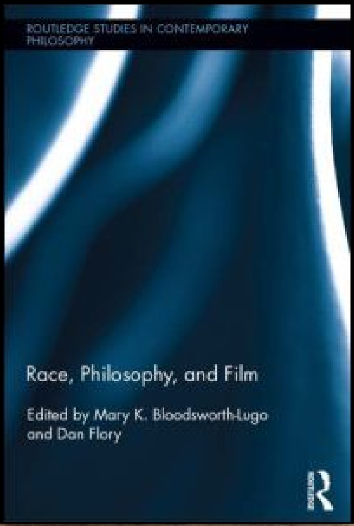
CHECK OUT THE FULL TEXT OF THESE FEATURED TITLES











USE DISCOUNT CODE FLR40 FOR 20% OFF ALL PHILOSOPHY TITLES FROM ROUTLEDGE

ROUTLEDGE PHILOSOPHY

Visit us online to browse the full collection of titles in aesthetics, and more, from Routledge Philosophy.

>>CLICK HERE

Introduction

To celebrate the 73rd meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics, Nov. 12-14 2015, Routledge has compiled this selection of chapters representing some of the best recent research on aesthetics.

To give you just a taste of what we offer, we've included in this eBook a few chapters from several books that we hope are of interest to ASA meeting delegates and members. These are the Introduction and Damien Freeman's chapter on "The Paradox of Fiction" in the upcoming *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Fiction*, ed by Noel Carroll and John Gibson; the chapter, "Three Ways to Think about Authenticity in Performance" in the brand new, *Philosophy of Song and Singing*, by Jeanette Bicknell; the "Music and Emotion" chapter in Ted Gracyk's *On Music*; the chapter on "Form" in *Walter Benjamin's Concept of the Image*, by Alison Ross; and "Cruising through Race," which is from *Race, Philosophy, and Film* ed by Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo and Dan Flory.

Take a look – you can visit our website to view information on the books in full, or to purchase a copy. Links are provided at the beginning of each chapter, below. If this leads to any questions, or if you want to discuss a project you may want to publish, please do contact us!

Note to readers: References from the original chapters have not been included in this text. For a fully-referenced version of each chapter, including footnotes, bibliographies, references and endnotes, please see the published title. Links to purchase each specific title can be found on the first page of each chapter.

Chapters 1 and 2 are excerpts from the uncorrected first proofs of *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Literature*, and thus may contain spelling or punctuation that will be corrected in the finished publication.

Author Biographies:

Chapter 1 & 2, taken from *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Literature*

Noël Carroll is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA.

John Gibson is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville, USA.

Damien Freeman currently lectures at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge, UK, for its International Programmes Department's *Pembroke/King's Programme*.

Chapter 3 taken from *Philosophy of Song and Singing*

Jeanette Bicknell is an independent scholar based in Toronto, Canada.

Chapter 4 taken from *On Music*

Theodore Gracyk is Department Chair and Professor of Philosophy at Minnesota State University Moorhead, USA.

Chapter 5 taken from *Walter Benjamin's Concept of the Image*

Alison Ross is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow in Philosophy, Monash University, Australia.

Chapter 6 taken from *Race Philosophy and Film*

Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo is Professor of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies at Washington State University, USA.

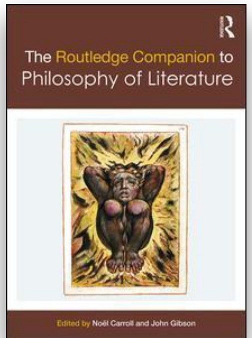
Dan Flory is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Montana State University, USA.

Monique Roelofs is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Hampshire College, USA.

CHAPTER 01

Introduction to *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Literature*

Noël Carroll & John Gibson



Of all the Muses, the first to receive sustained philosophical attention was poetry, which, for our purposes, may stand for literature in general. First Plato and then Aristotle concentrated their penetrating analytic skills especially on tragedy, although with insights into other precincts of literature as well. Thus was the philosophy of literature born even if in Plato's case—with reference to his Ion and his Republic—the operative preposition here might better be "against," as in philosophy against literature.

However, in order to be against literature, Plato was obliged to propose a philosophy of literature, since he had to clarify the nature of what he opposed, while also explaining why—metaphysically, epistemologically, ethically, and politically—he rejected it. That is, Plato had to advance an ontology of literature before interrogating its claims to cognitive, moral, and political value. Plato questioned the value of literature in all of these domains, but in order to do so, he had to arraign literature before the full court of philosophical inquiry, including metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical psychology and the philosophy of mind, ethics and political theory.

Aristotle, of course, pursued this line of inquiry not only more sympathetically but more systematically and, for that reason, has the best claim to the title of "father of the philosophy of literature," at least in the Western philosophical tradition. In many respects, much philosophy of literature still remains, if not a footnote to Aristotle, then nevertheless deeply indebted to him. In his Poetics he effectively asks two questions: what is literature? And why do we value it? With these questions, we have the beginning of philosophy of literature performed in a charitable key. Literature, for Aristotle, engages mind and emotion in a distinctive manner—it offers emotion "catharsis" and mind an insight into general features of human behavior—and understanding how it manages to accomplish this requires studying the mechanics and formal features of literature itself. While the philosophy of literature is today animated by a vastly broader range of issues and concerns, its Aristotelian inheritance is still very much in evidence.

But what is the philosophy of literature. Very roughly, it is the examination of literature from the viewpoint of the major divisions of the field of philosophy: metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy and, of course, aesthetics. In addition, the philosophy of literature addresses the various paradoxes, anomalies, and questions that arise in the course of attempting to systematically work out an account of the arts of literature in relation to our broader conceptions of human nature and the world.

In the larger academic world the philosophy of literature is at times confounded with literary theory (sometimes simply called "Theory"). It is nearly impossible to distinguish literary theory and the philosophy of literature in a way that is accurate yet does not deeply insult one or the other field. We will not try to define "literary theory" here, except to say that it is an immensely inclusive term that brings under its extension theoretically-minded work in English, Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, and much else. Philosophy of literature is a narrower field, not restricted to but in practice often coextensive with the work produced by professors of philosophy who pursue their interests in literary aesthetics in conversation with debates in the core areas of professional philosophy. Whatever philosophy of literature precisely designates as a field of research in the Anglophone academic world, this volume acts as a very good representative of its concerns and boundaries.

The philosophy of literature contrasts straightforwardly with something else: philosophy in literature. The latter discourse primarily discusses philosophical themes found in individual literary works, such as the challenges to utilitarianism presented in Dickens's Hard Times and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World or, taking "philosophy" in a more expansive sense, the critique of modern culture found in William Wordsworth's "The World is Too Much With Us" or T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land. The presentation of philosophical themes in literary works may range from illustrating said themes to attempts to advance original philosophical theses by means of a literary text. But, with the exception of literary works that endeavor reflexively to raise philosophical questions about literature by means of literature, the study of philosophy in literature differs from philosophy of literature in that the former typically takes as its object a particular work, or genre or author, while the philosophy of literature takes all literature or great swathes of it in its purview, examining it in terms of the animating questions of metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, ethics, political theory, and aesthetics.

Virtually all of the entries in this volume are exercises in the philosophy of literature, though readers should expect the odd foray into philosophy in literature, too. Thus, there are chapters not only on the ontology of literature but also on the nature of the novel, poetry, narrative, authorship, style, fiction, and metaphor. Epistemological issues in relation to literature are examined in entries on fictional truth and literary cognitivism. Literature is viewed from the perspective of the philosophy of mind and philosophical psychology in contributions on the imagination, literature and the theory of mind, neuroscience and literature, literature and evolution, the paradox of fiction, the paradox of negative emotion, empathy, and the problem of imaginative resistance. Ethics is not only given an entry of its own, but is also addressed in the chapters on literary cognitivism and imaginative resistance. Literature meets politics in an essay with that very title, as well as in essays on literature and race and literature and gender. There is, naturally, overlap, and many of the fundamental issues concerning fiction, imagination, and the relation between the ethical, aesthetic, and cognitive values of literature make numerous appearances in the following chapters. This repetition is of the productive and healthy sort, and it demonstrates the extent to which work in the philosophy of literature is interlocking and mutually informed.

Also covered are such general aesthetical topics as literature and expression, interpretation, criticism, style, and canon, while issues in the aesthetics of literature in particular are dealt with in essays on character, theme, literary adaptations and screenplays, theatrical literature and popular fiction. Of course, discussions of literature occur in specific contexts, and in order to supply an introductory grasp of some the leading contexts for the Western conversation of the philosophy of literature, we have included articles on the philosophy of literature in the ancient world, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, as well as an overview of analytic aesthetics. (If one wonders why there is no chapter on literary aesthetics between antiquity and the modern era, it is because there is virtually no contemporary philosophical research on this. Graduate students interested in the history of aesthetics should take note when devising dissertation topics.) Needless to say, more topics could be added to our table of contents, though the fact that forty chapters were required to cover the essentials shows that contemporary philosophy of literature is flourishing indeed. Nor is our exclusion of articles on philosophy in literature intended in any way to demean that enterprise. There is much more to the relation between philosophy and literature than what we are able to canvass here, and it is heartening to know that there are still unexplored frontiers. It is our hope that we have presented enough of the field to inspire readers to discover the rest and to chart out new territories in their own research.

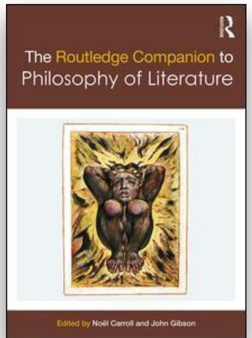
We made a few felicitous discoveries in the process of putting this volume together. The most difficult task editors face is that of selecting, from all the available talent, the leaders in the field. We suspect that even twenty years ago, forty chapters would have sufficed to include almost all the brightest lights in the philosophy of literature. Though it made our job unenviable, we were often struck by how many excellent philosophers of literature we simply did not have the space to invite. For many topics—on narrative, fiction, or imagination, for example—the list of figures producing cutting-edge work was at times more than ten-deep. We were also struck by the number of first-rate philosophers working in core areas of philosophy and their histories who have taken an interest in the philosophy of literature. Since Aristotle, philosophers of literature have known that our field raises important general issues for the philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. It is good to know that many luminaries in these fields now know this, too. Lastly, we were surprised to see just how much competition we faced from other handbooks, companions, and surveys of the philosophy of literature; there is clearly a sizable market for books on the topic. This placed considerable pressure on us to raise our game, and we hope the result is a volume that anyone with an interest in the philosophy of literature will find comprehensive, au courant, and essential.

Our primary goal was to produce a companion to the philosophy of literature that will be attractive to both researchers and university instructors (for use in graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses). We asked contributors to strike a balance between survey and originality, and to write in such a way that readers new to the field will acquire a sense not only of the showcase debates, but also of how one might go about making innovative contributions to them. In a volume of this sort, originality typically takes the form of at least outlining novel positions and suggesting new lines of inquiry, and we think the chapters here promise to do an excellent job of guiding and inviting new work in the field.

CHAPTER 02

The Paradox of Fiction

Damien Freeman



1 Introduction: Paradox, Emotion, Response, Fiction

The paradox of fiction is a comparatively recent problem in the philosophy of literature, around which a considerable industry has quickly developed. Although we take for granted that reading a novel, such as *Anna Karenina*, involves our engaging emotionally with the characters in the novel, Radford (1975) asserts that it does not make sense logically to claim that a reader responds emotionally to Anna Karenina and her travails, when reading the novel. Radford's claim that it is paradoxical to have an emotional response to a fictitious character was received, by a generation of theorists, as an invitation to demonstrate why an emotional response to a fictional character is not, in principle, paradoxical. The form of the paradox is widely accepted, and, in a review of the literature on the paradox, Levinson (1997, 22–23) sets out the premises that give rise to the paradox in the following terms:

1. We often have emotions for fictional characters and situations known to be purely fictional.
2. Emotions for objects logically presuppose beliefs in the existence and features of those objects.
3. We do not harbour beliefs in the existence and features of objects known to be fictional.

This is a paradox because the experience it describes appears to involve a contradiction (namely, that we believe in the existence of the object and we do not harbour beliefs in the existence of the object), and yet it also appears to be true that we do experience fiction in this contradictory way.

Although there is consensus about how to state the paradox, there is disagreement about how to break it. If any one of the three premises is denied, then the paradox does not arise. Each premise has been challenged in a way that, it has been claimed, breaks the paradox:

1. Walton (1978) has been taken to reject (a), when he claims that what we have in response to fiction is not (ordinary) emotions, but 'quasi-emotions'. A quasi-emotion has the phenomenology of an ordinary emotion, but does not presuppose an existence belief in the quasi-emotion's object. The quasi-emotion involves our engaging in 'make-believe', and having the psychological and physiological response to the

‘make-believe’ that we would have to a belief about the world in (ordinary) emotional experiences. This quasi-emotional response does not presuppose an existence belief in the fictional object, even though an ordinary emotional response does presuppose such an existence belief.

2. Lamarque (1981), Carroll (1990), and Smith (1995) reject (b), claiming that the (ordinary) emotions we feel in response to fiction do not presuppose belief in the existence of the objects of those emotions. These theorists accept that emotional responses to non-fictional objects do presuppose beliefs about the existence of these objects. However, they claim that it is a mistake to treat these cases as being paradigmatic of emotional responses in general. Rather, we would do better to see that all that is required is that we ‘mentally represent’ (Lamarque), ‘entertain in thought’ (Carroll), or ‘imaginatively propose’ (Smith) the existence of the object, as they claim that we do when we respond emotionally to fictional characters. If these theorists are correct, the emotional response to fiction is a better paradigm for understanding emotional response generally, and emotional response to non-fictional objects is a peculiar case in which we do harbour existence beliefs, even though these are not necessary for emotional response in general.

3. Pseudo-Coleridge (1907) rejects (c), maintaining that we *do* harbour beliefs in the existence of objects known to be fictional. Coleridge famously spoke of “that willing suspension of disbelief” as an account of how it is that we temporarily harbour beliefs in the existence of objects that we otherwise know do not exist. Film theorists have also adapted Freud’s concept of ‘disavowal’ as a means of achieving the same theoretical end.

Predicably enough, learned papers were soon to be found disputing each of these ‘solutions’ to the paradox:

1. Walton’s critics have adopted two distinct lines of attack. First, Walton’s argument depends upon an analogy between the make-believe games played by children and emotional responses to fiction. Carroll (1990) has argued, however, that these two cases are not analogous: whereas children choose to play make-believe, and retain control over their participation in it, filmgoers do not have this kind of control over their emotional responses when they are watching a film. Second, exception has been taken to the idea of quasi-emotions, which are thought to be unnecessarily theoretical entities, for which film theory provides simpler and better accounts (Saatela 1994 and Hartz 1999).

2. Lamarque’s critics are fewer than Walton’s, and his appears to be the preferred solution at the moment. Turvey (1997) has argued that our responses to the concrete

presentation of cinematic images are often indifferent to their existence, suggesting that Lamarque's concern about existence claims is redundant, more than incorrect. The strongest line of attack seems to have been anticipated by Radford at the outset: why is merely entertaining a thought about Anna Karenina and her travails (rather than believing the thought about her existence and her travails) enough to generate an emotional response?

3. pseudo-Coleridge's critics have devoted very little time to criticising this position. Currie (1990) makes short shrift of the solution, pointing out that it is very rare for anyone to believe the content of what he knows to be fiction, but, even when this occurs, it is too fleeting to account for the often sustained emotional responses to fictional objects.

This chapter could take the form of a reverential treatment of Radford's paradox, the three proposed solutions, and the critiques of these solutions, but it will not. Instead, we shall examine in turn the four concepts that give us the paradox of emotional response to fiction, namely: paradox, emotion, response, fiction.

2 Paradox

The *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy's* entry for 'paradox' instructs us:

A paradox arises when a set of apparently incontrovertible premises gives unacceptable or contradictory conclusions. To solve a paradox will involve either showing that there is a hidden flaw in the premises, or that the reasoning is erroneous, or that the apparently unacceptable conclusion can, in fact, be tolerated.

The literature on the paradox of fiction consists of attempts at avoiding the contradiction that arises from the paradox's three premises, by showing the hidden flaws in one or other of the premises.

The paradox of emotional response to fiction is closely connected with other central concerns in the philosophy of literature, in particular, the paradox of tragedy (as well as the related paradox of horror) and the artistic expression of emotion. It is notable that fiction, tragedy, and expression have not only been central themes in the literature, but are also problems that have been subjected to different modes of treatment.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle (1961) introduces the philosophical discussion of tragedy that ultimately gave rise to the paradox of tragedy. Aristotle's treatment of the subject is something like a practitioner's handbook for the budding tragedian: in order to write a successful tragedy, you will have to provide a *mimesis* of an ethically serious situation, in which the audience experiences fear, pity, and a *katharsis* of fear and pity.

In his essay, "Of Tragedy", Hume (1987) takes up the problem of *katharsis*, and suggests that the pleasure that an audience takes in the experience of fear and pity can better be understood in terms of the concept of 'conversion', through which un-pleasurable emotions are converted into pleasurable ones. Hume's treatment of the subject differs from Aristotle's not only in terms of his solution, but also in terms of his approach. For Hume, the fundamental problem that tragedy raises is a psychological problem, rather than a practical problem: What kind of creatures are we that we would take pleasure in being distressed?

In Radford's (1975) essay, the treatment differs again, and not simply because he is concerned with 'fiction' rather than 'tragedy'. For Radford, the problem is fundamentally a logical problem: it is irrational to respond to fiction in a way that involves a contradiction.

In an influential essay, "The Expression Theory of Art", Bouwsma (1954) addresses the problem not of how we respond emotionally to the fictional character, Anna Karenina, but the problem of how Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina*, can be expressive of emotion. Bouwsma is not concerned with the practical problem of how to write an expressive novel, or some psychological problem concerning how it is that we are the kind of creatures that find novels expressive of emotion. And unlike Radford, he is not concerned with a logical problem. Rather, he has taken the 'linguistic turn.' and is interested in understanding artistic expression by investigating the different meanings of a common predicate – 'is sad' – when we make claims such as 'the music is sad', 'the girl is sad', 'the girl's face is sad', and 'the dog's face is sad'.

What this shows us is that there are at least four ways in which a philosopher might frame an inquiry into emotional response to fiction:

1. Practical inquiry: e.g. what are the necessary requirements for me to include in my work of fiction in order for it to invite emotional responses from its audience?
2. Psychological inquiry: e.g. what sort of creatures are we that we are capable of responding emotionally to fictitious characters?

3. Logical inquiry: e.g. is emotional response to fiction irrational?

4. Linguistic inquiry: e.g. what do we mean when we claim to respond emotionally to fiction?

Obviously, in providing their ‘solutions’, Walton, Lamarque, Carroll, and pseudo-Coleridge take themselves to be addressing a logical problem, and we can assess their solutions as arguments about a logical problem.

But there is no obvious reason (at least not before 1975), why we should treat the phenomenon of the emotional response to fiction as giving rise to a logical problem, rather than a practical problem, a psychological problem, or a linguistic problem. (Similarly, when it comes to tragedy, it is not Hume’s solution to the paradox, so much as his very approach in framing his essay as a psychological inquiry, that differs from Nietzsche’s (1999) treatment of the same subject in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a broader cultural inquiry.) It is notable that the philosophical treatment of emotional response to fiction did not take the linguistic turn at a time when this turn was fashionable both in aesthetics and general philosophy, and it would be interesting to speculate about why this might be so.

The first sentence of Stock’s (2006, 37) article, “Thoughts on the ‘Paradox’ of Fiction”, reads, “This paper concerns the familiar topic of whether we can have genuinely emotional responses such as pity and fear to characters and situations we believe to be fictional.” To this first sentence is appended the following footnote: “A different question is whether emotional responses such as pity and fear towards fictional characters and situations can be rational (Radford (1975)). I take it that this question is satisfactorily answered by Gaut (2003).” So, Stock represents the shift in theorists, three decades after Radford’s article, who now believe that the interesting inquiries into emotional response to fiction concern psychological, rather than logical issues.

Thus, it behoves us to acknowledge that a big part of our interest in the paradox of emotional response to fiction stems from the inherent appeal of logical problems, especially paradoxes, as much as, if not more than, the value that we attach to fiction as an art form, or emotion in our practical life or aesthetic contemplation. Were this not so, theorists would structure their inquiries into emotional response to fiction quite differently.

3 Emotion

In order to get going, the paradox makes certain assumptions about the nature of emotion. It is notable that philosophy of emotion emerged as a growth industry in analytic philosophy at about the same time that the paradox did, with Solomon's (1976) *The Passions*, drawing attention to the judgement theory of emotion the year after Radford's paper was published. Conceptual analysis of 'emotion' differs from conceptual analysis of 'belief', 'desire', or 'action' in part because it is much less clear what one is attempting to analyse in the case of emotion. Emotion is an heterogeneous category: some emotions, such as startle, seem closer to instinctual reactions, whereas other emotions, such as envy, seem more closely related to higher cognitive activities. Whereas some emotional phenomena seem to be instantaneous, others have a temporal dimension that might span a lifetime; thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations all attend emotions, but different emotions seem more significantly connected to one or other of these. The heterogeneous nature of the category of emotion has led not only to a multitude of attempts at conceptual analysis, but also an outright denial of the possibility of conceptual analysis of emotion because it is not a natural kind term (Griffiths 1997), or because it is in need of deconstruction through the history of philosophy (Rorty 1980).

The contemporary debate in philosophy of emotion emerged in response to William James's (1884) paper which famously advanced the non-cognitive theory of emotion: emotion, James claims, is simply the awareness of the feeling of bodily changes. A century later, a number of theories emerged arguing that James was fundamentally wrong, and that emotions are fundamentally judgements. While the cognitive theorists agree that emotions are judgements, they disagree about the kind of judgments that emotions are: different candidates include belief and desire (Solomon 1976 and Gordon 1987), feeling (Stocker and Hegeman 1999 and Goldie 2000), and evaluative judgement (Nussbaum 2001). However, Damasio (1994) heralded a new era in the philosophy of emotion, by explaining that the neuroscience establishes that emotions are not high-level cognitive responses, like judgements, but rather physiological responses, which can occur before the brain has had time to form a higher cognitive response. This seemed to refute the judgement theorists, and invite a return to (a more sophisticated) non-cognitive theory of emotion. The most recent work, however, has involved offering a conceptual analysis of emotion that incorporates both judgments and physiological phenomena into emotions either by analysing emotion as a 'process' that involves both cognitive and non-cognitive elements (Robinson, 2005), or as an 'embodied appraisal' that combines these elements (Prinz 2004).

Our affective lives are composed of a range of phenomena, including moods, as well as emotions. Moods, such as amusement or boredom, are less transient than emotions, and are not directed towards any particular object in the way that (fully-developed) emotions usually are (see Wollheim 1999, 76). Fiction typically elicits emotions rather than moods. Or rather, the paradox of fiction focuses on emotional responses rather than evocation of moods, which might seem more relevant to the problem of artistic expression. (*The Catcher in the Rye* seems to me to be an example of a novel in which the reader responds to Holden Caulfield and his narration by being permeated by a quite distinctive mood, aside from whether or not Holden is the object of any emotion that the reader feels.) So there is an assumption in the paradox that what matters is emotions. But there is a good reason for the assumption: emotions are directed towards objects, which means they might presuppose existence beliefs in the objects, and hence give rise to the logical problem (which objectless moods would not).

Given that emotions are directed towards an object, they might involve thoughts about the object, and those thoughts might include a belief about the object's existence. This is all quite natural if one adopts a cognitive theory of emotion as some sort of judgement. If one adopts a non-cognitive theory of emotion, emotions are still responses to objects. However, when the non-cognitive theorist analyses an emotion as a physiological response to an object (rather than as a judgement about the object), there is no longer any place for a belief (about the object's existence or anything else) within the emotion. So, whereas it fits comfortably within a cognitive theory to claim that a belief in the object's existence forms part of the judgement about the object, it is highly problematic for the non-cognitive theorist to include such a belief within a physiological analysis of emotion. This might be a problem for the non-cognitive theorist's analysis of emotion. But, if the non-cognitive theorist can circumvent the problem, then he can also circumvent the paradox of fiction: beliefs do not form part of an emotional response to fiction, on the non-cognitivist's account, and hence emotional response to fiction does not generate a contradiction.

Robinson (2005, 143) points out that, other than Carroll (1997), almost none of the philosophers writing on the paradox of fiction "have had much of a theory of emotion, yet how one responds to this issue will depend very largely on what one thinks an emotional experience is". This is concerning because the assumptions that the theorists seem to make about emotion are not necessary, and may be avoided, in which case the paradox does not get going. Robinson's own theory of emotion refutes the cognitive theory of emotion, and with it the second premise of the paradox, and so she regards the logical problem as uninteresting, and is more interested in pursuing related psychological problems.

When philosophers write about the paradox of fiction, it not only seems that they are interested in the interaction between fiction and emotions, rather than fiction and moods (or other parts of our affective life), but also that they have, or assume, a commitment to the cognitive theorist's analysis of emotion as a judgement. The paradox does not get going in the same way if one adopts a non-cognitive approach to emotion. The judgement theory was certainly in vogue during the decades in which interest in the paradox peaked. However, this commitment is particularly worrying, given that there has been a notable shift away from (exclusively) cognitive theories of emotion in recent times (the notable exceptions being Nussbaum 2001 and Wollheim 1999). In this way, the paradox reminds us of the importance of thinking carefully about how philosophers of art should approach theory of emotion, and the extent to which theorising about the links between art and emotion might (or might not) be affected by issues in the philosophy of mind and psychology.

4 Response

What we are concerned with in the paradox of emotional response to fiction is the way that a subject responds to an object, and the thought that some feature of a certain kind of object makes it irrational for the subject to respond to that object in a particular way.

Emotions are, by their very nature, responses to the impact of the world upon the subject (for a discussion of Wollheim and Spinoza on the activity and passivity of this response, see Freeman 2012, 34–35). So it is hardly surprising that emotions should form part of our response to the objects of art that we encounter, including expressive works of art, fictional works of art, and the emotions of characters that we encounter in fictional works of art. If a subject responds emotionally to a work of art, this might involve the subject experiencing the emotion that he perceives in the art object (as Tolstoy (1996) argues in the course of offering a definition of art as expression of emotion), or it might involve the subject experiencing a different emotion in response to the emotion perceived in the art object (as Aristotle 1961 argues in his account of the tragic audience's experience of pity in response to the perceived fear). Or the response might not involve undergoing the experience of an emotion, but rather the comprehending of an otherwise incomprehensible emotion (as Collingwood 1938 argues in his definition of art as expression of emotion). If the subject's emotional response to an art object involves experiencing emotion, rather than comprehending emotion, there is then a difficult question as to whether this emotional experience involves the ordinary experience of emotion, familiar from our practical lives, or some other form of emotional experience; albeit one that falls short of the ordinary sense in which we experience emotions. Wollheim (1980, 28–29) calls for "a more generous conception of the different relations in which a person can stand to the conscious feelings that he has", explaining that "it is a fact of human nature . . . that, even when feelings enter into consciousness, they can be comparatively split off or dissociated". So we need to consider the relation in which the subject stands to his own emotions when he responds emotionally to a fictional object of art.

In the context of artistic expression, Matravers (1998) has valiantly defended the idea that expressive works of art are expressive in virtue of their arousing the audience's emotions, and that these aroused emotions are experienced in the ordinary sense. However, Walton (1997) has argued that, although it is correct to analyse artistic expression in terms of the arousal of emotion in response to art, this is not a matter of experiencing emotions in the ordinary sense, but imaginatively experiencing emotions. A similar situation occurs in the analysis of the response that occurs when we engage with fictional characters: either the response is an ordinary emotional response, or it is a special kind of emotional response.

Fiction might elicit ordinary emotional responses. However, in this case, the philosopher will have to engage in some fancy footwork to establish, as Lamarque (1981) does, why it is rational to have an ordinary emotional response to a non-existent object. He does this by arguing that an ordinary emotional response occurs when the subject mentally represents the object, without the need for the subject to harbour a belief about the object's existence. A response that requires the subject to believe in the existence of the object of the response would be irrational in the case of an object that the subject knows to be non-existent, such as a fictional character. However, there is nothing irrational about a response to a non-existent object which requires merely that the subject mentally represents the object. Larmarque maintains that we respond emotionally to fictional and non-fictional objects in the same way, but that this same response involves the subject harbouring an existence belief about the object in one case, and merely mentally representing the object in the other case. By clarifying the way in which the thoughts about the object attend the emotional response to the object, Lamarque seeks to prove that it is rational for a subject to have an ordinary emotional response to a fictional object.

Just as expressive music arouses 'make-believe' emotions, according to Walton, it might be that 'make-believe' is central to an account of the response elicited by fictional characters. This involves Walton (1978) in an elaborate argument, in which filmgoers make-believe that they are part of the make-believe world of the film, and have quasiemotional responses to the 'make-believe'. Likewise, when the reader responds to Anna Karenina, this is a response to a 'make-believe' (rather than a response to a belief), and the response is a quasi-emotion (which shares the same psychological and physiological features of the response that one has to a belief in the case of emotion).

Walton's argument has been subjected to intense scrutiny, notably Neill's (1991) analysis of Walton's 'quasi-emotion' as simulation of emotion, and Neill's claim that at least some emotions, such as fear, cannot be simulated. In this regard, it should be noted that other commentators do not believe that Walton is concerned with simulation of emotion at all: Stecker (2011) believes that Walton's theory is best understood without employing 'quasi-emotion', as this term has been fundamentally misunderstood in the literature. However, Walton's theory is impressive as a solution to the paradox, seeking to demonstrate that, although an (ordinary) emotional response to a nonexistent object would be irrational, a quasi-emotional response to a non-existent object is not irrational. But Walton's (1978, 1990, and 1997) approach is also insightful as an account of how 'make-believe' provides new possibilities for responding emotionally to art. This seems to resonate with Wollheim's claim that there is a range of different relations in which we can stand to our emotions, and that art invites unorthodox emotional responses. Walton's quasi-emotional response to fiction is then one of the special ways in which we respond to the objects of art; one of a variety of responses that are rational responses to art and its objects, on account of the peculiar features of those objects (such as their being fictional), albeit responses that are otherwise unknown in the nonaesthetic life of educated Western adults, who are accustomed to responding to more pedestrian objects.

If successful, the solutions demonstrate not only the rationality of our responses to fictional characters, but that art expands our experience by offering us the opportunity to respond to imaginary objects or the opportunity for imaginary response to objects; experiences that rarely occur in Western culture after childhood (possibly because of this culture's inculcation of a certain conception of rationality in its mature members). Viewed in this way, the paradox of emotional response to fiction contributes massively to our understanding of the possibilities for how humans are capable of responding to the world. However, in doing so, we have now moved from the logical problem to the psychological problem.

5 Fiction

The foregoing assumes that the interesting or problematic aspect of our emotional response to novels, plays, and films, stems from the imaginary or non-existent nature of these things. But, perhaps, the problem does not have so much to do with the fact that we are dealing with something imaginary, as much as it has to do with some other feature of the art object, such as its narrative structure. 'Fiction' has multiple meanings connected with both the 'imaginary' and the 'narrative'.

Budd (1995, 86) writes that "the possibly fictional nature of poetry in itself presents no obstacle to its appreciation". In the context of the paradox of fiction, such a claim might seem remarkable: we are concerned with a very specific obstacle that is thought to prevent our appreciating art of a fictional nature in a manner that is commonly thought to be central to our appreciation of such art (emotional response), precisely because of its fictional nature. However, Budd's claim must be read in the context of his earlier comment that "what matters in poetry is the imaginative experience you undergo in reading the poem" (1995, 83). Poetry, he claims, always involves 'imaginative experience', and it is sometimes of a 'fictional nature'. It is necessary to clarify what is meant by 'fictional' before we can understand why the fictional nature of novels, plays, and films is thought to be a serious obstacle to their appreciation, whereas, apparently, it is not an obstacle to the appreciation of poetry.

'Fiction' and 'fictitious' both have multiple meanings. 'Fiction' can mean:

1. something (imaginatively) invented or untrue; or
2. literature in the form of prose, especially the novel, that is concerned with the narration of events and portraiture of people.

In the first sense, 'fiction' is a synonym for 'fabrication', 'untruth', or 'imaginative invention'. In the second sense, 'fiction' is a synonym for 'narrative literature'. 'Fictitious' also has two senses:

1. not true, not real, imaginary, or fabricated; or
2. occurring in, or invented for, fiction.

So the first sense of 'fiction' and 'fictitious' are related to 'fabrication' or 'untruth', and the second sense of these words is related to 'narrative literature'. 'Fictional' is a synonym for the second sense of 'fictitious'; in other words, 'fictional' relates to 'narrative literature', rather than 'fabrication' or 'untruth'.

While all poetry involves fictitious experience, in that it is imaginary experience, not all poetry is fictional in the sense of involving a narrative (hence the classical distinction between lyric poetry and epic poetry). So Budd can claim that all poetry is fictitious, and some poetry is fictional. In contrast, it is a central feature of the major English literary prose form – the novel – and the major dramatic forms – theatre and film – that they are almost always narratives, and so 'fictional' in the sense of 'fiction' is a synonym for 'narrative literature'. Narration is a central feature of novels, plays, and films, but is not nearly as central to poetry. When Budd claims that "the possibly fictional nature of poetry in itself presents no obstacle to its appreciation", he has in mind the sense of 'fiction' as 'fabrication' or 'untruth'. However, when we say that the paradox of fiction presents an obstacle to the appreciation of novels, films, and plays, there is an equivocation: we could mean either sense. But it is notable that the literature on the paradox of fiction is usually concerned with novels, plays, and films, the art forms in which there is a strong element of narration, and less frequently discusses poetry, the literary form in which narration is not nearly so significant.

The paradox of fiction is usually presented as being concerned with 'fiction' in the sense of a 'fabrication' or 'untruth'. The problem of emotional response to fictional characters is thought to lie in our knowledge that they are invented, unreal, untrue, or imaginary. Perhaps, however, the emotional response to novels, plays, and films has more to do with our emotional response to fiction in the sense of narration, than with our emotional response to fiction in the sense of being imaginary: what really matters about fiction as imaginary narratives might not be that they are imaginary, but that they are narrative. In *Narrative, Emotion, and Insight* (Carroll and Gibson 2011), we have a collection of essays in which philosophers of art start to examine how a range of problems in the philosophy of art might benefit from a new approach: focusing investigations on the narrative aspect of some works of art. In his contribution, Matravers (2011) considers how the narrative element of novels, plays, and films (a feature that is common to both fictional and documentary novels, plays, and films) might be what matters for understanding our emotional response to 'fiction', rather than the imaginary element. The first flowering of this idea in the 2011 chapter bears fruit in his subsequent monograph (Matravers 2014), which offers us a new way of understanding the philosophically significant issues surrounding the paradox.

If what is at stake in our emotional response to fiction is our response to narrative structures, rather than our response to fictional characters, then Levinson's statement of the problem needs rethinking, and this might have very serious consequences for the logical problem that is supposed to arise.

6. Should we be worried about the paradox of emotional response to fiction?

Finally, an observation about the pedagogical value of the paradox. Having given at least a dozen seminars on it, I have seen that it has the capacity to captivate and repulse students in equal measure. To some, it speaks to a personal experience of fiction that is deeply important to them; to others, it exemplifies the philosopher's ability to trivialise an otherwise fascinating and meaningful experience. Leiber (1993, 35–36) writes in his book about paradoxes, "If we think that the point of education and research, of our whole cognitive existence, is the accumulation of truths, like stocking the shelves of a library, we are likely to misunderstand paradoxes." This is true of the paradox of fiction. Whether or not one takes pleasure in attempting to solve it, what matters is the insights into emotions, existence beliefs, fiction, and narrative that are revealed along the way.

Wittgenstein wrote (Leiber 1993, 55):

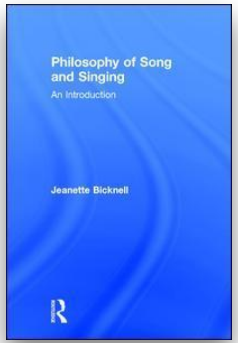
Something surprising, a paradox, is a paradox only in a particular, as it were defective, surrounding. One needs to complete this surrounding in such a way that what looks like a paradox no longer seems one.

Hopefully, the 'defective' surroundings of the paradox of emotional response to fiction have now been completed in a way that makes the emotional response to fiction less surprising. These surroundings include the practical, psychological, logical, or linguistic approach we adopt in our inquiries into the emotional response to fiction, and issues concerning the nature of emotion, the ways in which beliefs attend the experience of emotions, the variety of emotional responses, and the relationship between fiction and narrative.

CHAPTER 03

Three Ways to Think about Authenticity in Performance

Jeanette Bicknell



A voice is not like an oboe or violin, something you can take out of its case and put away (John Potter – singer and academic)

I have a friend who is a professional art appraiser. People consult her when they want to know the financial value of a painting or other artwork that they own. They may want to know this simply out of curiosity, or because they are considering selling it, or because they want to make sure that they have adequate insurance coverage. The issue of a work's authenticity or inauthenticity is important in my friend's appraisals. An authentic Modigliani – one actually painted by the artist – is worth far more than a copy of a Modigliani. Philosophers can discuss the aesthetic value of forgeries, and the different kinds of experience offered by original works and forgeries, and they can question whether our attitudes to forgeries and copies are strictly rational. But most of the time, these subtleties matter little to my friend or to her clients. For them, whether a work is authentic or not is a question of fact, and one that may have significant financial implications.

This kind of authenticity – whether an artwork truly came from the hand of a particular artist – arises in music relatively rarely. Yet "authenticity" is an important consideration for many listeners. When listeners fail to be convinced by a performance they sometimes express their disappointment in terms of the artist's authenticity or lack of the same. And while it may not be obvious at first, fans of diverse musical genres share concerns about singers' authenticity, although these concerns are likely to be expressed in different ways. This is not to say that concerns about authenticity are evenly distributed. Fans of some genres may care more than fans of other genres, and they are also likely to conceive of authenticity in different ways. We'll also see that concerns about authenticity in music may be the surface expression of deeper concerns about cultural appropriation and group identity.

In an earlier chapter I argued against some forms of aesthetic relativism. I claimed that disagreements regarding who is a "good singer" did not imply that there was no fact of the matter and no way to decide such questions. I suggested that we need to pay attention to broad agreement and consensus about such matters, as much as to controversy and disagreement. I will revisit some of these issues later in this chapter. Is there a fact about which singers are authentic and which are not? How do we decide these questions?

Before proceeding, I want to set aside another kind of authenticity in music that I won't discuss here. This is the question of whether an instance of a work faithfully reproduces the work's constituent properties. This type of authenticity is a matter of ontology, rather than of interpretation or the "politics" of performance. Stephen Davies takes this ontological sense of authenticity to be its primary meaning, and, in declining to discuss it, I fear that I may be asked to turn in my "philosopher of music" credentials. I will take the risk. While the ontological issues Davies identifies are certainly interesting, especially with regard to Western classical music, I want to stay focused here on the meaning of authenticity for listeners and the role that perceptions of it might have in listeners' expectations and experience.

Concerns about authenticity are expressed in different ways by fans of different musical genres. I see three kinds of worries around authenticity: concerns about faithfulness to composers' intentions (almost exclusively the province of opera and art song); concerns about emotional expression; and concerns about maintaining boundaries. Concerns with authenticity among fans of opera and art song revolve around what Peter Kivy calls "authenticity as intention," by which he means faithfulness to the composer's intentions. We saw the composer Edward Cone in the previous chapter express a concern with this kind of authenticity, where he says that an "illegitimate" vocal interpretation is one in which the singer (rather than the vocal persona) is seen as embodying and "composing" the song that she sings. So in an illegitimate interpretation of, for example, Schubert's Erlkönig, instead of hearing the words as sung by each of the four characters, we would hear the voice of, say, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as though he was telling the story in propria persona.

It is not only composers who are worried about this kind of authenticity. Opera and art song singers are criticized for performing in a way that is "ego-driven"; in other words, in a manner insufficiently self-effacing towards the musical material. We can see this when we examine articles about opera and art song singers in the mass media. Music journalists (presumably reflecting concerns of the audience) frequently assure readers that the singers they profile are down-to-earth (rather than full of themselves) and that (perhaps consequently) their performances are not ego-driven either. So Dawn Upshaw appears "sensibly swathed in a duffel coat" (rather than a ball gown?) and doesn't "look like" an opera singer or think of herself as one. Because she is "anchored to the earth" her vocal flights above it are "wondrous." Ian Bostridge is described as greeting the journalist at the door "brandishing hands caked with food" as he prepares lunch for his two children. Another journalist reminds us that Lorraine Hunt Lieberson began her musical career as a viola player and developed as a musician in the (unglamorous) "inner voices" of the orchestra: "Perhaps as a result, her singing was never ostentatious or ego-driven, and always in service to the demands of the score and ensemble." And to cite one more example, a recent profile of soprano Anna Netrebko tells us that she loves to party and shop (just like other women her age, it is implied) and that during her student days worked in the decidedly un-diva-like job as a janitor at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre.

Now, music journalists may present these singers as "just ordinary folks" in an attempt to demystify opera and art song, which are often seen as elitist and difficult. And I don't mean to suggest that these kinds of singers are always presented as down-to-earth. Reports about another Russian soprano, Marina Poplavskaya, tend to stress rather than to down-play her difficult and "diva-like" behavior. But the theme of "these world-class artists are just like you and me" comes up frequently enough to be of note. These portraits are not necessarily false but they are certainly selective. I think that at least one function of these portrayals – both the singers' self-presentation as down-to-earth and the journalists' reporting of it – is to reassure fans that singers are "authentic," in the sense of having sufficient respect for the music they perform to submerge their own egos in it. A certain way of being (down-to-earth, without pretensions, even ordinary) is seen as consistent with an approach to music that is also not showy.

Opera and art singers present themselves as serious musicians in the sense of taking a respectful and self-effacing attitude to the music they perform. Unlike successful people in other fields and in other musical genres, their personal narratives rarely contain elements of worldly ambition or the drive to succeed. They present themselves as not motivated by fame or fortune. In fact, in reading journalistic accounts of these singers' careers, I was struck also by the trope of the "accidental career." Many of these world-class artists are presented as somehow having fallen into vocal music. Hunt Lieberson turned to singing only after her viola was stolen; Netrebko originally wanted to be an actress; Bostridge started out as a historian. Although these singers have to train their voices, practice, learn new music, etc., we rarely hear about these components of their musical lives. Perhaps it would make for dull reading. Being a serious musician (something that is necessarily true of any even moderately successful singers in this genre) is reduced to only one of its many components: having a certain kind of attitude to the music, such that one is "authentic" in the right sense (i.e. humble) so as to sing it respectfully.

The Paradox of Performed "Authenticity"

"Authentic" is opposed to "fake" or "forgery" in the case of paintings and other works of art that are physically instantiated. Another sense of "authenticity" opposes it to insincerity. We contrast genuine or authentic sorrow with the pretense of sorrow and we usually recognize that emotional responses may be more or less genuine. We can usually recognize the difference between a genuine smile (what psychologists call a "Duchenne smile") and a fake smile. People may display less emotion than they feel (if they are stoic) or they may exaggerate their responses and come over as more angry or more pleased than they actually are. When a child or immature person expresses emotion beyond what a situation seems to indicate, we might say, "What a performance!" – meaning that we suspect some of the expressed emotion was feigned.

Yes, the person was emotional and may have had good reason to be so, but something about their display of emotion struck us as overdone and therefore likely insincere and inauthentic.

A vocal music performance is a social interaction with a specific set of demands and expectations that vary according to culture and musical genre. Performers and audiences alike have roles to play and expectations to fulfill. Generally speaking, audiences recognize that a singer in performance is in the "performer" role. For example, singers and audiences are physically separated. Unless invited, audiences do not go on the stage to share the performance space. Listeners sing along with performers only in certain contexts, and usually only when encouraged to do so. Audience members do not usually comment on the performance in progress or initiate conversation with performers (although, depending on the type of performance, audience members may speak to one another). These are just some of the basic social conventions surrounding performance. Of course, these conventions are occasionally violated; however, if they break down completely the event in question is no longer a performance but something else.

Now here is the paradox: within the performance context, audiences (at least some audiences in some musical genres) desire and expect sincerity from performers, and they are disappointed to detect elements of insincerity. Why should this be so, given that everyone recognizes that a performance is a special kind of event, one that, by its very nature, has elements of artificiality? I think I have an answer to this question, which I will defer until we've delved a little deeper into authenticity.

Authenticity as Sincerity (II)

Authenticity is conceived of differently when we move from opera and art song to other music genres. In many forms of popular music, self-expression on the part of the performer is expected, so there are few worries about ego, "illegitimate" self-expression, or faithfulness to the composer's intentions. In jazz, blues, rock, and popular music, concerns about authenticity often take the form of worries about sincerity of emotional expression.

Singers in many musical genres make claims that the music they perform is important to them and that the emotion they convey in performance is genuinely felt. Although the following examples are drawn from interviews with jazz singers, I would bet that a survey of rock, hip-hop, or country singers would yield similar results.

So we have Diana Krall:

I was watching Spalding Gray doing Swimming to Cambodia and I thought how wonderful it was that he took his life and made it art. I can't do that, but all I can try to do is be myself, even if sometimes the only people laughing are the guys on the bandstand.

So Krall does not "perform" (turn her life into art), so much as "be herself" on stage. In the same interview she also says that the choice of songs on the album she is currently promoting ("Glad Rag Doll") has personal resonance. It was inspired by compilation tapes that her father made for her when she was in music school. Dianne Reeves similarly mentions that the songs she sings have personal significance, and that she strives to sing them sincerely:

A lot of the songs took me back to a time of discovering who I was […] I feel like I am still courageous but I know now what I want. Now I want to sing from a very clear place because I see things and I have access to a broad array of information. I can speak about life now with some power.

Kurt Elling, speaking about the eclectic selection of songs he sings:

I just try to do stuff I can get behind emotionally and believe.

Jazz singers present themselves as musicians whose work is personally and emotionally meaningful. I should acknowledge that this is not the only way in which they present themselves. Other themes that frequently arise in their interviews include their musical background and apprenticeship, expressions of gratitude to mentors and musical collaborators, and praise for past masters and sources of musical inspiration. Still, it is striking to me that jazz singers proclaim their sincerity as often as they do.

Remarks about sincerity and emotional authenticity from the mouths of jazz singers are particularly interesting because these singers do not typically write their own material but sing standards – songs written by others and often made famous by other performers. It would seem that popular music's "aesthetic of sincerity" is alive here as well. In making these claims singers reassure audiences of their sincerity, likely because they believe that their fans want or expect this kind of reassurance. Now, I do not mean to suggest that the sentiments are feigned. The point is that, by making such claims, singers are fulfilling a social role that they take to demand a certain attitude to their repertoire while meeting what they take to be the expectations of their fans.

Authenticity as Boundary Policing (III)

Jazz singing is also interesting for thinking about authenticity because, as one of the genres based on African-American musical traditions, questions of authenticity and singers' attitudes to the music they perform are entwined with issues of race and appropriation. Joel Rudinow's much-discussed paper, "Race, Ethnicity, Expressive Authenticity: Can White People Sing the Blues?" focuses on one genre but has relevance for other genres similarly derived from African-American music.

The subtitle of Rudinow's paper asks a question about boundaries. If white people are playing the music in question, is it really blues? The implication, of course, is that blues is authentically performed only by blacks. Rudinow frames the question as one of ethnicity. For other listeners, boundary questions about music may be framed in different ways. Keith Richards remembers intense debates about authenticity among blues fans in London in the early 1960s. He says that a group he calls the "blues purists" were "very stuffy and conservative, full of disapproval." While it was taken for granted that the performers of authentic blues were African-American, ethnicity was far from the only relevant factor for these fans. Richards recalls a Muddy Waters show in Manchester where Waters was virtually booed off the stage when he played a second set with an electric band. For this audience, Richards says, "blues was only blues if somebody got up there in a pair of old blue dungarees and sang about how his old lady left him. None of these blues purists could play anything. But their Negroes had to be dressed in overalls and go 'Yes'm boss.' And in actual fact they're city blokes who are so hip it's not true." Richards' anecdote is illustrative of the different things that can matter to fans; not only ethnicity, but also elements of public persona and instrumentation can be taken as marking authenticity.

Blues, as it draws on folk traditions, may be particularly likely to arouse debates about authenticity among its fans. But such debates are actually ubiquitous in popular music. Is a singer too pop to be really country? Not gritty enough to be genuine punk? In fact, Jennifer C. Lena, a sociologist who studies popular music, has found that boundary-policing debates about authenticity have touched nearly every style of twentieth and twenty-first century music, from electronic dance to South Texas polka.

How might we judge whether a particular performer is "authentic" in a particular genre? In his paper on the blues, Rudinow characterizes authenticity as the kind of credibility that comes from having the appropriate relationship to an original source. He argues that the authenticity of a blues performance turns on the degree of mastery of the idiom rather than on the performer's ethnicity. Evidence of authenticity can be sought "in and around the performance" for the performer's recognition and acknowledgement of indebtedness to sources of inspiration and technique. So, for Rudinow, authenticity is an objective matter, rather than a matter of subjective taste or opinion. One can make arguments that a particular musician has or has not mastered the idiom and therefore is or is not authentic. It seems plausible that Rudinow's claims could be extended to at least some other musical genres. So in judging if a hip-hop artist, say, is authentic, we might consider his mastery of the idiom (how well he raps, etc.) and whether he shows an understanding of hip-hop's history and past masters.

I value Rudinow's position because it acknowledges that there is more to music and to our experience of music than sound. A listener's judgment of vocalists' authenticity to a particular tradition may be based on how they sound, but they are also influenced by their public persona, including but going beyond those factors that Rudinow mentions.

We can see this illustrated in the film 8 Mile which starred and was based on the life of (white) rapper Eminem. The climax of the film is a "battle" (rapping contest) between Jimmy (the character played by Eminem) and a succession of African- American rappers, staged in front of a predominantly black audience. The film up to this point can be seen as making a case for the plausibility of Jimmy's victory. It is not just Jimmy's appropriate relationship to original sources that is seen as crucial, although the film takes care to make us aware of it. Just as importantly, we have seen Jimmy's difficult life, economic deprivation, hassles on the job, difficulty finding love, his pleasure and ability in rapping, and his close friendships with African-Americans. Even the title of the film is a marker of authenticity; it refers to Eight Mile Road, the border between the impoverished black city of Detroit and the wealthier white northern suburbs. In the rap which wins the final contest Jimmy taunts his black opponent with lacking the right kind of background despite being African-American – he comes from a loving suburban middle class family and has had the advantage of an elite private school education. The quality of the contestants' lived experience is important to the audience judging the rap contest. The implication is that it should be so for us too, and the film is as much an argument for Eminem's authenticity as it is for Jimmy's. (Yet I should add that not every viewer was so convinced. Elvis Mitchell, in reviewing 8 Mile for the New York Times charged that, "the film embraces the absurdity of a white rapper who takes down a brother in a club full of black people – perhaps more black people than own Eminem records.")

Twenty years have passed since the publication of Rudinow's seminal article. Does race still deserve consideration as a relevant boundary marker for authenticity of a blues performer? What about as an authenticity marker for other musical genres? Writing in 1999, Kembrew McLeod found that blackness was one (but not the only) marker of authenticity for fans of hiphop. More than 15 years later, some would go so far as to argue that North American society is now "post-racial," and that discussions of race have little place in thinking about current popular music. While I doubt this is true, I also do not feel that this is the right place (or I am the right person) to pursue that discussion.

To sum up: Fans of nearly every genre of popular music make boundarypolicing arguments about singers. These arguments may be based on a number of factors, including sonic qualities of the music ("too pop"), accompanying instrumentation ("electric guitars don't belong in a blues performance"), a singer's public persona ("he's no gangsta"), and so on.

Authenticity clearly matters to fans, whether we are talking about expectations of sincerity, about boundary issues, or about the attitude that singers take to their repertoire. Why? In the following two sections I discuss two types of possible reasons.

Both apply to musical performance in general, and the second is more relevant for singing.

Authenticity: Music and Group Identity

I began this chapter by telling you about my friend the art appraiser. In her work, authenticity is inherent in objects. A painting either originated from the hand of a particular artist or it did not. I said that this way of conceiving of authenticity has some relevance for music, but a much more potent concept of authenticity has to do with fans' expectations. I hinted that concerns about authenticity in music might be a way of talking about deeper issues, those having to do with cultural appropriation and group identity.

If authenticity is not inherent in an object or event, where is it? Here I follow the thinkers in a diverse number of fields who would argue that "authenticity" (and a number of other concepts) are socially constructed. Before saying much more, I want to disarm critics who might claim that "socially constructed" concepts are trivial or merely subjective or somehow "unreal." This line of criticism is simply mistaken. Take the laws of one's society, for example. These were socially constructed in the sense of being thought up and written down by people who came before us. Even if you believe that a nation's laws are divinely inspired, an element of social construction must enter when these laws are written down and again when they are interpreted. Laws continue to be socially modified as they are interpreted and adjusted by people today. Yet a society's laws are anything but trivial. Laws have real, measurable consequences and can exert a powerful effect on people's behavior. Furthermore, to acknowledge that a concept is socially constructed does not mean that it is "merely" socially constructed – that it has no basis in the external world. Race and gender are both powerful socially constructed concepts with a basis in human biology. The crucial point is that neither can be reduced to human biology. There is more to gender than biological sex and more to race than physical characteristics or DNA sequences.

So in claiming that authenticity is socially constructed by communities of musical fans, I do not mean to denigrate its importance or its ontological status. I recognize that authenticity claims are profoundly important to some fans. What I want to explore in this section and the next are some of the reasons why they might be important.

Again, I find Lena's work on authenticity in popular music to be really useful here. She has found that most major musical styles have followed a similar trajectory. They begin with an "avant-garde" phase that is driven by musicians who come together to jam, share recordings, and bemoan the state of current popular music. If they keep at it long enough, they develop what she calls a "scene." They converge on a style, perform in public, and start to develop a fan base. If the music becomes better known and of wider interest (if there is a "buzz" around it) then the next stage – the "industry based" phase – might begin. With this stage comes national attention, an influx of cash, and media hype. Debates over authenticity are almost always triggered by this phase – when the scene is "threatened" by the music industry's attention – and they become more frequent and intense from there. Eventually, if a style becomes more firmly established, concerns about authenticity fade. Some musical genres go on to exhibit a fourth "traditionalist" phase when some fans and musicians push for the preservation and celebration of the pre-industry phases.

One of Lena's central examples is the authenticity debates among hip-hop fans. "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang was the first release that took the emerging musical style out of the Bronx where it began and into mainstream culture. Along with national media attention, the single started debates over what counted as "genuine" hip-hop. (Some hip-hop fans in the Bronx claimed never to have heard of the Sugarhill Gang before it won national success.) Debates over authenticity have been reflected in the changing content of rap lyrics over the past years. Lena writes: "In the early years, the music was produced mainly by independent record labels, and the lyrics focused on whatever mattered to the kids writing the songs, like partying, romance, or competition between dueling bands in the scene. In 1988, however, soon after the major record labels took over the rap market, lyrics took a dramatic turn toward boasts of street credibility voiced by an array of 'hustler' protagonists. Just when the industry passed fully into corporate hands, its lyrical currency shifted to favor competitive claims of gritty authenticity."

Hip-hop's trajectory is fairly typical, and Lena tells a similar story about Seattle grunge rock. As she demonstrates, conversations about authenticity become particularly intense when a musical sub-culture is seen as under threat from corrupting outside influences. Boundary debates over musical styles tend to focus on qualities of the music in question, but they are rarely only about music. Rather they are a way of making larger claims about who belongs and who doesn't. As Lena puts it, "fundamental questions of group identity hang in the balance."

People preserve their culture by attempting to draw boundaries around it. Among other things, belonging to a national, ethnic or religious group can mean eating this (but not that), speaking in this way (but not that way), or celebrating this holiday (but not that one.) These are just some of the ways in which people have "fenced off" their identity as (say) Canadian or African- American or Jewish or whatever. Listening to certain kinds of music and singing certain kinds of songs (but not others) is another way of reinforcing boundaries around group identity. National anthems are the most obvious example, but by no means the only one. Music can create and reinforce personal and social identity on a smaller level as well. Many music fans, especially adolescents, identify strongly with their preferred style of music. Probably most of us have felt that instant sense of fellowship that arises when we find that a recent acquaintance likes the same kind of music that we do. We may have also experienced the fellowship that arises when we find that another person dislikes the same music that we do.

Debates about authenticity are important to fans when music (this music, but not that music) is constitutive of personal or social identity. Boundarypolicing conversations about music are a way of staking out one's identity and drawing boundaries around one's culture or sub-culture. Fans demonstrate expert familiarity with a style to other fans in the community when they can make increasingly fine distinctions about what properly belongs to that style and what doesn't. Discussion – even disagreements – are a way of connecting with others, as only those who care deeply about a musical style will bother to argue about it.

Authenticity: Singing Is Personal

I have been making the case that "boundary debates" about musical styles have a strongly social aspect. I think that the same is true for the other kind of authenticity – the claim that a performer is or is not sincere.

I have argued at length elsewhere that all musical experience is intrinsically and fundamentally social rather than personal or individual. The way that I understand music, even listening on headphones alone in a room is a social experience, through and through. Music's social character can be seen in the role it plays in every culture – past and present – in creating and reinforcing social bonds, whether these are bonds between caregivers and infants, adult partners, friends, or among members of social groups and subgroups. Music is typically made in interaction with others, with a score coded by others or according to traditions developed by others, with instruments made by others. Even a seemingly individualistic experience of music is derivative, secondary, and carries a social meaning. If a musician were to make her own instrument, compose or improvise her own music, and decline to play in front of others, then we might say that her music making was an individual activity. However, what she did would be understandable as "music" only if we could connect her actions to some larger musical practice.

What holds true about the social character of music is, if anything, true in a more fundamental way for singing. Singing is a form of interpersonal communication. Because its medium is the human voice and because the voice invokes the human and therefore the social, a song can feel like a personal communication, even when the listener is just one of many in a crowd. Insincere communication – or communication that is perceived by the recipient to be insincere – damages relations between people. The insincere apology, the disingenuous compliment, the reluctantly given invitation –

all of these can be a source of tension between people and can end relationships. Reciprocity – understood as treating others in a way commensurate with how they have treated us, and expecting others to treat us as we have treated them – is a powerful social norm. When fans sincerely feel enthusiasm and affection for performers and music, it is only natural that they want these emotions to be reciprocated in a genuine way. They want to feel that the singers they admire are just as eager to perform for them as they are to listen. They do not want to feel that performers are just "doing their job" or "in it for the money." Hence the expectation that singers be authentic in the sense of "performing" sincerity effectively. As an audience, we want to be the recipient of a sincere communication.

I suspect that our more rational selves know (or should know) that singers and other performers cannot possibly feel all of the emotions they project in performance, each and every time they perform. If singers did in fact experience all of the emotions that they must project, their work would be too difficult and draining. Yet at another level, we want to feel that singers are performing in a genuine way and conveying something true of their own lives and experience. Hence the importance of a singer's public persona. Sometimes the persona can do part of the work of conveying a singer's lived experience, and, when fans are familiar with the persona, it informs their perception and understanding of the singer's performances.

Authenticity: Is It All Subjective? How to Decide?

Earlier I proposed that "authenticity" is not inherent in performances but is socially constructed. Now, this does not imply that all claims about performers' authenticity are merely subjective. Things are more complicated, and much depends on what a person is trying to say when he or she claims that a performer or performance is or is not authentic.

Some authenticity claims purport to be claims of fact. In their book Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music, Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor devote a chapter to the career and reception of Mississippi John Hurt (approx. 1892–1966). Hurt was a sharecropper who played guitar and sang at local parties and dances and recorded a few songs with Okeh Records in 1928. These were commercial failures and Hurt soon returned to obscurity. In 1963 a musicologist rediscovered Hurt and helped him to revive his career. Hurt performed extensively until his death and was heralded as an authentic blues performer. The reality was more complicated, as Hurt did not actually meet some of the standard criteria of a blues singer, and much of the music he played was contemporary popular music with little blues influence.

Many of Hurt's fans were drawn to his music because of its purported authenticity and the connections it seemed to offer to a simpler past (and some just liked his guitar playing). Some may have been motivated in perhaps subtle ways by racist beliefs about African-American music – much like the British fans Richards remembers who thought that blues performers must be unsophisticated bumpkins. If these fans were to insist on Hurt's authenticity – and if by that, they meant his status as an old-time bluesman – then they would be mistaken. Hurt came to the blues quite late in his career. So if fans meant to make a claim about a matter of ethnomusicology or musical historiography, then these claims should be assessed for their truth value by the relevant experts.

If authenticity claims are judgments about an artist's place in a musical tradition, they come close to the kind of authenticity that is the concern of my art appraiser friend. In this kind of case, experts in that musical tradition get to decide if these claims are true or not. This is not to say that experts will always necessarily agree, any more than my friend will always come to the same conclusion as another art appraiser. Indeed, experts may disagree and they may talk past one another if there is underlying controversy about the characteristics and defining features of different musical styles. I should note that experts in a musical style may or may not be fans of that style, and fans may or may not be experts.

At the same time, I think that Barker and Tayor may have misunderstood some of the fans' responses to Hurt. Claims about performers' authenticity are not always claims about music history and traditions. Sometimes "authentic" is playing a different kind of role. Let me quote Richards again. Here he contrasts himself and Mick Jagger with the British "blues purists" who couldn't play any instruments and who had very rigid ideas about what was or wasn't genuine. He and Jagger also cared about authenticity, but they defined it differently:

We'd hear something, we'd both look at each other at once. Everything was to do with sound. We'd hear a record and go, That's wrong. That's faking. That's real. It was either that's the shit or that isn't the shit, no matter what kind of music you were talking about. I really liked some pop music if it was the shit. But there was a definite line of what was the shit and what wasn't the shit. Very strict.

Richards makes some attempts at clarifying what he means by "real." "I was looking for the core of it," he says, "the expression." He discusses different blues styles and techniques, and also repeats how he loves some pop music. But although Richards is expressing himself in the language of authenticity ("real," "faking") and boundaries ("a definite line"), I cannot help but think that he is actually saying something like "I like this music and not that music." "This music is real" (or "the shit") becomes another way of saying "This is my kind of music."

I suspect that Richards is not alone in using authenticity claims as a kind of short-hand for personal taste and strong conviction. When authenticity claims are disguised statements of musical taste, the person making the claim is the arbitrator of its truth. Generally speaking, I do not think that people can be mistaken about what they like and dislike, and arguments over such matters are a misplaced effort. There can be productive arguments over whether Mississippi John Hurt is an "authentic" bluesman or not, and about the relevant criteria for judging this question. But I doubt that one person can convince another, through argument, that he or she should enjoy Hurt's music. Arguments can convince someone to listen (or to listen again), and arguments can guide listening and single out different aspects of the music for closer attention. But the verbal arguments do only part of the work – the heavy lifting is done by perception.

Finally, I argued above that boundary-policing authenticity claims reflect concerns about community. It matters to fans whether a particular artist or a particular sound is truly authentic to a genre because such boundarypolicing conversations about music are rarely just about music. They are a way of staking out one's identity and drawing boundaries around one's culture or sub-culture. And despite the philosophical shortcomings and potential confusion inherent in the language of authenticity, I don't see that it is likely to change or that there would be much point in encouraging reform. The notion of authenticity or "keepin' it real" is likely to remain part of the discourse of popular musicians and their fans.

When authenticity claims are claims about what belongs to a genre and what doesn't, fans of that genre are the ones who get to decide if the claims are true or not. This kind of authenticity makes sense only within a social group for whom the boundaries are important. They are the ones in a position to pronounce on questions surrounding it. For example, I enjoy some hip-hop, but I don't count myself a true fan. I know a little about the history of hip-hop and I follow some current discussions of it in the media (such as Questlove's series on the future of hip-hop in the on-line publication Vulture.) I know what I like, but the music is not important enough to me for me to make claims about what is real or fake. Hip-hop is one of many musical genres I can enjoy; it isn't part of my identity. I'm not the one who should be adjudicating claims about which artists are authentic or not, or making meta-claims regarding what counts as authenticity in hiphop. These matters are best left to fans. They are the ones who care about whether, say, Eminem or Insane Clown Posse or P.M. Dawn are truly authentic.

"Blues in the Night"

This song and the film in which it first appeared raise a host of issues related to authenticity, and attempting to think through them reveals just how complex and twisted these issues can be.

Let's start with the song as it is presented in the film. Jigger (a jazz pianist), Nicky, and

Peppi (two accompanying musicians) are thrown in jail after a fight breaks out in the St. Louis club where they have been performing. In the cell they meet one of Jigger's old friends, a bass player. The four discuss starting a band where they can play "real blues – that comes out of people's hearts." Peppi pleads with Jigger to start such a band then nearly faints after a fit of coughing. The cell opposite holds a group of African-American prisoners. They look alarmed and concerned by Peppi's coughing, and one calls out, "What's wrong with that white boy?" He continues: "He's got the miseries! We all got the miseries in here!" After this expression of racial solidarity, the camera pans to the other end of the cell where an African-American prisoner starts to sing "Blues in the Night." The other black prisoners provide unobtrusive backing vocals with elements of call and response. (For example, after the opening line, "My Momma done told me," one counters, "What'd she say?") The un-credited William Gillespie sings mournfully, with great expression, and incorporates melisma into his performance.

Meanwhile, Jigger and his friends hear the song and move from the back of their cell to the front in order to hear better. This exchange follows:

JIGGER: You hear that Peppi? It's great!

PEPPI: It sure is, Jigger.

JIGGER: That's the real misery, ain't it boys?

PEPPI: You could sure beat that out, couldn't ya, Jigger? [Meaning: Play it on a piano.]

ANOTHER: We all could

JIGGER: We all will! Boy, that's the blues – the real low-down New Orleans blues!

For the final verses of the song, presumably to stress the music's authentic origins, the film cuts to a montage of African-Americans doing physical work – picking cotton, moving cotton bales, unloading watermelons from a truck, etc. The montage ends with a close-up of a map with a route to New Orleans. Ironically, though the visuals are of African-Americans, the accompanying voices seem to belong to the film's white protagonists, singing in unison.

This short scene and the events leading up to it convey the following themes: (1) authentic or "real" music originates in human emotion, it "comes out of people's hearts"; (2) African-American music is authentic, and its authenticity is linked with the experience and the suffering of the people who sing and play it; (3) African-American music is worth imitating and (despite its roots in black experience) can be successfully imitated by whites. Jigger and his friends go on to form a jazz band and to perform the song "Blues in the Night" that they first heard from the black prisoner. The same point is made in another scene. Jigger and his friends meet Leo, a trumpet player. When Leo wants to show them that he's good enough to join their band, he stands up in a New

Orleans club where they are having a meal and (uninvited) plays a solo with the African-American band onstage. Far from being put out, the black musicians welcome his contribution. I think that the message we're supposed to take from the scene is that white musicians, if they play well enough, can gain the respect of black musicians. If the African-American musicians think Leo is good enough to sit in with them, then the white musicians should be happy to have him; and (4) the film also conveys the theme that commercially popular music is inauthentic and performing it is a form of selling out. Jigger leaves his friends to earn a higher salary playing with "Guy Heiser's Band" in New York City. These white musicians (who wear bright white suits on stage) perform with the novelty singer "Baby Beth Barton" (the un-credited Mabel Todd) and their performance is presented as risible (if not the stuff of nightmares). The experience of playing with the group is seen as contributing to Jigger's eventual break-down. He is redeemed only by rejoining his friends and again playing "real" music.

Of course, "Blues in the Night" is not "found" music improvised by African- American prisoners. It was composed for the film by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen and has become part of the "Great American Songbook." Arlen intended the melody to sound like a blues folk song, and Mercer drew on his experiences living in the south among African-Americans to compose the lyrics. How are we to judge the song's "authenticity" according to the three ways that I have proposed?

The first form of authenticity – that of faithfulness to the composer's intentions – seems not to apply. In the film itself, the song is already taken out of its (faux) folk origins and played as an up-tempo number by Jigger's band. Later Jigger uses the melody to compose an ambitious piano piece in the mode of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. Clearly, Arlen and Mercer did not intend "Blues in the Night" to be performed in one specific way. They were commercial songwriters whose livelihoods depending on their music gaining popularity and being performed widely.

What of authenticity in the second sense – that of the performers' sincerity? In the film Gillespie sings in character, and his character certainly seems to sing with sincere expression. Interestingly, later singers often undercut the sadness and pessimism of the lyrics by taking the song rather briskly and do not express much sadness. In short, they have fun with the song. Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and Tony Bennett, among others, sing the song in this way. One notable exception is Frank Sinatra, who recorded the song for his 1958 album Only the Lonely and sings it slowly and sadly. Yet all of these performers seem to be sincere in the sense of "sincerely wanting to give the audience a good experience." For example, Cab Calloway's exaggerated facial expressions, mugging, and rather obvious physical gestures (holding up two fingers for "a woman's a two-faced, a worrisome thing" and four fingers for "four winds") may have had an element of irony or satire, but they were clearly meant to engage the audience.

The third form of authenticity is authenticity to a particular musical genre, as determined by the community of fans. It might seem perverse to discuss the authenticity of “Blues in the Night” because no one (as far as I know) would claim it as genuine blues, in the sense of being a blues folk song. But other songs are readily characterized as “blues” despite not being the work of folk artists. I find it interesting to compare “Blues in the Night” with the song “Everyday I Have the Blues” attributed to Pinetop Sparks in 1935 and later reworked by Memphis Slim. Like “Blues in the Night,” this song has been performed by many musicians, black and white, often as an up-tempo number that belies the sad and pessimistic lyrics. Are both songs “authentic”? Is neither? It depends whom we ask and what we mean by “authenticity.” If we are asking about the songs’ place in the American musical tradition, we should ask experts in the history of American music. We would expect them to provide criteria for what is to count as “authentic” blues and reasons for including or excluding each of the songs. If our question about authenticity is really a question about community, then we have to consult that community, and the inclusion of either song is not likely to be a pressing matter for any contemporary group. In the end, I would argue that the long-standing popularity of both songs among musicians and their evident respect for the songs make further questions about authenticity moot.

CHAPTER 04

Music and Emotion

Theodore Gracyk

From my great pain
I make small songs;
They lift their ringing feathers
And flutter to her heart.
(Heinrich Heine)

When German poet Heinrich Heine personifies his artistic creations as birds, he introduces a metaphor. But what about his claim that his emotional distress is the material of his songs? Is this to be taken literally, as a theory of artistic inspiration? Or is it another metaphor?

Although I have thrown cold water on the idea that birds and German poets are kin in their ability to make music, I face a long history of opposition. Some of that opposition arises from the longstanding view that music expresses emotion, and this expressive capacity is the essence of musical art. Many bird lovers endorse it, as well. They believe that birds sing for some reason besides communicating location, staking out territory, and attracting a mate. Like people, birds sing in order to express emotion. In "Ode to a Nightingale," John Keats contends that the bird's music expresses ecstasy. More recently, philosopher David Rothenberg argues that the variations that birds introduce into their songs demonstrate that they are doing more than communicating. Sometimes, it seems as if "birds burst into song out of pure joy," and there is no scientific way to prove otherwise. But why take it as an expression of joy? Because, Rothenberg argues, "Evolution is not supposed to produce beauty for the sake of loveliness alone." In sum, if a nightingale's song is beautiful, and its actual design exceeds what is required by evolutionary adaptation, then it must be an expression of joy, for it must also be doing what people do when they make music.

There is nothing special about Rothenberg's version of the argument that beautiful bird song is a species of expressive art. Many people endorse it. From the perspective of influence, the most important version might be that of Jacques Delamain, the French ornithologist who trained composer Olivier Messiaen to recognize a variety of birdsongs. In the book *Why Birds Sing*, Delamain writes,

In the rhythmic chime of his clear, rapid, unexpected notes, the Song Thrush encloses all the joy of living, his gay, capricious vehemence; . . . here is the emotional life of the bird at its height: well-being, joy of existence, happiness at feeling in his place in a chosen corner of nature[.] . . . The song, liberating discharge of a vital plenitude that the bird cannot contain, is rendered by the male with attitudes which are often strange, now frenzied, now fixed[.]

Delamain advances three distinct claims in this passage. First, the bird's song displays or reveals its emotional life. Second, the songs display distinct, recognizable emotions that parallel human emotions. In this case, the song displays the bird's joy. Third, the bird cannot contain or control itself. This, Delamain maintains, is how "musical art is born."

This chapter argues that, on the contrary, the natural expressiveness of sound does not support the position that the expression of emotion is the essence of music. If the art of music is born anywhere, it emerges from a society's conventions for adapting music's expressive qualities to its specific purposes. Art reflects culture. Unchecked natural outpourings of emotion are not art.

I. SYMPTOMS AND SYMBOLS

Understanding the debate about musical expression requires a detour into the general topic of expression. Emotions permit expression because emotions embody beliefs and attitudes about events.

Consider a particular sound, made on two different occasions. On Saturday evening, at a chamber music recital, a quartet is about to launch into Henryk Górecki's third string quartet. The first movement begins very softly. Fifteen seconds into it, Frida coughs loudly. People who are seated nearby turn and glare at her. The woman seated beside Frida hands her a cough drop. Two days later, at Monday morning's staff meeting, Frida and her colleagues are discussing impending changes in their office. One of Frida's co-workers begins to say, "We'll have to hire someone for . . . ," only to be interrupted when Frida coughs loudly. Frida realizes that her co-worker is about to blurt out a possible plan to re-assign some work duties. Frida thinks that it is not yet time to share those plans. Frida's co-workers get the message and no one pursues the subject of hiring. No one hands Frida a cough drop.

This example illustrates two things. First, there is a difference between someone who is coughing and someone who is imitating or representing themselves as coughing. When Frida coughs on Saturday, the cough is a symptom of discomfort in her throat.

The sound that she makes is caused by the discomfort. If she could contain herself, she would not cough, because she knows that it will disturb the audience for the music. She, and everyone else, wants to hear the music. On Monday, she can contain herself. There is no discomfort in her throat. Instead, she does not want her co-worker to continue talking. Her cough is staged to disrupt a line of conversation. The co-worker's understanding of the message depends on understanding that it is *not* a symptom of a sore throat.

Like many philosophers today, I think that expression requires a mental state with an intentional object. That is, the mental state is directed *at* something, which is the object of that mental state. I endorse Jesse Prinz's formulation, "The objects of our emotions are the real or imagined conditions that elicit them." Emotions fall into the class of things that can be expressed, then, because they are within the realm of psychological states that judge or evaluate something. An *expressive behavior* is about something because it reflects a mental state that is about something. If we ask what mental state is expressed by Frida's fake cough, we will probably agree that it expresses her annoyance at, and disapproval of, the co-worker's contribution to the conversation. So the staged cough expresses emotion. In contrast, Frida's cough at the concert is not directed at anyone or anything. Consequently, it is a mistake to think that it *expresses* the feeling of dryness or irritation in her throat.

Like a cough or sneeze, many emotions are intimately related to the body. As Peter Goldie summarizes the crucial point, "Many emotions, especially short-term emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust, involve characteristic involuntary bodily changes—muscular reactions, hormonal changes . . . and so on." These involuntary changes are the basis for an emotion's feeling-component. Anger increases the flow of the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline, causing an angry person to experience an increased heart rate, contributing one element to the cluster that characterizes *feeling* angry. Furthermore, there may be changes that other people can observe, permitting others to detect the emotion. As you become angry, an observer may see bulging neck muscles, flushed red cheeks, and a clenched fist. However, emotions are more than bodily changes that are felt and observed. Although many people use "emotion" and "feeling" as synonymous terms, what follows depends on using the criterion of intentionality or "aboutness" to make a distinction between them. Emotions include feelings, but not every feeling has an intentional object.

In Chapter 2, I explained how emotion involves a belief about how one's past and present are linked to a possible future. For example, when Frida coughs at the concert, the anger of other audience members reflects a judgment that Frida is spoiling things. Given this requirement, there is an important difference between *having the feeling* that is characteristic of anger and actually *being* angry. Given this requirement, the mere presence of a characteristic feeling does not qualify as an emotion. Furthermore, emotions are frequently distinguished from moods, which are longer-term feelings that lack the directed "aboutness" of emotions. Feeling sad following a significant loss is very different from feeling depressed for no particular reason. For purposes of my argument, it is not important whether this distinction is genuine, or whether Jesse Prinz is correct that both emotions and moods have intentional content. However, moods illustrate that there are many complications that arise when we move beyond the most basic emotions, which are my focus here.

Psychologists and philosophers who study emotion generally agree that there are seven simple, core emotions. They are fear, anger, happiness, contempt, surprise, disgust, and sadness. Because they involve involuntary bodily changes, all seven have natural and therefore universal symptoms. The most notable symptoms are our distinctive facial expressions. These are not universal symptoms in the sense that they always occur and are always recognized. Rather, they are universal in the sense that people who can recognize them are equally adept at identifying them cross-culturally. Furthermore, they are natural symptoms, for individuals who are born without sight display the same core repertoire of facial expression as everyone else despite their inability to learn them by watching others. Like everyone else, babies born without sight express happiness with a smiling mouth and a downward shift of the outer corners of the eyebrows, and they express disgust with a wrinkled nose and raised upper lip. These natural facial expressions are our most straightforward, unproblematic examples of human expression of emotion. As a consequence, we are not always the best judges of our own emotions. People have subjective, "internal," first-person access to their own emotions by way of their characteristic feelings. However, the accompanying belief element is often fleeting and it does not always rise to consciousness. So if I am not clear about the judgment I am making, I may be unclear about which emotion is present. Suppose a friend tells me that a mutual acquaintance has been promoted at work. I feel surprised. My friend, watching my face, sees an expression of disgust. In this case, my friend may know better than I do how I feel about the news.

Although facial expression is the paradigm case of expression, it is not always trustworthy. Expression of emotion is culturally influenced—some even say culturally "scripted." Each society develops a set of expectations about proper and improper emotional expressions, including rules concerning how, when, to whom, and to what degree various expressions are permitted. Facial expression is heavily policed by cultural display rules. In many Asian societies, “natural” emotional expression is highly restrained. With many Japanese adults, a strong emotional response is only detectable by watching for fleeting changes around the eyes, if it is to be seen at all. In contrast, Americans feel far freer than almost everyone else to indiscriminately display the core emotions through facial expression.

So far, I have concentrated on basic emotions, which are short-lived responses to immediate circumstances. We also have cognitively complex emotions, such as shame and jealousy. Cognitively complex emotions can involve judgment about complex social relationships that are themselves “scripted” by social rules governing behavior. Cultural context heavily informs both the emotion’s arousal and its outward expression. Suppose that Fred, one of Frida’s co-workers, starts to make belittling jokes about her job performance after she receives the promotion that he sought. If the jokes are only directed at Frida and only after her promotion, then they are not expressions of his otherwise humorous, teasing nature. They express Fred’s jealousy. Yet notice the enormously complex set of concepts that Fred must bring to bear on their respective social standings in order to feel jealous, and the additional complex understanding of workplace politics that directs its outward expression into belittling jokes.

Cultural scripting often converts short-lived emotions into extended episodes of expression. And of course expression becomes even more complicated as different expressive scripts are linked to class and gender. In Victorian England, for example, a respectable widow wore black mourning dress for at least a full year. This full mourning was followed by a year of second mourning, followed by a period of half-mourning. During these two periods, the amount of black fabric was reduced in turn. As an additional expression of her grief, a widow could not remarry for at least two years. In contrast, a widower could express his grief by wearing black gloves and perhaps a black armband for a few months. If he chose to remarry within two years of his wife’s death, his new bride was expected to adopt mourning garb for her predecessor. These Victorian rules for the expression of grief can seem overly elaborate, arbitrary, and generally insincere to us now, in the twenty-first century. However, it would be a great error to conclude that they do not count as genuine expressions of grief. Most expressions of emotion are more like Victorian mourning clothes than smiles on faces. If Fred’s jokes can express jealousy, then Queen Victoria’s decision to wear black for forty years following Prince Albert’s death can serve as a sincere expression of her grief.

Three closely related consequences follow from the cultural scripting of expression. Since music is also shot through with cultural scripting, these three points should inform our thinking about music's capacity to express emotion. First, an expression of emotion does not have to express an occurrent feeling. Once we acquire a non-natural method for expressing emotion, the expressive gesture can be detached from the immediate circumstances and emotion, allowing individuals to "express" emotions that they do not possess. The full mourning "weeds" of a Victorian widow continue to express her grief during moments when something makes her happy. Second, once detachability is in place, the expression can be insincere. Who hasn't said "Thank you" after receiving a gift that one is not thankful for? Third, there will be occasions when what looks to be an expression will not be expression at all. On any given occasion, a behavior or "expression" that is a characteristic symptom or conventional expression of an inner psychological state might be something else altogether. The symptom or convention might be present in the absence of any intention to communicate an emotional state. Lacking that intention, it does not even count as expression at all, not even as an insincere one. (To judge that a smile or another facial expression is insincere, one must believe that the person is intentionally misleading others, and that it is wrong to do so in the relevant circumstances.) The next section explores the idea that music is also a heavily "scripted" expression of emotion, and therefore music that seems to express emotion might not be expressing anything at all.

II. EXPRESSION AND EXPRESSIVE QUALITIES

Let us, at long last, return to music. Consider the Scottish fiddle tune, "The Soldier's Joy." It is appropriately named, for it is expressively joyful. Although several sets of lyrics have been added to it over the years, neither the title nor the lyrics have any bearing on my description of it as joyful music. Given a forced choice from the standard list of core emotions (fear, anger, happiness, contempt, surprise, disgust, and sadness), anyone who hears "The Soldier's Joy" and who does not pick happiness is simply not competent with respect to the basics of Western music. Furthermore, it is *very* happy music, hence joyful.

But how can that be? *It* cannot experience joy, for *it* is a rhythmic and melodic pattern. It is no more capable of *being* joyful—of having the emotion of joy—than is a heap of pebbles or the equation "2 _ 2 = 4." Nor can it *express* joy, for nothing can express joy unless it satisfies two conditions: it can experience the emotion of joy and it can provide an outward symptom or conventional symbol of that inner state. Since music is not a sentient thing with "inner," psychological states, music cannot satisfy the first of these two conditions for expression. Therefore “The Soldier’s Joy” does not express emotion. There is only one way to avoid the conclusion that we talk nonsense whenever we say that the music is joyful or we say that it expresses joy. Our alternative is to deny that we mean what we seem to mean. It will surprise no one when I report that music lovers and philosophers prefer to save the day in this way, by interpreting “The music is joyful” non-literally.

The favored reinterpretation focuses on the meaning of “is” in “‘The Soldier’s Joy’ is joyful.” That word can be reinterpreted as short-hand for “is an expression of,” so that “‘The Soldier’s Joy’ is joyful” really means “‘The Soldier’s Joy’ is some person’s expression of joy.” It is just like seeing a festively decorated house in the weeks leading to Christmas and saying, “That house has the Christmas spirit.” What we really mean is that whoever decorated the house has the Christmas spirit, and the decorations express that emotional connection to the holiday. (Again, one lesson from the previous section is that the expression might be insincere. The decorations might be the work of someone who despises Christmas but who hopes to win the cash prize given annually to the most festively decorated home. However, the possibility of insincerity arises precisely *because* we treat it as the expression of a particular person’s emotion. Insincerity is a species of expression.) Notice, on this account, that an attribution of emotion to music necessarily requires attributing the emotion to the historical individual(s) responsible for the design. So “‘The Soldier’s Joy’ is joyful” really means “ ‘The Soldier’s Joy’ is its composer’s expression of joy.” On this account, “The Soldier’s Joy” is emotionally expressive in roughly the same way that Delamain says that the thrush’s song is emotionally expressive.

Many complications disrupt this appealingly simple theory. The important objections arise from the fact that the musical pattern does all the work of communicating the emotion. One might suppose that certain sound patterns are naturally expressive, as the natural, universal analogue to the natural behavior of moving one’s mouth into a smile to express happiness. However, just as the mouth can do more than smile and frown, expressive musical patterns have other functions besides expressing emotion. Except in the very limited case of a child’s spontaneous facial expression that betrays occurrent emotion, what appears to be an expression of emotion is frequently something other than an expression of emotion. What follows is an explanation of Alan Tormey’s important observation, made four decades ago, that the presence of expressive qualities is never sufficient for expression.

My argument depends on separating two features of “The Soldier’s Joy” that fulfil two different social functions. First, it is a reel, and I assume that whoever composed it intended it as such, which is to say that it was composed with the intention of functioning to support a specific kind of dancing. As I argued in Chapter 2, that intention reflects a great many concepts about music and its uses. Since this particular reel seems to date back to the middle of the eighteenth century, we can assume that the composer knew the difference between a jig and a reel, two dances with very different time signatures. Let's assume, therefore, that the composer intended to compose a reel and succeeded (admirably!). The music's second feature is its expressive quality. If you are going to maintain that "'The Soldier's Joy' is joyful" means that it expresses joy, then I assume you are maintaining that the composer intended to express his own personal happiness by creating and sharing this particular piece of music. My alternative proposal is that the composer's success in achieving his rhythmic goal generates the conditions that create the impression that the composer must also have been expressing happiness. Therefore the music's expressive quality of happiness may have been quite unintentional, and therefore the music does not necessarily express happiness.

Because I am contrasting expressive and non-expressive functions, I should say a little more about the functional value of expressing emotion. In particular, consider the point that the functional value of *expressing* emotion is not identical with the value of *experiencing* emotion. The capacity to experience emotion is functionally useful to the individual who has the emotion. Emotion guides behavior by alerting us to the significance of changing situations and by motivating actions in response. We can imagine sentient creatures who have emotions but who do not show them expressively in their bodies. (In societies that suppress the open expression of emotion, this might be regarded as a biological advantage!) So what advantage is gained by our natural proclivity to exhibit emotions? The obvious advantage is that we are social creatures. Consequently, it is useful to be able to "read" the expressions of emotion of people we encounter. That is why children with Asperger's syndrome—characterized by a failure to notice and recognize facial changes that express emotion— are laboriously taught what other children learn spontaneously. However, looking at faces and body language is a very limited mode of access. It limits us to knowledge about occurrent emotions of people near us. So there is a social benefit to designing public signals that communicate emotions. Music is one of the media we employ for this purpose. Steven Feld has documented the social use of a particular falling melodic phrase by the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea.

In a ritualized use of music, a Kaluli woman who is distressed by a death or another significant loss begins to weep. Then she begins to sing the distinctive descending phrase, transforming her weeping into singing. This musical phrase is adapted from the song of the fruit dove, which Kaluli interpret as genuine expressions of grief by birds, some of whom possess the souls of dead humans. Next, the woman improvises a song. This sung-weeping and singing sets off a prolonged event that ignores the performer–audience boundaries typical in modern musical culture. Other women respond with weeping and melodic wailing. Men, who are normally the musicians of Kaluli society, do not respond with melody. Instead, they weep hysterically, without singing. Feld explores multiple social benefits to this use of music, including the way it reverses normal Kaluli social patterns by demanding public confirmation of women's emotions.

The functional value of conventionalized expression requires members of a society to agree on its expressive character. In contemporary life, for example, music is routinely attached to mass communication. A political candidate might use "The Soldier's Joy" as background music in a television advertisement with a positive message about better times to come. The same tune will never be used as the background music for an "attack" advertisement that presents an opponent in a negative light, for that would send a mixed message that would confuse potential voters. Yet in order for music to be expressively useful in mass media, something in the general pattern of the music has to communicate its expressive character. It cannot always depend on some prior social conditioning that associates a particular melody with a particular expressive function—the way, for example, that the red octagon of the stop sign is a purely conventional symbol for stopping. If it is to be useful in an advertisement, "The Soldier's Joy" has to be univocally expressive for millions of people who do not otherwise listen to bluegrass and Scottish folk music. Similarly, there would be little point to hiring composers to write original film scores if music does not possess distinctive expressive qualities that supplement and enhance the visual and narrative material. Suppose the ominous quality of the "Imperial March"—Darth Vader's theme in the *Star Wars* films—is established through association, because it accompanies Vader's appearance. If that is why the music is ominous, then there's no point in hiring John Williams to write the music and then hiring an orchestra to play the theme, for the film audience will already have to know how they feel about Vader before the music functions expressively. The same point applies to songwriting. The melody that Woody Guthrie supplied to "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt" does not express his sadness about President Roosevelt's death simply because the words express grief; if Guthrie had somehow shoehorned a lyric about Roosevelt's death into the music of "This Land Is Your Land," the song would simply create cognitive dissonance due to conflicting emotional expression in the words and the melody.

Examples like these show that music has features that make it useful for presenting expressive qualities and that people are generally very good at recognizing these musical features and resulting expressive character. Previously, I argued that the production and reception of music is shaped by cultural tradition. If we combine these three points, they undercut the idea that "The music is joyful" *always* attributes an expressive function to the music in the strict sense of providing an externalization of a mental state. They demonstrate that an expressive quality of joy may be nothing but a by-product of a culturally entrenched musical pattern, created for reasons other than expressing emotion. The musical features that prompt us to say that "The Soldier's Joy" is joyful might be present for reasons that have absolutely nothing to do with the expression of joy.

"The Soldier's Joy" was already at least a century old when Thomas Hardy described a performance of it in the novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, written in 1874.

Here sat three fiddlers, and beside them stood a frantic man with his hair on end, perspiration streaming down his cheeks, and a tambourine quivering in his hand. The dance ended, and on the black oak floor in the midst a new row of couples formed for another. "Now, ma'am, and no offence I hope, I ask what dance you would like next?" said the first violin. "Really, it makes no difference," said the clear voice of Bathsheba . . . "Then," said the fiddler, "I'll venture to name that the right and proper thing is 'The Soldier's Joy'—there being a gallant soldier married into the farm—hey, my sonnies, and gentlemen all?"...

So the dance began. As to the merits of "The Soldier's Joy," there cannot be, and never were, two opinions. It has been observed in the musical circles of Weatherbury and its vicinity that this melody, at the end of three quarters of an hour of thunderous footing, still possesses more stimulative properties for the heel and toe than the majority of other dances at their first opening. "The Soldier's Joy" has, too, an additional charm, in being so admirably adapted to the tambourine aforesaid—no mean instrument in the hands of a performer who understands the proper convulsions, spasms, St. Vitus's dances, and fearful frenzies necessary when exhibiting its tones in their highest perfection.

In rural England in the nineteenth century, the attraction of "The Soldier's Joy" is its capacity to support dancing. At the farm dance described by Hardy, its expressiveness is not the point.

If we could go back in time and interview the anonymous composer of this reel, we would probably discover a Scottish fiddler. He might confirm my hunch that expressiveness was *never* the point. The three fiddlers at Weatherbury farm must have been exhausted—and perhaps bored, too—after playing the same reel for forty-five minutes. Perhaps the composer of "The Soldier's Joy" was simply very bored of playing whatever reel was then popular in the Scottish highlands, and wanted something new to play at dances. Perhaps he just wanted to show off his musical skills. However, in creating a new reel, he also created something with a joyful expressive character.

As a general rule, a reel has a lively tempo in common time, with a heavy emphasis on the downbeat. Reels are commonly played with a bit of lilt, which is created by playing the downbeats a fraction early, in front of the anticipated beat. Although some reels are associated with sad titles and texts, such as "The Hangman's Reel" (in French-Canada, "Le Reel du pendu"), they are inherently happy-sounding. I defer to Scottish poet Robert Fergusson:

For nought can cheer the heart [so well]
As can a canty Highland reel.
It even vivifies the heel
To skip and dance:
Lifeless is he wha canna feel
Its influence.

So I challenge anyone to write a decent medium tempo or up-tempo reel with a Highland rhythm that is expressively sad. Given the inherent tendency of such reels to sound happy, the "happiness" of "The Soldier's Joy" is no reason to conclude that the expression of happiness was an element of the compositional process. Because its social purpose in that society at that time placed limits on the composer's creative process, and those cultural limitations directed it expressively, then some highly expressive music is expressive without being the expression of emotion.

III. THE SONG THRUSH

In the last section I argued that the presence of the expressive quality of happiness in a Scottish reel is adequately explained by noting that it was created as an instrumental tune to support a particular kind of dancing. In turn, it follows that it is simply wrong to think that expressive qualities of music are always present as an expression of emotion.

My argument collapses if we assume that certain musical patterns are just like facial expressions. On this assumption, certain musical patterns are the natural, universal expressions of our basic simple emotions. Someone who is sufficiently aware of these patterns might choose to actively suppress personal expression, creating emotionally neutral music, the way that adult Japanese often suppress facial expressions. Or she might use the patterns to generate insincere expressions of emotion. But if a composer does not actively avoid expressing her own emotions, her musical compositions will employ patterns that express her emotions. Or, recognizing that the extended time required to compose music makes it unlikely that a piece of music expresses an occurrent mental state, the advocate of natural expression might endorse William Wordsworth's proposal that poetry arises at a later time, as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."

On this revised account, "'The Soldier's Joy' is joyful" means that the music reflects its composer's recollection of some earlier happy occasion or the composer had a miserable life but knew how to be insincere. Fans of Ludwig van Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony (Op. 68) will point out how neatly this model fits Beethoven's program for his "Recollections of Country Life" and its warning that it is "more an expression of feeling than painting." Thus, the goal of Beethoven's first movement is to express "the awakening of cheerful feelings upon arriving in the country." Although I grant that Beethoven aimed at genuine expression in the sixth symphony, there are serious reasons to resist generalizing from the musical practices of nineteenth-century Vienna. It is a historically recent use of music. Projecting it back onto pre-modern music would be like thinking that the mourning garb of Victorian England is a natural response to death that was somehow repressed for all those preceding centuries. I will expand this objection in this chapter's final section. Until then, I will discuss more obvious problems with attributions of expression.

If the presence of distinctive patterns justifies the attribution of joy to music, then there is no reason to stop with music. If this position is supposed to provide a general account of the expressive qualities of music, then it should be applied to all expressive qualities. We are justified in assigning a capacity for emotional response wherever we find patterns that "naturally" convey emotive expressiveness. But that invites endless, unjustified anthropomorphism about the world around us. Our tendency toward anthropomorphic perception invites further scrutiny of seemingly expressive non-human music: the "music" of birds. Perhaps birds make joyful sounding vocalizations for some non-expressive reason.

The heart of the argument is that music is not the only realm of experience that inspires application of the names of basic emotions to non-sentient things. Spontaneous anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human objects and events, is a basic strategy that we use for locating patterns in complex perceptual information. We engage in a mild anthropomorphism when we say that our car "refuses" to start on a cold morning, that the weather isn't "cooperating" when it rains during our weekend at the lake, and that the stock market is "nervous." From a scientific perspective, the Ojibwa people of central North America engage in a strong anthropomorphism when educated members of the tribe endorse the traditional belief that the four winds are living creatures and that thunder and lightning are the observable effects of the thunder birds, persons with avian form, traveling through the air.

Activities that unfold in time are strong targets of anthropomorphism. Activity suggests life, encouraging anthropomorphic perception of non-human forms as embodiments of purposeful activity. Since the detection of emotion is central to our perception of human agency, it is not surprising to find that basic emotions are routinely attributed to musical patterns that unfold in time. This would happen even if no music were ever used to express emotion. And it is not that music is particularly begging to be treated in this way (itself an anthropomorphism). Steven Feld notes that the Kaluli people typically describe musical patterns as waterfalls, pools of water, and other water phenomena. If that same metaphor was widely used in Western musical aesthetics, we might think about "The Soldier's Joy" as a bubbling hot spring, totally sidestepping the question of what emotion it expresses.

Here we have our troubling double standard. Although scientifically literate people routinely use emotive vocabulary for cars, household appliances, the weather, and a host of other things, most of us have abandoned the theory that a "sad" willow tree and an "angry" rain squall express the emotions of some sentient agent. "Sad" music confronts us with an interesting problem concerning a widespread habit of thought and language, not a problem that is specific to music. The widespread belief that music is a special case is largely due to the continuing influence of a nineteenth-century Romantic aesthetic. I expand on this point in the final section of this chapter and then again in Chapter 4.

My position faces the obvious objection that music just happens to be a very special case. Granted, it's a mistake to think that the weather is a person with human-like

The heart of the argument is that music is not the only realm of experience that inspires application of the names of basic emotions to non-sentient things. Spontaneous anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human objects and events, is a basic strategy that we use for locating patterns in complex perceptual information. We engage in a mild anthropomorphism when we say that our car "refuses" to start on a cold morning, that the weather isn't "cooperating" when it rains during our weekend at the lake, and that the stock market is "nervous." From a scientific perspective, the Ojibwa people of central North America engage in a strong anthropomorphism when educated members of the tribe endorse the traditional belief that the four winds are living creatures and that thunder and lightning are the observable effects of the thunder birds, persons with avian form, traveling through the air.

Activities that unfold in time are strong targets of anthropomorphism. Activity suggests life, encouraging anthropomorphic perception of non-human forms as embodiments of purposeful activity. Since the detection of emotion is central to our perception of human agency, it is not surprising to find that basic emotions are routinely attributed to musical patterns that unfold in time. This would happen even if no music were ever used to express emotion. And it is not that music is particularly begging to be treated in this way (itself an anthropomorphism). Steven Feld notes that the Kaluli people typically describe musical patterns as waterfalls, pools of water, and other water phenomena. If that same metaphor was widely used in Western musical aesthetics, we might think about "The Soldier's Joy" as a bubbling hot spring, totally sidestepping the question of what emotion it expresses.

Here we have our troubling double standard. Although scientifically literate people routinely use emotive vocabulary for cars, household appliances, the weather, and a host of other things, most of us have abandoned the theory that a "sad" willow tree and an "angry" rain squall express the emotions of some sentient agent. "Sad" music confronts us with an interesting problem concerning a widespread habit of thought and language, not a problem that is specific to music. The widespread belief that music is a special case is largely due to the continuing influence of a nineteenth-century Romantic aesthetic. I expand on this point in the final section of this chapter and then again in Chapter 4.

My position faces the obvious objection that music just happens to be a very special case. Granted, it's a mistake to think that the weather is a person with human-like emotions. However, birds express themselves musically. Therefore their activity is independent evidence for the thesis that music is a natural method for expressing emotion, and therefore we are dealing with a very different phenomenon than people who say that the stock market is nervous.

My argument against this special pleading for music is another appeal to our tendency to anthropomorphize what we perceive. Animals are so-named because they are animate, self-moving, and so we find it very difficult to avoid assigning them "inner" psychological states and motivations that parallel our own. My quarrel is not with the idea that birds, reptiles, and non-human mammals have mental states, including emotions. I am quite confident that my dog is emotionally frightened by the sound of thunder and is happy when I return home from a trip. I have no quarrel with the idea that monogamous birds feel differently about their mates than about other birds. My objection is based on the obvious point that non-human species do not, for the most part, express their emotions in the manner of humans. I am hardly the first person to say that if you want to know if a Saint Bernard is feeling happy, its facial "expression" is irrelevant. All Saint Bernards have sad-looking faces. That is, they are sad looking by human standards. But dogs don't express happiness and sadness with facial expressions. They express emotion in their tails, stance, and mode of movement. If you're looking at their faces, you're falsely anthropomorphizing them. This warning is not specific to dogs. We cannot determine how any non-human species displays an occurrent emotion without carefully studying its patterns of behavioral response to different stimuli.

My argument against a universal, natural, cross-species proclivity to use music to express emotion is therefore quite simple. If you believe that Kaluli engage in anthropomorphism when they attribute grieving human souls to fruit doves, then you should agree with me that the fruit dove's sad song is not a symptom of genuine sadness. Granted, the song of the fruit dove sounds sad to human perceivers. But there is no more reason to think that fruitdoves are *routinely* sad and express that sadness with their songs than to think that Saint Bernards are naturally sad and express it with their faces. Since we cannot reliably determine how a dog feels by looking at its face, then we cannot reliably determine how a song thrush or a fruit dove feels by listening to its song. A "mournful" or "joyful" birdsong means no more than a "sad" dog's face. Until we have very good evidence otherwise, the expressive quality of a bird song is like the expressive quality of a Saint Bernard's face. We should resist anthropomorphic perception as a guide to their respective emotional states.

Rothenberg's appeal to the beauty of birdsong is subject to the same censure. Peacocks cannot see most of the colors in the male peacock's elaborate tail, and the male peacock's horrible screaming may well be more beautiful than their tails to females of the species. Our sense of beauty may be very different from theirs.

We should be equally cautious about using familiar cultural practices as a basis for making conclusions about the "natural" proclivities of our own species. The fact that it became all the rage to express emotion in instrumental music in nineteenth century Europe is no reason to think that music was, from the dawn of our evolutionary history, our natural tool for expressing emotion. We are so accustomed to the thesis that art has the function of expressing the emotions of artists that it can be very difficult to acknowledge that the idea is of recent vintage. Informed appreciation of Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony should acknowledge that it reflects the composer's recollected feelings. But it doesn't follow that the same holds for "The Soldier's Joy."

IV. AROUSAL THEORY

Until now, I have focused on the thesis that expressive sounding music expresses emotion by making someone's emotion outwardly apparent. I have mentioned that this theory is of recent European origin. In contrast, the earliest Greek philosophers emphasize a different dimension of the expressive qualities of music. For example, when Plato discusses musical expression, he is far less concerned with the composer's externalization of feeling than with the listener's internalization of the music's expressive quality. Naturally sorrowful musical modes should be banished from the state, for they make us self-indulgent, weak, and prone to feel sad in the presence of misfortune. The Confucian tradition of Chinese philosophy also warns about music's expressive capacity and its attractions. Unlike Plato, Confucianism emphasizes a complete reciprocity between expression and reception. If musical choices reflect inner states, then hearing music will shape and control the inner states of listeners. Both Plato and Confucius conclude that the good of society demands censoring music that supports socially destructive emotions.

The thesis that sorrowful music makes listeners sorrowful and angry music makes them angry is logically independent of the idea that "'The Soldier's Joy' is joyful" attributes joy to its composer. Instead, the music is joyful in the same way that an overcast day is gloomy, that is, as a cause of that emotional state in observers. As you may already have noted about Robert Fergusson's praise of the Scottish reel, he endorses the reel as a superior cause of joy. We literally *feel* its influence. This theory about the meaning of "is joyful" in "the music is joyful" is traditionally known as the arousal theory, on the grounds that "is joyful" can be cashed out as meaning "arouses joy." Arousal theory comes in two versions. The first, less plausible version holds that expressive descriptions indicate that the speaker is reporting his or her own response. The second version denies that "the music is sad" is necessarily a first-person report. However, neither version is attractive as a general theory, for there are many situations in which neither version captures what we are communicating when we expressively label music.

The first-person version might capture what some people mean when they talk about sad and joyful music, but it falls apart when we consider people who have something more to say than "it makes me sad." Consider boredom, an emotion that I have mentioned only in passing. Suppose Professor Harmonious teaches music appreciation and she asks her students, "What did you think of 'Trio,' by King Crimson?" "It was peaceful," one says. "It was boring," another responds. It is plausible that the first student is reporting that the music had a calming effect and the second is reporting that it caused boredom. The difficulty is that, if Professor Harmonious continues the discussion and asks the second student whether the first student's description is appropriate, the second student might very well endorse it. An individual can be bored to tears by a piece of music and yet know perfectly well that it is not expressing boredom. (There is nothing special about boredom. Annoyance is another emotion. I know people who find country music very annoying and yet who have no difficulty distinguishing between sad tunes, happy ones, humorous ones, and so on.)

To deal with the objection that the bored student is not reporting her own peacefulness, a second version of the arousal theory is available to preserve the theory's core insight. When she agrees that "Trio" is peaceful, she is saying that the music typically or frequently produces a peaceful feeling in listeners. I will grant that this analysis captures what some speakers intend to communicate on some occasions, as when a record label packages music together as *The Most Relaxing Classical Music in the Universe*. It is a prediction that it will relax people. However, as a general account of what it means to say that a piece of music "is sad" or "is joyful," this analysis fails on the grounds that it requires us to overlook much of the evidence that we have about music's typical tendencies to arouse listeners. When it is not in actual conflict with our real estimation of the effects of listening to a particular piece of music, it reflects unjustified speculation. For example, if you listen to King Crimson's "Trio" on the *Starless and Bible Black* album and to "Blue in Green" on the Miles Davis *Kind of Blue* album, and you find them boring, as a very great many listeners do, then what is your evidence for their calming effect on others? If you actually go looking for that evidence, I wager that you will discover that these two pieces of music bore most people—most people are not fans of these styles of music and are quickly bored by the placidity of these two pieces. If one needs another example, "amusing" appears to be a solid candidate for the revised arousal theory, as a label that indicates an expectation that a piece of music will amuse most people. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Ein musikalischer Spaß* (K. 522, "A Musical Joke") and Led Zeppelin's "D'yer Mak'er" are two highly amusing pieces of music, but I say this with full knowledge that nine out of ten randomly chosen people will not hear the musical jokes.

To summarize the two great difficulties for arousal theory, many people assign expressive labels that do not reflect their personal response and without waiting to observe how others actually respond to it. However, if neither personal response nor general pattern of response is consulted in order to assign joyfulness to music, then the music itself must display an aural property that is appropriately described as "joyful." The joyfulness of "The Soldier's Joy" must be a property that emerges from its musical structure. Applied to music, an expressive label is a description of an emergent, gestalt property that the particular piece of music shares with other music that is described with the same term. It is like seeing that a vase has a fragile design without having to break it. *On that basis* the music may be predicted to be the source of emotional contagion for some listeners, or regarded as a suitable vehicle for self-expression if used in that way. However, theorizing that music's expressive qualities are *essentially* bound to these functional uses of music is to let the tail wag the dog.

Some defenders of arousal theory will respond that I am being unfair, because I am ignoring basic ideas that I defended in the last chapter. Ignorant listening is not relevant. The responses that matter are those of listeners with sufficient familiarity to grasp the relevant musical structures. Most people have not acquired the right concepts for hearing what's funny in Mozart's "A Musical Joke," and I have argued elsewhere that what is amusing about the Led Zeppelin piece is equally dependent on the right mix of musical and cultural information. The proper question, therefore, is whether *informed* listeners have the responses required by either version of arousal theory. My response has two prongs. First, if arousal theory is supposed to account for the *natural* expressiveness of sound, then the test group should be randomly selected people, drawn from people who listen to all sorts of music. Focusing on the responses of culturally informed audiences would be as misleading as demonstrating that there is a "natural" and universal sense of justice by questioning college graduates in the United States. Second, if we are going to defend arousal theory while abandoning the theory of natural expressiveness, then we introduce several new problems. For example, there is the problem of audiences who respond with "been-there, done-that, no-longer-interesting." In other words, well-informed respondents are generally able to identify the emotional tone of a piece of music based on very little information. Then recall Brahms's famous insult ("Every jackass hears that!") when he wanted to make the point that what's obvious about a piece of music is unlikely to be what's musically interesting in it. Informed listeners frequently regard the music's expressivity as a mere starting point for appreciation. They are generally more interested in the musical skill displayed in the composing and performing than in the act of expressing emotion. Eduard Hanslick appears to have been on the right track: if expression is elemental in music, it will be the same thing, over and over, and it will not sustain the aesthetic interest of more informed listeners.

V. KALULI GRIEF, AMERICAN JAZZ, HINDUSTANI RASA

For the remainder of this chapter I return to the topic of music as art. For the sake of argument, suppose that there is a pure, original music and that three things are true about it. Suppose that we have some natural proclivity to perceive basic expressive qualities in many things, including musical patterns. (Many theorists push the story back a step and say that the true origin is the expressivity of vocal tones, which is then developed into music.) Suppose that, as a general rule, expressive musical patterns originate in the emotional lives of those who create those patterns. And suppose that, as a general rule, listeners respond to those patterns by experiencing, either genuinely or imaginatively, the emotions that are expressed. We now have a theory of why "The Soldier's Joy" exhibits joy and we have an account of why there is such a strong consensus that it is joyful. However, we are not yet making any connection between expressivity and art. There - fore it is seriously misleading to point to a beautiful and "expressive" bird song and identify it as a species of musical art. Exhibiting symptoms is different from creating art.

The most telling difference between exhibiting an emotion and artistically expressing it is that art invites appreciation. Appreciation is different from mere liking or admiration. It is a complex evaluation of a human achievement within a particular tradition. In Chapter 2, I mentioned the Beatles' "In My Life." Liking the "harpsichord" sound is a much simpler response than appreciating its studio virtuosity. To clarify my argument, let's consider a seemingly simple case of appreciating a musical performance.

Let's return to Feld's fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. Although Kaluli explain their use of the grieving weeping-into song by pointing to its origins in the song of the fruit dove, Feld reports their interest in the recordings that he made of particular rituals. He was intrigued by the fact that many members of the village visited his house in order to request playback of a specific improvisation, in which a woman, Hane, addresses the spirit of Bibiali, a male cousin. The improvised song lasts just under five minutes. Why, Feld wondered, did so many people want to hear that particular song? As Feld interviewed people who sought out the recording, he found that they were drawn to its aesthetic achievement: "Kaluli found its construction controlled, deliberate, crafted, and almost composed like a song." Although improvised, it was a strikingly superior articulation of grief. In other words, Kaluli do not treat all musical self-expression as equally valuable natural expressions. They listen for, and appreciate, the artistry of coherent articulation "within the constraints of an improvised form." In short, Kaluli apply standards to Hane's public grieving that are not applied to non-artistic expression of grief. Kaluli admire Hane's performance in much the way that jazz fans applaud some performances of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," Charles Mingus's music to commemorate Lester Young, as aesthetically better than others.

Kaluli admiration of Hane's song of grief is strikingly like the European Romantic preference for expressive specificity and particularization. However, artistic individualization is a criterion for *artistic* success that we do not apply to natural outpouring of basic emotion. When people praise the expressive improvisations of Hane and jazz musicians as direct and spontaneous outpourings of pure feeling that they cannot contain, the evaluation is condescending. Ted Gioia points out that aesthetic admiration of "primitive," natural self-expression is a mainstay of jazz criticism. Yet what it really does, he notes, is treat the musician as "practitioner of an art which he himself scarcely understands. . . . Presented in such terms, the jazz performance seems hardly a cultural event and more like a medical affliction, akin to epilepsy." An aesthetic evaluation of someone's epileptic seizure objectifies and dehumanizes them. Evaluating Hane's highly expressive music as an uncontrolled symptom of emotion is no better.

However, I must caution against generalizing too widely from the examples of Hane's song and jazz improvisation. Both examples conform to expectations about musical expression that are associated with the European Romantic account of art. Earlier in this chapter, I quoted Wordsworth's influential formulation about expressive poetry. Romantic ideals continue to influence art. As Jenefer Robinson points out, a generic "smiley face" has an expressive quality, but that does not make it an expression of emotion in the Romantic sense. The Romantic aesthetic endorses a high degree of individuation of emotion. Artistic expression is valuable when it precisely articulates a unique version of an emotion. Even when the emotions are those of a fictional character who is clearly not the artist, as in Bob Dylan's "North Country Blues," the expressivity is expected to reveal something new about the human capacity for emotion. Robinson observes that Romantic expression requires more than skilled making, for artistic expression requires the articulation "of new and unique emotional states." Whether we find it in Kaluli appreciation of Hane's song or in English poet Philip Larkin's appreciation of Mingus, Romantic expression places a high value on the individuality of each person.

More importantly, assigning a shared criterion for success to Hane and Mingus assumes that personal expression is a *functionally* distinctive approach to expressive qualities of artworks. Appreciating the expressivity of a particular piece of music requires appreciating choices made against the background of musical and therefore cultural constraint. But we can also step back from the particular case and appreciate the *tradition* as an evolving collective choice to endorse expressive art. That choice is subject to revision. There would be no point to identifying and debating the Romantic theory of expression if it was the only game in town. Romantic expression is a cultural preference, not a musical universal. Some traditions endorse high levels of musical individualization without interpreting it as unique, personal expression.

In Chapter 2, I discussed audience confusion about the categories of tuning and performing at the start of Ravi Shankar's performance during the 1971 benefit concert for Bangladesh. That mistake was easily corrected by Shankar's joke, for the audience already possessed (but had incorrectly applied) the concept of performance. However, it is considerably more difficult to appreciate the expressivity of Hindustani classical music correctly, because it *rejects* the core value of Romantic expression theory. It questions the individuality of each person. The goal of musical performance is to exhibit *rasa*, which is a refined, de-personalized exhibition of the flavor of a basic emotion. When Shankar engages in an extended improvisation of a classic raga, his artistic goal is completely distorted by approaching the performance as personal expression. Nor is it offered as mere musical virtuosity. The Hindustani aesthetics sees nothing valuable about pure, expressionless music. Technical skill has a spiritual purpose. Standard Western interpretations, Shankar warns, are simply *wrong*.

Most Westerners cannot formulate—or, upon having it explained, cannot take seriously—the philosophical doctrine that individuality is a problem in need of a solution and part of the solution is to purge it from music. Although the point is often ignored by secular musicians and audiences in India, Hindustani classical art reflects the view that art is a path to enlightenment. In Hinduism, enlightenment is an escape from the "self" that loves, hates, suffers, and laughs. The central aesthetic principle of Hindustani art, Raj Kumar explains, is the presentation of impersonal, universalized emotion, so "the final effect that is left on [audience members] is not that of the passion depicted but is an impersonal absorption in the aesthetic mood." Artistic expressivity is highly valued as a method of purging personal emotions. In this tradition, instrumental music displays *rasa* rather than *bha ̄va*. Crudely summarized, *bha ̄vas* are mental states, including the important subset of *stha ̄yibha ̄vas*, the basic emotions. Sorrow and anger are *stha ̄yibha ̄vas*. Their display is common in representational art. Michelangelo's *Pietà* displays the *bha ̄va* of sorrow and it may arouse empathetic sorrow in viewers. But that is a superficial first step for the viewer.

Each of the basic emotions has a corresponding *rasa* (literally, "sap" or an extract or flavor that we can taste and savor). The point of listening to music is to "taste" its *rasa*. However, a *rasa* is not a *bha ̄va*. The difference is sometimes expressed with the metaphor that *bha ̄va* is to *rasa* as grapes are to wine. Hindustani aesthetics highlights the distinction between *bha ̄va* and *rasa* by assigning them different names. Sorrow (*shoka*) is an emotion, but its *rasa* is pathos (*karuna*). Although it is rarely found in music, the emotion of disgust (*jugupsa ̄*) is allied with a rasa of repulsiveness (*ba ̄bhatsa*). More than four dozen *bha ̄vas* are recognized in Hindustani aesthetics, but only nine *rasas*.

However "expressively" complex a work might be in representing emotion, the real goal of art is to present the audience with a single, unified *rasa*. Established musical structures are merely blueprints. Music is energy, and so the musician must energize the melodic framework. To present *rasa*, Shankar explains, "The musician must breathe life" into the melody, "mak[ing] the bare notes vibrate, pulsate, come alive." From a Western or Kaluli perspective, the resulting particularity of one of Shankar's performances might appear to be his expression of a unique and personalized emotion. However, to "appreciate" it in that manner is to admire it without taking an interest in the performance's true goal. Transcendence requires a skilled performer to extract and present a rarefied essence of an emotion, rather than mere self-expression.

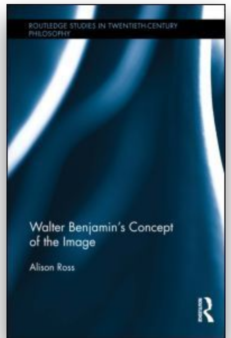
We can tell all the stories we like about the natural evolutionary sources of music as an account of music's expressive potentials. However, we must also recognize the difference between Jaco Pastorius's gesture in opening his debut album with "Donna Lee" and Ravi Shankar's aim of revealing the essence of erotic-romantic longing when he performs *Raga Bhimpalasi*. Unlike Shankar but like Hane, Pastorius was engaged in self-expression. In Chapter 1, I explained how Pastorius's expressive gesture depends on its place in a musical tradition. He relies on cultural norms and expectations *about* *music*. When music is used as Romantic expression of a highly individualized emotion, that functional use relies on cultural expectation that does not apply to Shankar's performances of traditional music. The contrast between Hindustani and "Romantic" improvisation illustrates that the expressive function of art does not lie in a universal human proclivity to use music in just one way. There are multiple musical arts with distinct expressive functions. Knowing which function is present in a performance requires a judgment about the music's origins in a particular system of symbolic interactions and social preferences.

We can go one more step in the analysis. Individual composers and musicians can deploy expressive qualities in different ways on different occasions. Pastorius's fretless electric bass is the musical highlight of one of my favorite records, Joni Mitchell's *Hejira*. (Like *Jaco Pastorius*, *Hejira* was released in 1976.) Although his contribution is crucial to *Hejira's* power, Pastorius is supporting Mitchell's expressive gestures. His own emotions are not the point. So his musical exploration of emotion is functionally different from the personal gesture of arranging "Donna Lee." The *Hejira* performances are more like Shankar's relationship to *Raga Bhimpalasi*. Conversely, Shankar spent part of his childhood in Paris and a good deal of the middle period of his musical career working with non-Indian musicians. No stranger to Western music, Shankar's three concertos for sitar and Western orchestra are, I suggest, best approached as his personal expressions of pride in his Indian heritage. Again, music is art because its meaning is inseparable from its cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 05

Form

Alison Ross



The following is excerpted from *Walter Benjamin's Concept of the Image* by Alison Ross.

In an essay entitled 'The Bare Facts of Ritual,' Jonathan Z. Smith develops a version of the thesis that the sacred is not a substantive category but a relational, even a spatial, one. The sacred is not a quality that can be present in things. Rather it is a manner of treatment of things that exist within a particular space, which marks them as significant and brimming with meaning in opposition to the ordinary ('profane') things belonging to the background. In the space of the profane, ordinary things and events happen in an unremarkable way. By contrast, the space of the sacred is one in which everything that occurs is marked as significant and assimilated into the ritual pattern and thus guarded. Smith cites a passage from Kafka, which highlights the role of repetition that defines what is distinctive about the events of the sacred space: 'Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial chalices dry; this occurs repeatedly, again and again: finally it can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes a part of the ceremony.' According to Eliade's influential view of the sacred (or more precisely the 'dialectic of the sacred'): a primordial event that is in some way vital (e.g., for the continued existence of the world) must be indefinitely repeated and guarded in its pristine quality by the ritual, which introduces the awesome power of the beginnings into the profane world and replenishes it. Kafka, on the other hand, intimates that anything is liable to become sacred through sheer repetition in a space marked off by ritual.

The things that occur in the space of the sacred are symbolic in the sense that they signify in one way or another something vitally important. By virtue of being within a space marked off by ritual, the perceptible procedure or object is *treated* as representing a truth and embodying the power of that truth. In the profane space things and events are not treated in this way. They are what they appear to be or, in any case, do not point to anything beyond the world of appearances. The inclusion of things in the sacred time-space marks them for the special treatment just described: without it everything would be banal (unmarked). On the other hand, if everything were marked as if it carried (symbolic) significance we would be quickly led to madness; caught in the impossible situation of feeling, for example, the compulsion to decipher the meaning supposed to be communicated. The difference that these spaces define therefore does not just mark the sacred; the contrast in expectations and modes of engagement that they establish also sets out different patterns of human behaviour in the respective spaces. This point can be elucidated by the need to exclude accidents from the space of the sacred. Anything that occurs in ritual has the potential to become symbolic of the sacred because it is not the thing itself that is 'sacred' but the space where it occurs that marks them as such. Thus accidental things that occur in the space of the sacred can potentially become assimilated into the ritual simply as a result of having occurred in that space. Kafka's leopards form a reliable habit of satisfying their thirst, thus becoming a part of the ritual. Smith also cites Plutarch's account of how the priestess of Athene Polias refused the thirsty mule drivers who had brought the sacred vessels to the temple a drink: 'No' she said, 'for I fear it will get into the ritual.' The capacity for the ritual assimilation of the routine is, Smith concludes, one of the core 'building blocks of religion.'

In this chapter, I would like to use this perspective of the relational determination of 'noteworthy meaning' to reconsider what Benjamin says about the differences between the symbol and the allegory in his early writing. It is well known that the symbol represents a 'bad' aesthetic for Benjamin and the allegory a 'good' one. Both symbol and allegory are 'images' in the sense that they are material forms with a power to signify something other than their perceptible form. Thus whether the sensuous form of the image embodies what it signifies, in the case of the symbol, or points beyond what it embodies, as in the allegory—each form marks out a space of significance or meaning, which can be contrasted to merely ordinary things that do not so signify. The perspective that Smith outlines from the history of religions is not entirely foreign to Benjamin's early approach to the topic of the image, which is understood as making a significant claim on attention against the factors of diffusion of meaning. However, it is the precise link that Benjamin develops in the 'Goethe's Elective Affinities' essay between the capacity of things to embody and signify meaning as *ritual form* that recommends reconsidering the terms of his famous opposition between allegory and symbol in the light of Smith's thesis. It seems to me that this perspective also has relevance for analysing the antithetical poles around which different conceptions of the image are present in Benjamin's later work: on the one hand, his writing denounces the phantasmagoric effect of images in a commodity culture, but on the other, he maintains that the cracks in totalising forms of meaning become perceptible in the experience of certain sensible forms, such as the dialectical image. In his *Arcades Project,* for instance, he indicates that it is the image that has the capacity to fracture semblance when he claims that '[h]istory decays into images, not into stories.' Similarly, against the tone of some of his early essays in which he talks in highly derogatory terms about the undisciplined Goethean notion of the ur-phenomenon, the project of the *Arcades* seems to confirm Arendt's view that this Goethean notion had a positive impact on Benjamin's later thinking, and this can be seen in the way that Benjamin sought in the experience of single, miniature things a truthful perspective on the whole. If we follow Smith's relational perspective and accept that the physical form of a thing is not sufficient to make of it an 'image' that expresses noteworthy meaning beyond this sensuous form, we may ask what is the space that, in Benjamin's writing, determines the revelatory power and insight that can be attached to certain perceptible forms?

This question can be used to highlight some of the major fault lines that traverse Benjamin's thought. It is clear that Benjamin's late thinking relies on the idea that perceptible forms can carry revelatory power, and that this idea draws on his unique coordination of themes and perspectives from 'historical materialism' and 'theology.' In his late treatment of the commodity form or in his discussion of the iron and glass of the Paris arcades Benjamin contends that the experience of these things are 'graphic' ones in which the 'perceptibility of history' may be grasped. Specifically, their glistening novelty carries with it the following revelation: novelty as a value requires perpetual change and hence capitalism as the unthinking drive to novelty is, in fact, the 'eternity of Hell.' Even 'before they have crumbled,' he writes, 'the monuments of the bourgeoisie' can be recognised as 'ruins.' The magnetic spell cast by the commodity fetish obscures such recognition. In *Capital,* Marx had described the commodity as 'a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.' He had linked the strange, quasi-religious power of the commodity to the debilitating and pacifying effect it exercised. In Benjamin's account, the commodity fetish is tied to the forces of myth, and the dream-like state of the phantasmagoria. It casts a spell that places the individual under the power of false authority. For Benjamin, specific threshold states are crossed when otherwise everyday objects attract such intense attention. To be specific, it is ritual practices that mark out 'objects of everyday use' as items for 'auratic perception.' Such practices draw the 'everyday' objects into the ritual space that endows them with significance. In his 1939 essay 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,' Benjamin describes 'auratic perception' as a feature of perception in dreams and in temples. Against Adorno's criticisms, he had insisted that his conception of the dialectical image dissolved this auratic screen and presented an illuminated view of the commodity's 'truth.' A version of this group of themes also figures in his Artwork essay: the 'image,' he claims in this latter piece, is an auratic form, whose claim to authority the 'reproductions' of technologically produced art now displace.

If we critically consider the status of the image as meaning embodied in sensuous form, some of the complexities and implications of the perceptibility of the 'hell' of modern capitalism in bourgeois 'ruins,' or of the true meaning of nineteenth-century history in the fetish character of the commodity form can be brought to light. Benjamin maintains that there are perceptible objects or events that signify a meaning that, due to its very comprehensiveness and abstract nature, is not strictly 'visible' in these objects and events. Further, he believes that this invisible meaning is vitally important. In what ways, we might ask, can a sensuous, perceptible object signify a 'meaning,' and in what sense must this meaning be seen as 'vital'?

This question needs to be placed against the general chronology of Benjamin's thinking on the image as I have set it out so far. I have argued in the previous chapter that Benjamin condemns images as forms of demonic expressivity. Moreover, he explicitly connects the demonic form of the image to the perils of *aesthetic* represent-ability (*Abbildbarkheit*). However, the *Trauerspiel* study sets out the allegory as an *aesthetic* form that signifies in a different way than the symbol does. The self-mortification of sensuous form in allegory constitutes, for Benjamin, its most important quality. The allegory, we might say, earns its privileged position because it is an anti-aesthetic form within the aesthetic space. If Benjamin treats the allegorical form as representing a truth and embodying the power of that truth, it is important to consider precisely how the relational or spatial context in which the mortification of sensuous form that constitutes the allegorical truth is established. Certain features of this context, such as the written status of allegorical knowledge, have an important echo in Benjamin's later formulations of the image, as we will see in chapter 4.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first two compare Benjamin's conception of the symbol as a degraded perceptual form in the *Elective Affinities* essay with his treatment of allegorical form in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. My focus in these sections falls on understanding the connection between the form of the (aesthetic) symbol and false ritualisation on the one hand, and the connection between the allegory and (antiaesthetic) knowledge, on the other. In the third section, I consider Benjamin's staging of the contrast between the symbol and the allegory in the light of Kant's definition of aesthetic space in the *Critique of Judgment*. Benjamin contends that the symbol and the allegory signify differently; nonetheless, they each belong to an aesthetic space in which sensuous forms signify more than their materiality. What are the consequences of Benjamin's attempt to oppose the symbol and the allegory within the aesthetic space? Just as J. Z. Smith argues that the sacred is not substantive but a relational category marked out in a space by ritual, so, too, sensible forms win their signifying power in the 'aesthetic space,' where they become 'images.' The allegorical form as the 'anti-aesthetic' principle within the aesthetic space re-arranges the structure of attention. Aesthetic forms stand out against those forms that are merely 'ordinary.' In the category of allegorical form, however, Benjamin is not primarily concerned with the contrast between the 'ordinary' and the 'signifying,' but with that of the 'aesthetic' and the 'anti-aesthetic.' The polemic against the aesthetic consists in the false vitality of its meanings. There is an echo of this approach in Benjamin's later work, too, although its parameters undergo a shift. In his

1929 essay on Surrealism, Benjamin draws attention to the vital political meanings that ordinary things communicate according to the surrealist idea of 'profane illumination.' Similarly, in his 1940 theses on 'The Concept of History' he articulates the notion of a 'universal history' that would be 'citable in all its moments.' With this notion, Benjamin defends the idea that the detritus of ordinary life contains noteworthy meaning. The vital meaning that is communicated in prosaic forms, or pieces of historical detritus, is of a non-aesthetic origin; and it raises the problem of how such meaning is attached to these forms. I will look at this problem in detail in chapter 4. Smith's perspective disallows sensible forms in the ordinary life the signifying power of the 'image.' Benjamin's 'profane illumination' or 'universal history,' on the other hand, assimilates the ordinary to the 'aesthetic space.' When anything and everything enters into the space of signification, this space vanishes as the place where the objects are marked for vital attention. My main point in this chapter is that Benjamin's early work has a way of dealing with this problem of indiscriminate significance: in the allegory he brings an anti-aesthetic antidote to the maddening proliferation of aesthetic forms. Allegorical knowledge cuts down the arbitrariness of form; and it does so by pointing to a meaning that is beyond aesthetic form. The allegory is significant, to use Smith's typology, because it marks out a further space within the aesthetic space of the symbol.

THE NOTION OF RITUAL FORM IN BENJAMIN'S 'GOETHE'S ELECTIVE AFFINITIES' ESSAY

In the essay 'The Artwork as Breach of a Beyond,' Sigrid Weigel treats Benjamin's interpretation of the crucial scene in Goethe's novel in which the characters remove the gravestones from the churchyard in order to 'beautify' it. The friends attempt to substitute for tradition an aesthetic order: 'See how Charlotte has beautified this funeral-ground,' comments Eduard to Mittler in the first chapter of the novel. Weigel writes that the 'freedom' of these characters is exercised according to the mistaken belief that '[a]s educated, enlightened people, superior to the order of nature . . . they have outgrown the need for the ritual.' Benjamin is interested in where the newfound freedom from tradition takes these characters; he points out that the characters walk over the burial ground 'without scruple or consideration.' Benjamin's objection to their conduct, however, is not, as Weigel has it, that they believe themselves to have 'outgrown the need for the ritual.' Rather, it is that baseless practices of ritualisation ensue from the characters' 'liberation' from tradition. What replaces the unquestioning relation to tradition is ritualisation. Ritual life is now ubiquitous. Its ubiquity, however, only produces anxiety. If anything could be an object of ritual care and obeisance, then nothing seems able to relieve the characters of their guilt. As we saw in the previous chapter, obeisance to mere form cannot provide adequate mechanisms of orientation and existential security, nor can it ward off the omnipresent threat that the mythic perspective on life unleashes. Instead the autonomy of such forms becomes an oppressive regime for human beings.

For Benjamin, the absence of the transcendent moment in human life ‘inexorably’ leads to guilt-ridden life (*SW I,* 307). Accordingly, guilt is understood in the essay not as a religious transgression but as a consequence of a life that is ‘merely’ natural. Benjamin asks: how could the infant in the novel acquire guilt? ‘It is a question here not of ethical guilt,’ he concludes, ‘but rather of the natural kind, which befalls human beings not by decision and action but by negligence and celebration’ (*SW I,* 308). The power of form as such, that is conformism to ceremony and etiquette, structure the lives of the characters in the novel:

At the height of their cultivation, however, they are subject to the forces that cultivation claims to have mastered, even if it may forever prove impotent to curb them. These forces have given them a feeling for what is seemly; they have lost the sense for what is ethical . . . Deaf to God and mute before the world. Rendering account eludes them, not because of their actions but because of their being. They fall silent. (*SW I,* 304–305)

The guilt these characters feel is based in ritual-cultic anxiety: ‘In the way that every one of his velleities brings fresh guilt upon him, every one of his deeds will bring disaster upon him’ (*SW I,* 308).

When they turn their attention away from the human and succumb to the power of nature, then natural life, which in man preserves its innocence only so long as natural life binds itself to something higher, drags the human down. With the disappearance of supernatural life in man, his natural life turns to guilt, even without his committing an act contrary to ethics . . . When once man has sunk to this level, even the life of seemingly dead things acquires power. . . . The incorporation of the totality of material things into life is indeed a criterion of the mythic world. (*SW I,* 308)

The ritualisation of life in blindness to the Revelation is one component of fate, which ‘unfolds inexorably in the culpable life’ (*SW I,* 307). The more fate unfolds, the more human beings look to ritual for atonement and security. ‘Nothing but strict attachment to ritual can promise these human beings a stay against the nature in which they live. Charged, as only mythic nature is, with superhuman powers, it comes menacingly into play' (*SW I,* 303). The other component of fate is the symbol.

For Benjamin, the symbol embodies existential meaning that is both potent and ambiguous. I sketched out some of the aspects of Benjamin's presentation of myth as it pertains to the category of the symbol in the previous chapter. Benjamin, as we saw, takes the term 'demonic' from Goethe's autobiography and uses it to depict the dominating effects of symbolic forms in Goethe's novel and his life. When Benjamin labels the type of image that carries ambiguous, demonic meanings 'symbolic,' it is clear that he has in his sights Goethe's view that 'the symbol' is a more significant and promising aesthetic category than 'allegory,' which had nearly universal currency amongst the early Romantics. In his essay on *Elective Affinities* Benjamin defines the symbolic as the sensible form 'in which the indissoluble and necessary bonding of truth content to material content appears' (*SW I,* 318). In the symbol, sensuous nature is elevated to the status of the ultimate source of existential meaning and closes in on itself in an absolute totality. In the symbolic, the world receives its full justification in complete indifference to truth. This false plenitude of meaning does not mean that humans find their reconciliation with the world, however. In fact, without the clarity of the moral decision 'the human being petrifies in the chaos of symbols' (*SW I,* 315). It is in the nature of the symbol that the supposed authoritative meaning it embodies is ever ambiguous. Benjamin uses the term 'demonic' to refer to the 'experience of the incomprehensible ambivalence in nature,' which blocks off the path to the transcendent by miring mythic humanity in the endless ritual cycle of transgression and expiation (*SW I,* 316). Just as in a wholly ritualised world even inanimate things take on superhuman powers, so, too, in the symbol everything becomes significant and is looked to as a sign or an oracle. In Benjamin's view 'what is proper to the truly divine is the logos. The divine does not ground life without truth, nor does it ground the rite without theology' (*SW I,* 326). (' *Dem wahrhaft Göttlichen eignet nämlich der Logos, es begründet das Leben nicht ohne die Wahrheit, den Ritus nichte ohne die Theologie* ' [*GS I,* I, 163]). Things of the world have their true, unequivocal meaning only in the light of the Revelation, in the clarity of the logos. Hence the 'muteness' of Ottilie is the sign that she is absorbed by fate and that her path to reconciliation is 'semblance like': she 'wants others to make their peace with one another and only in this way become reconciled with God' (*SW I,* 342). In Benjamin's essay the moral decision taken by the lovers in the novella is what allows them to attain the 'true reconciliation' that 'exists only with God' (*SW I,* 342). In the previous chapter I outlined the significance of this position in relation to the schema of oppositions organising Benjamin's early thinking. Here I would like to consider the significance of the lovers' moral decision in relation to Benjamin's account of fate.

The novella lovers refuse practices of ritualisation. Benjamin argues this point in relation to the meaning that he ascribes to the girl's death-defying leap. In diving into the dangerous currents, the lovers each make a moral decision. They win through this decision the peace that is futilely pursued in the novel through sacrifice. For Benjamin it is 'the falsely conceived freedom' from tradition that ushers the novel's characters into the sphere of fate and sets off the vicious ritual cycle in which sacrifice is supposed to expiate guilt. The novella lovers, in contrast, want nothing to do with the calculations of sacrifice:

The lovers in the novella do not obtain their freedom through sacrifice. That the girl's fatal leap does not have that meaning is indicated by the author in the most delicate and precise manner. For this alone is her secret intention when she throws the garland wreath to the boy: to assert that she does not want to 'die in beauty' be wreathed in death like a sacrifice. The boy, whose mind is only on steering, testifies for his part that, whether knowingly or not, he does not have a share, as if it were a sacrifice, in any such deed. Because these human beings do not risk everything for the sake of a falsely conceived freedom, no sacrifice falls among them; rather, the decision befalls within them. In fact, freedom is as clearly removed from the youth's saving decision as is fate. It is the chimerical striving for freedom that draws down fate upon the characters in the novel. The lovers in the novella stand beyond both freedom and fate, and their courageous decision suffices to tear to bits a fate that would gather to a head over them and to see through a freedom that would pull them down into the nothingness of choice. In the brief instants of their decision, this is the meaning of their action. Both dive down into the living current, whose beneficent power appears no less great in this event than the death-dealing power of the still waters in the other. (*SW I,* 332)

Unlike the way these lovers 'stand beyond both freedom and fate,' Ottilie's 'sacrifice' is part of the mute world of fate and cannot provide an exit from the 'natural guilt' that defines it. Benjamin argues not just that Ottilie puts herself in God's hand as 'the most difficult burden, and anticipates his decree' (*SW I,* 343), but that her death is the result of a 'drive' rather than a 'decision' (*SW I,* 336). A moral decision is one, he says, that is 'illuminated by the spirit of language': 'No moral decision can enter into life without verbal form and, strictly speaking, without thus becoming an object of communication' (*SW I,* 336). Ottilie's 'complete silence' throws into question 'the morality of the will to die that animates her' (*SW I,* 336). Her decline is 'mute' and 'vegetative' (*SW I,* 336–337). With this description, Benjamin denies her death the aura of the 'sacred' (*SW I,* 336). He writes: 'Death is thus very probably atonement, in the sense of fate but not holy absolution— which voluntary death can never be for human beings and which only the divine death imposed on them can become' (*SW I,* 336). Ottilie's 'death drive . . . speaks the longing for rest.' It is 'merely the last exit of the soul, which flees from ruin' (*SW I,* 336). 'Goethe has not failed to indicate how completely,' Benjamin writes, Ottilie's death arises from what is natural in her. If Ottilie dies by depriving herself of food, then Goethe has also made it clear in the novel how often, even in happier times, food was repugnant to her. Ottilie's existence, which Gundolf calls sacred, is an unhallowed one, not so much because she trespassed against a marriage in dissolution as because in her seeming and her becoming, subjected until her death to a fateful power, she vegetates without decision. This—her lingering, at once guilty and guiltless, in the precincts of fate—lends her, for the fleeting glance, a tragic quality. (*SW I,* 336–337).

In the previous chapter I discussed the unfathomable powers that the mythic life gives to nature's forms, such as the 'death-dealing power of the still waters' (*SW I,* 332) of the lake. In his analysis of the place of sacrifice in the novel, Benjamin points to the accoutrements of bourgeois life and how the preoccupation with perfection in form that is its signature—as in the project of 'beautifying the graveyard,' or the house and the chapel—becomes a trap that crushes human beings. In Benjamin's account of fate 'even the life of seemingly dead things acquires power' (*SW I,* 308). And this is true not just for the progress in the completion of the house, at which point 'fate closes in' (*SW I,* 308), as it is for the 'casket' of treasures that Eduard gives to Ottilie, which prefigures her death and entombment in the chapel:

This gift to Ottilie . . . corresponds to the receptacle in which the architect keeps his finds from prehistoric graves. The first is acquired from 'trades people and fashion dealers'; of the other, we are told that its contents, through the way in which they were arranged, took on 'a somewhat prettified air,' that it 'could be looked at with the same enjoyment as the display cases of a fashion dealer.' (*SW I,* 306)

It is from this casket, too, that the fabric of her death shroud (*SW I,* 306), referred to as her 'bridal gown' (*SW I,* 332), is taken. Each of these signs of fateful life is reversed in the novella. Here the 'wedding vestments' that the lovers wear once they are 'saved' are not coveted, beautiful treasures, but can be 'recognized,' Benjamin writes, 'as transformed burial shrouds henceforth immune to death.' Similarly, the 'great image of the boat' that lands 'at the place of their union' arouses the feeling 'that they no longer have a fate and that they stand at the place where the others are meant to arrive some day' (*SW I,* 332).

We might say that the references in this essay to the counter-example of the novella stand for a second space, which delimits true meaning. Crucially, in the novel and Goethe's own life, the limiting conditions that the contrast of different kinds of spaces defines for modes of human engagement have been overrun by the proliferation of significant forms—form as such has become the object of ritualisation. Against the false totality of Goethe's 'chaos of symbols,' Benjamin describes the novella as akin to the 'sober,' 'sacred light' of day. The model of perceptual acuity able to properly evaluate the distractions of the symbol is the key to this contrast. He contrasts the novella's lucidity with the shimmering luminescence of myth whose source of light is 'inward,' 'veiled,' and 'refracted through multicolored panes' (*SW I,* 352). The novella, he writes, is 'comparable to an image in the darkness of a cathedral—an image which portrays the cathedral itself and so in the midst of the interior communicates a view of the place that is not otherwise available. In this way it brings inside at the same time a reflection of the bright, indeed sober day.'

The novella, in the precision and economy of its 'communicat[ion of] a view . . . that is not otherwise available' (*SW I,* 352) is akin to the effect on aesthetic symbols and forms of 'the expressionless' (*das Ausdruckslose*). The expressionless counters 'the chaos of all beautiful semblance' with 'the sublime violence of the true' (*SW I,* 340). It 'completes the work, by shattering it into a thing of shards, into a fragment of the true world, into the torso of the symbol' (*SW I,* 340).

In citing the 'bright' and 'sacred' lucidity of the novella and the critical violence [*die kritische Gewalt*] of the expressionless, Benjamin establishes an alternative space of meaning to the type of uncertain and ambiguous meaning embodied in the chaos of symbolic forms in the novel. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* —written around the date of the publication of his essay on *Elective Affinities* in 1924/1925—Benjamin names another kind of image, the allegory, as the counter to the pernicious effects of the symbol. The allegorical form also bears a meaning that communicates beyond its perceptible form. However, allegory, as the anti-aesthetic form within the aesthetic space, escapes the terms of Benjamin's repudiation of the symbol. It is worth considering how it achieves this.

ANOTHER KIND OF IMAGE? THE ALLEGORICAL FORM IN BENJAMIN'S *TRAUERSPIEL* BOOK

The symbol is the sensuous form that is alive and brimming with meaning. Allegorical form, in contrast, indicates its own decay and deficiency in the way it points beyond itself. The kind of meaning that allegory presents is transcendent and its mechanism is the mortification of sensuous form. If the chaos of the symbol threatens to erase the sense of a distinction between different kinds of spaces—nature, dead things, social etiquette, and ceremony are all caught up in its sweep—the function of allegorical form is to mark out two contrasting spaces: the field of sensuous form and the transcendent meaning. In pointing beyond its sensuous form, allegory provides a secure point of orientation amongst the chaos of forms. It devalues and limits form. It discourages therefore the type of disorientating ritualisation that Benjamin associates with the symbol.

The potency of the symbol lay in its capacity to impose ambiguous, uncertain meaning on any setting. The identification of insuperable ambiguity in sensuous form is the core of Benjamin's objection to the symbol as 'embodied meaning.' By contrast, allegory devalues sensuous form, and it draws attention to the almost indifferent relation between form and the meaning it can be made to carry. In allegory the relationship between the image and meaning as it exists in the symbol is thus reversed. But let us consider, beyond this general contrast with the symbol, Benjamin's positive evaluation of the meaning of allegorical form. Benjamin's treatment of allegory focuses on the explicit artificiality of the mechanism through which this form, on his conception, relays meaning.

In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* Benjamin argues against the reputation of allegory as clumsy 'conceptual' meaning (*U,* 162). Against the previous studies of the baroque imagery, Benjamin shows that allegory, as a type of image, must be considered in relation to its *sui generis* mode of expression. What distinguishes its mode of expression from the symbol is its 'strange combination of nature and history' (*U,* 167). This 'combination' is in fact a dialectical exchange between the extremities of nature and history. In the allegorical way of seeing, '[e]verything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face—or rather in a death's head' (*U,* 166). This mode of expression may lack 'all "symbolic" freedom of expression, all classical proportion, all humanity' but it is 'nevertheless . . . the form in which man's subjection to nature is most obvious' (*U,* 166).

The allegorical expression of man's subjection to nature is distinctive because of the way that allegorical form separates 'visual being from meaning' (*U,* 165). Against the idealising movement of the symbol that transfigures nature into the embodiment of moral or aesthetic ideas, 'in allegory the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as a petrified, primordial landscape' (*U,* 166). In this way the material form is not elevated and transfigured as it is in the case of the symbol, but flattened and compressed. Like the 'critical violence' of the expressionless in 'Goethe's Elective Affinities,' allegory petrifies the movement and shatters the harmony of form. But in the case of allegory this very separation between perceptible form and its 'true' meaning raises the problem of how the 'meaning' may be present in the form.

Benjamin confronts this problem in two different ways. When he describes the baroque apotheosis as dialectical, he says that it is the 'movement between extremes' [' *Umschlagen von Extremen,* ' *GS I,* 337] (*U,* 160) that accomplishes the 'allegorical' communication. In this respect, Benjamin addresses the communicative mode of allegory as such. Thus he claims that nature is subject to the power of death, and for that reason it 'has always been allegorical' (*U,* 166). The measure of time for the experience of allegory is history. And this measure is geared towards what Benjamin describes as the 'fruition of significance and death' (*U,* 166). There is an economy of proportion between meaning and the subjection of nature: 'The greater the significance, the greater the subjection to death, because death digs most deeply the jagged line of demarcation between physical nature and significance' (*U,* 166). Hence the suffering of the Passion of the Christ is cited as an instance of how the pain and violence of the world sets out the significance attached to mortal subjection (*U,* 182–183). It is the general definition of allegory as the presentation of the meaning of 'history' as 'nature' that the example of the Passion relays. Most notably, this example involves the historical dimension of the tale or story that is alien to the supposedly timeless form of the symbol.

The definition of the allegorical meaning that is communicated in this dialectic of the extremes, therefore, needs to be distinguished from what Benjamin describes as the 'Midas touch' of the baroque that allowed it to transform *any* form into the service of such allegorical meaning. It is this second way of approaching the allegorical meaning that really brings into focus the question of how perceptible forms become allegorically meaningful. Benjamin draws attention to the entirely *arbitrary* connections between material forms and the meanings they bear in the German *Trauerspiel:* in Hallmann's transformation of the 'harp' into the 'executioner's axe' we see, he says, the 'unashamed crudity' of baroque metamorphoses (*U,* 231). The emblem is the textual machinery that builds on the allegorical separation of visual form and meaning to accomplish the mortification of visual form. Thus, allegory works to convey a meaning that is more than its sensuous form precisely because allegory is the form that undermines itself—the negation of visual form in the emblem 'is' the mode of the allegorical communication of meaning. This is how baroque allegory mortifies the prosaic, which it hems in with the extremity of the figure of life as decay and degeneration. Benjamin argues that:

The three most important impulses in the origin of western allegory are non-antique, anti-antique: the gods project into the alien world, they become evil, and they become creatures. The attire of the Olympians is left behind, and in the course of time the emblems collect around it. (*U,* 225)

The ambiguity of the symbol and its connection to fate was marked and is sustained, as we saw, by silence (Benjamin refers to nature's mute, sensuous forms, or inanimate forms such as the house, and to the unarticulated bourgeois conformity to ceremony as well as Ottilie's vegetative and mute decline, to make this point). Silence fosters a peculiar hermeneutic relation to form. This hermeneutic relation is not to be understood as a benign interpretative inquiry into different layers of meaning, but as an intense fixation on forms that are presumed to carry significant precepts, which, however, in their opaque materiality only yield irreducibly ambiguous meaning. In allegory, the emblem mortifies visual form. With the emblem, a new complexity is introduced into the way that allegory signifies its 'invisible' meaning.

Benjamin is clear that the meaning allegory confers is only subjective, by which he signals the double limitation of artificial mechanism and subjective intention. At the same time, the mortification of sensuous form in allegory places allegorical meaning in the field of 'knowledge.' The allegory, Benjamin insists, is as 'a form of writing' 'a fixed schema: at one and the same time a fixed image and a fixing sign.'

Allegories become dated, because it is part of their nature to shock. If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy, if melancholy causes life to flow out of it and it remains dead, but eternally secure, then it is exposed to the allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power. That is to say it is now quite incapable of emanating any meaning or significance of its own; such significance as it has, it acquires from the allegorist. He places it within it, and stands behind it; not in a psychological but in an ontological sense. In his hands the object becomes something different; through it he speaks of something different and for him it becomes a key to the realm of hidden knowledge; and he reveres it as the emblem of this. *This is what determines the character of allegory as a form of writing. It is a schema;* and as a schema it is an object of knowledge, but it is not securely possessed until it becomes a fixed schema: at one and the same time a fixed image and a fixing sign. The baroque idea of knowledge, the process of storing, to which the vast libraries are a monument, is realized in the external appearance of the script. (*U,* 184, emphasis added)

In contrast to the symbol, in allegory the 'object' does not 'emanate' 'meaning or significance of its own.' The meaning it has 'it acquires from the allegorist.' The 'subjective' status of allegorical meaning allows Benjamin to derive from allegory a type of theodicy motif: evil, he claims, is revealed in the allegorical form to be a merely subjective phenomenon (*U,* 233). The baroque mode of allegorical expression is, he writes, in 'all its darkness, vainglory, and godlessness . . . nothing but self-delusion' (*U,* 232):

Allegory goes away empty-handed. Evil as such, which it cherished as enduring profundity, exists only in allegory, is nothing other than allegory, and *means something different from what it is*. It means precisely the non-existence of what it presents. The absolute vices, as exemplified by tyrants and intriguers, are allegories. They are not real, and that which they represent, they possess only in the subjective view of melancholy, they are this view, which is destroyed by its own offspring because they only signify its blindness. They point to the absolutely subjective pensiveness, to which alone they owe their existence. (*U,* 233, emphasis added)

Allegory succeeds where the symbol fails because the meaning that it imparts to things is ultimately *only allegorical*. In other words, it is the form in which the artificiality of meaningful sensuous form as such is marked. In this sense the valorised status of the allegorical form in Benjamin's writing is in the service of the general point that images are deficient modes of relaying meaning. Allegory is the 'good' aesthetic because it shows the limitations of the aesthetic, i.e., the image as a mode of communication of meaning. When he highlights the subjective pensiveness of allegorical form, Benjamin indicates how this pensiveness points to the impotence of particular images, and from here points emphatically to the general deficiency of the image as such. Allegorical form is 'securely possessed' as knowledge in writing. It is in writing that allegory becomes a fixed schema—a 'fixed image and a fixing sign.' This 'fixity,' and the knowledge it allows, is opposed to the undisciplined expressivity of form in the case of the symbol. The reference to the baroque idea of knowledge as writing, as we will see in later chapters, is also integral to the way Benjamin understands the historical truth of the dialectical image, even if this latter type of image has nothing to do with the allegorical emblems.

The status of these forms as modes of communicability of meaning is marked not in the material forms they use, but in the schema of relations in which these forms are able to bear meaning. What kind of space determines such meaning in Benjamin's writing? Despite the critique he intends to make of the 'image' and his use of allegory to show the limitations of the aesthetic, the space in which allegory works is, in fact, like the space of the symbol to which it is opposed, an aesthetic space of meaning. To be more precise, allegory is the anti-aesthetic form within the aesthetic space.

THE AESTHETIC SPACE: BENJAMIN'S DEMONIC IMAGES AND KANT'S IMAGE OF NATURE

A comparison between the critical position Benjamin articulates on ritual meaning and Kant's conception of aesthetic significance can help to make the implications of this point clearer. In particular, the technicalities of Kant's use of aesthetic space can be used to clarify the stakes of Benjamin's way of opposing symbol and allegory as if they belonged to different spaces of signification. Like the sacred space of ritual, symbol and allegory are material forms whose expressive capacity is determined relationally against the prosaic. The question is: what is the threshold these forms cross, and what are the features of the space they have entered? Benjamin's view is that the symbol's expressivity belongs to an aesthetic space, and that allegory perforates this space by its artificiality and mortification of the sensuous form.

In Kant's *Critique of Judgment* a conception of the aesthetic space of meaning is outlined and defended. To be sure, the phrase 'aesthetic space' is not Kant's, but it can be used to indicate the functional shift that the aesthetic attitude effects as to how and what a material form signifies. Like the sacred space of ritual, in Kant's aesthetic space perceptible forms signify meanings beyond their perceptible features. Indeed it is no exaggeration to state that when he discusses this space Kant entertains the idea that its main characteristic is that in this space the sensuous form is assumed to signify a non-sensuous meaning, to which the attention is drawn.

The contrast that Kant sets up between the beauties of nature and of art is especially relevant here. Hegel has Kant's conception of the transfiguring effects on nature's singular forms of aesthetic reflection in his sights when in his *Aesthetics* he dismisses nature's beauties as 'naïve' and 'self-centred'— they can exist and wither away, Hegel says, without anyone to appreciate them. In Kant's view precisely this independence from the field of human concerns qualifies singular forms of nature as potentially more significant than works of art: in fact, for Kant, nature's forms can be expressive vehicles able to attest in a unique way to the human moral vocation. But to do so, such forms must be able to arrest our experience of them—both in the sense of standing out against a prosaic background, i.e., moving into an 'aesthetic' space of significance, and doing so in such a way as to occasion a morally satisfying experience of the sensuous form that, crucially, is *not* designed to provide such satisfaction.

Ritual patterns of repetition mark what occurs in the sacred space as significant. A similar determination of significance can be observed in Kant's aesthetic space. What occurs in the aesthetic space depends for Kant on the suspension of our ordinary attitude to things (the 'contingent accord' that is 'discovered' by the faculties (*CJ,* §7, 31) has its meaning-effects due to this suspension). Hence when a flower has been displayed in a vase for decoration the features that made it aesthetically significant in nature are lost. Considered as a structure of engagement with nature's forms, the practice of aesthetic judgment also performs a function akin to ritual repetition in the patterns of interaction it establishes with its environment. Aesthetic forms signify on account of the relation they have with a spectator who receives them aesthetically, i.e., who expects these forms to signify. This aesthetic reception of forms is an attitude that can be cultivated: what Kant terms the 'intellectual interest of the beautiful' (*CJ,* §42) establishes a pattern of interaction with form, which the moral significance he attaches to aesthetic reflection reinforces.

Ultimately, it is a very specific kind of image of nature that authorises its expression of moral ideas. Under the expectations of the aesthetic attitude, nature becomes the second Book; it 'winks' at us (*CJ,* §42, 167); it speaks to us in its 'cipher language' (*CJ,* §42, 168); and it 'symbolises' moral ideas (*CJ,* §59). In all of these ways nature shows that, like the events that occur in the space of the 'sacred,' the flower that communicates with us does not do so by accident. The significance we 'discover' in certain natural forms do in fact belong to them.

The 'expressive' form of the flower thus points to highly specific features of the aesthetic space that allows it to signify moral ideas. The religious icon signifies by virtue of being in the space of a religious tradition. Benjamin makes a similar point regarding religious and aesthetic spaces of signification in his Artwork essay. In a footnote to the essay in which he contests the unidirectional nature of Hegel's thesis of the impact of secularisation on the arts, he highlights instances in which works of art have oscillated between the enchanted space of aesthetic contemplation, and their religious veneration as objects of worship. He specifically identifies the complex functions within hierarchically organised spaces of ritual that can transform a painting from an object of aesthetic interest to a religious icon, thus inverting the normal order of 'disenchantment.' In Kant's 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' the flower signifies because there is an expectation that singular natural forms communicate meaning to those who are morally tuned to receive such messages (thus Kant praises the moral feeling of the soul that turns away from museums to the appreciation of nature's singular forms, *CJ,* §42, 166–167).

In the account Benjamin gives of ritual meaning in his essay on Goethe's novel this attitude towards an autonomously expressive sensuous nature, which is greeted with the expectation that it is communicative, is described as demonic. The aesthetic disposition that looks for and expects meaning in sensuous forms leads directly to the ritualisation of experience. This is Benjamin's objection to both the Goethe-cult and Goethe's own symbolic attitude to nature.

When our habitat is 'a forest of symbols' disorientation is the result. Symbols signify, but their precise meaning is inscrutable. Benjamin uses allegory to mark out the proper focus of the aesthetic space. In a neat reversal of Kant's preference for nature over art, it is the subjective artificiality of the mechanism of allegory that mortifies the image and undoes its Goethean function of captivation. Allegory points to a meaning freed from its ties with sensuous form (and all that this implies for Benjamin). In particular, it points to the transcendent beyond nature. Thus sensuous form and nature are both mortified.

I have argued in this chapter that Benjamin's early writing maintains a fundamental difference between two kinds of images and two spaces of signification. The allegorical image that exposes and destroys (false) harmonies is opposed to the symbol, which enchants and reduces human life to a natural existence. We saw Benjamin's pejorative view of the symbols that populate Goethe's novel and entrance its characters in a 'forest of symbols.' The symbol signifies in the wrong way (it is described as the 'demonic' force that reduces humans to a state of impotence). The sensuous presence of authoritative meaning in the symbol is a source of endless anxiety. Benjamin calls the space where this expectation is at home 'mythic,' which may be understood as a sector of the aesthetic space where the sensuous form has the power to signify something vital.

The allegory and the 'expressionless,' too, rely on the aesthetic space, albeit in order to destroy the integrity of the image. Later, in his concept of 'profane illumination' or 'universal history' (a history that would be 'quotable in all its moments'), Benjamin seems to move in the direction of dismantling this privileged aesthetic space altogether.

Perhaps these two perspectives are ultimately reconcilable: allegory attempts to erase the boundaries between the sacred and the ordinary from within the aesthetic space, on whose rules it depends for its effects. But even this way of describing the work of the allegory is problematic, for in a sense in profane illumination the ordinary is drawn into the 'sacred' space, rendered capable of signifying in the manner of an (aesthetic) image. The diffuse profusion of signifying forms leads to revolutionary madness. Here we may cite Benjamin's comment in his 1929 essay on the Surrealists that 'No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution—not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects—can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism.'

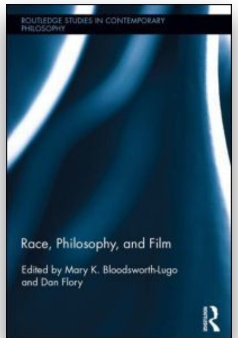
Is for Benjamin the aesthetic space itself 'demonic,' where forms acquire the power to communicate meaning spontaneously? Or is it a particular form of signification that is so, since he thinks that the subjective pensiveness and the artificiality of the allegory dispel the power of the demonic? Benjamin must say: both. This is the paradox that determines his early treatment of the topic of the image.

In the next chapter I would like to consider the detail of Benjamin's writing on similitude and the mimetic faculty. This vocabulary aims at an integral image, that is, an image in which the relation of the form and meaning is not artificial or even conventional. The opposition between symbol and allegory provides Benjamin with negative and positive markers of the image. Specifically, the theory of allegory is aimed at cutting down the false totality of the symbol. Similitude and mimesis are, in contrast, Benjamin's positive conceptions of the integral image. They are meant to present an image of a 'whole' rather than a 'totality.' In this aspiration, I will argue, they present strong points of overlap with certain categories of religious meaning.

CHAPTER 06

Cruising Through Race

Monique Roelofs



Films and taxis conjoin movement and stagnation. They realize distinctive orders of bodies in space, ones that differ from the quotidian rooms, buildings, and expanses most of us typically occupy. Comings and goings, separation and togetherness assume a characteristic organization in the cinema and the cab. Both kinds of spaces constitute heterotopias. Such forms spark otherness, but also incite repetitions of what already exists. The effects of these mechanisms evince the force of numerous factors over and above the energies that the heterotopias themselves put into play, which, after all, comprise elements of a much larger whole.

Films *about* taxis bring together technologies of the moving image with technologies of the moving body. Mobility and stillness infuse this process from multiple angles. The spectator may be moved, while things do not move that much. Things may move, leaving the viewer in place. Both may move more or less than they seem to. Films and cabs meanwhile operate racially, in ways that affect their layering of stability with change.

Systemic conditions prevent such devices from simply overhauling our racial being or communities. This, however, does not signal these technologies' massive lack of social or subjective power. Rather, the densely mediated and mediating cultural productivity of films and cabs becomes explicable if we realize that their dealings in sameness are in many ways of a piece with their transactions in difference. Indeed, the taxi's and the cinema's dispensations of similarity and stasis commingle with their metamorphic proclivities.

If heterotopias entangle motion and stasis, what happens when two kinds of heterotopia join forces? Aesthetically foregrounding the cab's heterotopic operations, Michael Mann's *Collateral* (2004) brings into relief the potential for intrigue the taxi holds out as a place that hurls together strangers and takes them to uncertain, not quite determinate racial ground. This chapter examines the entwinements of aesthetics, race, and space springing up in the cab's pathway, out of which the movie forges its central formal and narrative threads.

Aesthetics acquire a special salience in the context of current theories of race. Many philosophers understand race as an embodied, social construction. Aesthetic forms comprise elements of racialized and racializing conditions. Cultural artifacts and constellations of everyday aesthetic existence are among the factors that participate in the discursive formation of registers of racial difference and identity, and of modalities of locality, nation, citizenship, and the transnational, that weigh in on matters of race. Tracing the shape of existing racial configurations then necessitates aesthetic analysis. It demands that we examine the ways in which technologies of mobility and stasis lend aesthetic articulation to fantasies, narratives, desires, and states of embodiment that participate in the dynamics of race. Many artworks and other cultural productions enlist aesthetic experience to address difficult racial questions and rally racial categories to satisfy complex aesthetic desiderata. Philosophy is becoming increasingly aware of the vibrant activity converging in the nexus of everyday cultural existence, technology, and race. The cab starring in Mann's neo-noir reveals the inevitability of the aesthetic as a repository of movements and blockages that forge a racialized geopolitical sense of possibility and place.

THE CAB AS A VEHICLE FOR RACIAL MEDIATION

Collateral locates the cab squarely within the racial dynamics of the multicultural city. The gentle, kind-hearted Max (Jamie Foxx) chauffeurs his fastidiously polished taxi along Los Angeles freeway routes that he has timed to the minute. To fight off the workaday discord he faces in the garage and from his back seat, he contemplates an idyllic island pictured on a postcard hidden under his sun visor. Dreams about the high-end limousine company he hopes to get off the ground provide another avenue of escape. Max's professional routine undergoes an initial jolt as a disagreement with an attractive U.S. attorney, named Annie (Jada Pinkett Smith), about the fastest course to her office, lands the black couple in a flirtation. The second shakeup ensues when the next passenger, a white contract killer named Vincent (Tom Cruise), recruits Max to carry him from target to target detailed on the night's lengthy hit list. The cabbie's vehicle appears to be finely attuned to ostensibly unrelated spatial and temporal determinations, such as the incipient shards of connection linking the fate of one passenger to that of another, and the destiny of a killer-for-hire to that of a driver-for-hire. Bringing resolution to the romantic as well as the crime plot, the taxi weaves these two storylines together in the contest between a Latino drug cartel and the rule of official law.

The film shows us the city through the cab's windows. Following the vehicle on freeways, boulevards, and in alleys, we explore the metropolitan expanse under the guidance of its movements. The taxi shapes our sense of the city. From time to time, in aerial perspectives, the cab merges with the flow of its neighboring automobiles. Occasionally the camera miniaturizes the car to the point of its getting lost to the viewer, but then, again, the taxi dynamically looms before us in close-ups. The luminescent glow of the car's orange/red and yellow surfaces resonates with the chameleonic nighttime sky. Greenish, yellowish, and metallic hues suffusing the vehicle's interior pick up on analogous qualities in the automobile's surroundings. Inside and outside are invariably co-present. Gazing into the cab, we observe the urban landscape in the form of a dazzling display of buildings and shimmering headlights. Shiny specks of color flicker through the rear window, drawing yet nearer to Max's body as they glisten in his glasses.

The presence of the cab's semipermeable enclosure in the vast metropolis sets up a dialectic of anonymity and intimacy. Against the backdrop of the city, the automobile's condensed scale and its enveloping hold on its occupants heighten Max's and Annie's emotional connection. Likewise, the bodily proximity Max and Vincent enjoy on their shared passage through deserted nocturnal zones that are populated mostly, if at all, by nameless strangers, layers their explosively adversarial relationship with personal revelations and heart-to-heart confrontations.

Collateral keeps us constantly aware of the taxi's mediating role in establishing our experience of physical and interpersonal space. Green plastic lettering on the divider between driver and fare does not cease to decree, in fragments, to absurd effect: "Driver carries only $5.00 change. All passengers ride for the price of one." Until the moment at which Max deliberately crashes the cab, leading us into the movie's final stretch, the radiant sign "Taxi" rarely remains out of sight for long. Indeed, skidding over the road on the car's destruction, the lone marker seals the end of the cab's services as an instrument for Max's and Vincent's labor.

A medley of music, images of a Thai-language newspaper, neon notices and billboards broadcasting Korean establishments, and an ethnically and racially mixed array of bodies proclaim L.A.'s multicultural demographics. Murals, painted advertisements of fruits and vegetables, and untranslated exchanges in Spanish publicize the presence of the city's Latino population. The film's principal focus, however, is on the evolving, asymmetrical relation between black and white forms of masculinity. This dynamic asserts its dominance, in part, by way of the movie's forceful displacement of Latino, and less prominently, Korean-American agency.

Celebrating the taxi's powers of mediation—its intercessions in the terrain between work and intimacy, criminality and the law, bounded microcosm and unbounded urban geography— *Collateral* also sharply regulates the cab's racial operations. In the role of the assassin, a salt-and-pepper topped Tom Cruise wears a grey suit, the taxi's slick signature ad for Bacardi silver uncannily predestining the vehicle for its metallically clad charge. Under Vincent's steely tutelage, Jamie Foxx's mellow, good-natured Max overcomes the terror engulfing him, when the plunge onto his car of dead body Number One shocks him out of his fetishistic reveries over a platinum coated Mercedes he wishes to acquire for his future limo business. The mild mannered black driver learns a lesson from his combative white passenger. As the remedy of white masculinity begins to seep in, the cabbie toughens up. Echoing Vincent's rap, Max manages to impersonate the killer in front of the Latino drug baron in whose employ the murderer has been serving for some years. This ingenious performance enables the cabby to reclaim the computerized inventory of targets, which, in a remarkable show of athleticism, he had blown to smithereens. Once he discards the taxi, Max is free to supersede the job description to which the hit man has appointed him. Learning that Annie, the prosecutor, is victim Number Five on Vincent's recovered schedule—the preceding items having successfully been brought to their end—Max metamorphoses into a gun-wielding man of action. Although he only honeymoons at what Vincent does for a living, the pupil outwits his tutor, conquers crime, and, in the same go, saves the woman who has inflamed his affection. In this pedagogical scheme, black male agency achieves reconciliation with the law enforcement system, and takes its chance at an empowered role in a heterosexual romance that crosses class lines.

RACIAL MIMICRY, LATINO PHANTASMAGORIA, AND THE BLACK-WHITE BINARY

The film's plot resolution involves the suppression of a dual Latino threat, one directed at social order, the other at disorder. While both FBI and LAPD chiefs suspect Max of the murders, the intelligent Latino detective Ray Fanning (Mark Ruffalo) is persuaded of the cabbie's innocence. Fanning has surmised that there must be another traveler in the car who is killing witnesses lined up by the prosecution to testify in cartel leader Felix Reyes- Torrenda's (Javier Bardem) upcoming indictment. As Ray, to the cabbie's immense relief, is about to complete Max's rescue from a crowded Korean nightclub-turned-bloodbath, Vincent brutally shoots the cop, returning the driver to his control. It will be a newly minted black hero, rather than a Latino policeman, thoughtful, diligent, sexy, and upright, who lives out the path to justice. By killing Vincent and rescuing Annie, the public prosecutor who is bringing Felix to trial, Max salvages the court case against the Latino drug gang. The black-white drama entwining Max and Vincent represses Latino lawlessness as well as integrity, relegating Latino and Korean- American players to the narrative's background and its cultural setting.

The theme of a white-Latino struggle for control over a black man informs not only the imaginary of the police force but extends its lure to the sphere of illegality, triangulating the relation between Vincent and Felix by way of Max, in a scene that turns out to be decisive for the film's racial design. The narco-boss tells the cabbie the "Mexican" legend of Santa Claus and black Pedro, his helper. In this tale, it is Pedro's job to leave a little toy donkey for evil children; irremediable youngsters who fail to better themselves on receipt of the voodoo puppet are to be taken away by him. The drug trafficker's story imparts an ominous message: should Pedro lose the record of offenders, as Max-masquerading-for-Vincent appears to have done, he will obviously be in trouble with Santa. Assuming the place of the noble saint, in his adaptation of the fable to current circumstances, Felix asserts his power over Max. But in the U.S. context, the position of superiority typically accrues to the white man, who, in cases of competition, holds claim to the highest rank. The saga does not straightforwardly leave Santa's post open to appropriation by a Latino if there happens to be a non-Latino white contender on the scene. Indeed, Felix's fraught attempt at usurpation is mangled by the cabbie's mimicry, which keeps Max beholden to the white middleman he impersonates, rather than to a racially/ethnically mobile Latino Santa Claus, parachuted into L.A. from a Latin-American country. Black performativity and educability (pending white instruction) outsmart Latino phantasmagoria. This accomplishment leaves the white go-between in the Latino-black exchange temporarily in charge of his part of the proceedings, allowing him a short-term gain that issues in killing Number Four, and causes the demise of a Korean crook. Ultimately, Max's artistry foreshadows both the white interloper's and the Latino boss's downfall. A properly initiated black man prevails.

In short, the drug lord's myth backfires. Fancying himself in the dominant position outlined by the legend, he misjudges the severity of his own trouble. The powers of mediation held out by the cab are not accessible to him. Max's impersonation shortcuts Felix's attempt at narrative transculturation of his Latino self. The story of Pedro and Santa fails to translate from "Mexico" to L.A.: globalization runs into racialized barriers of transmissibility. The Latino cannot make true his threat. He remains stuck in relation to white and black masculinity, powerless to turn the situation to his advantage. Racial mimicry may to some extent be available to Max, but not to Felix. The film confronts the latter's cultural imagination with its limits. Trying to improve on what he is, yet unable to be other than himself, he is doomed to lose out. Felix's tale leaves its own narrator in the role of the bad child who is constitutionally incapable of betterment. Sidelining the Latino, this outcome implements racialized restrictions on who can undertake what action, and to what effect, and ensures the plot's continued pivoting around the dealings between a white and a black protagonist.

Vincent's attempt at racial mimicry precedes Max's and Felix's. Showing up along with the cabbie for the latter's daily visit to his mother in the hospital, Vincent upstages Max by exuding the ruse of the better, more delightful son, the one who buys the mother flowers and whom, contrary to her real offspring, she can genuinely appreciate. The charming substitute son proves to be an attentive conversational partner, in contrast to the dutiful original child. The cabbie's distress at his mother's disparagement of him prompts him to run off with the killer's briefcase. Max capitalizes on an unheeded moment, when Vincent, having lost his own mother early in life, finds himself absorbed in his chat with his stand-in mom. At the pragmatic level, the murderer's effort to insinuate himself into the cabbie's family clearly miscarries. Outrunning the proxy son, Max trashes the hit list. A fighting scene that has the criminal on top of the driver, the two staring one another in the face, shows that Vincent already loves Max too much to finish him off. The cabbie's newly acquired sibling/alter ego endeavors to restore the balance by forcing his brother/double to pose as the drug cartel's contract killer for Felix. This is the ploy that brings faux-Vincent, as indicated before, to the gang leader with the assignment to recuperate the destroyed roll of names. A white fantasy of black familial love is enlisted to repair white masculine dysfunction, apparently owing to maternal absence, and, it is suggested later, paternal abuse. Yet, the mimetic strategy by means of which Vincent wishes to fulfill this desire founders; it erodes his professionalism and deprives him of the tools required to carry out his mission. Racial mimicry poses grave risks not only for Latinos but also for non-Latino whites. In the end, it benefits solely the black protagonist.

AESTHETIC FIGURATIONS OF DETAIL AND WHOLE, INTIMACY AND ANONYMITY

The cabbie's final triumph over the criminal fails to occasion an equal distribution of cinematic energy among the white and black protagonists. Vincent's unresolved dilemmas dominate their affiliation and substantially command the film's organization. At the same time, the film aesthetically pronounces his mode of being unequipped to handle the intricacies of contemporary urban existence.

A major contradiction on Vincent's part arises as follows. The world's indifference to the fate of individuals distresses him. He is haunted by the report of a lone dead traveler circulating on the subway without anyone noticing that the man is no longer alive. Vis-à-vis Max, however, he insists that the death of a single person is inconsequential, a matter of little or no concern. Not incidentally, the subject of discussion is murder victim Number One, a Latino, whom, after his tumble onto the cab's front window, the two have stuffed into the trunk of the taxi. Vincent tries to talk the cabbie out of his shocked indignation: "Max, six billion people on the planet, you're getting bent out of shape because of one fat guy." The burden of suffering on a hemispheric scale, for Vincent, dictates a pragmatic, self-interested approach to situations we confront in the limited realm of individual existence. Refusing to privilege an arbitrary "here" over a contingent "there," Vincent propounds an egoist standpoint that subsumes the individual under a greater scheme of things. "We have got to make the best of it. Improvise. Adapt to the environment. Darwin. 'Shit happens.' I Ching. Whatever, man. We've got to roll with it."

The hit man's shaky line of ethical, metaethical, cosmological, empirical, and historical reasoning lacks credibility, even in the eyes of its champion, who remains unable to shrug off the specter of solitary suffering, epitomized by the dead subway rider, whose voyage leads him nowhere, unbeknownst to anybody. Questions of the individual's place in an alienated universe, and of the relation between larger and smaller scales of human functioning, pose mortifying dilemmas for the killer.

Whereas Vincent's commitment to *realpolitik* keeps him from reaching a principled answer to these quandaries, the film itself formulates a philosophical reply. At the levels of plot development, cinematography, and dialogue, *Collateral* rejects the opposition between macrocosm and detail that underlies Vincent's outlook. By having Max mess up Vincent's murder scheme, Mann reveals the power of a minor factor to wreak havoc in a much greater racial order, invalidating the perspective that takes overarching frames to determine the course of events at a truncated scale. There is no grand picture in view of which the death of a Latino witness occurs with an inevitable facticity. Max's actions disturb the decisive arrangement of the small by the large.

Through the manipulation of light, the film disputes the opposition between individual and larger society. The city makes itself present in the taxicab in the form of a play of lights sparkling on its reflective surfaces. The undifferentiated glitter of color fragments realizes states of perception, emotion, excitement, and desire in which we experience the urban sky from the vantage point of the drama in the cab and comprehend what happens in the cab from the perspective of what we see transpiring outside. Consequently, the continually glimmering spots and reflections point not only to the access the cab yields to the surrounding world, but also to ways in which urban space pervades the cab. The outside becomes visible at the borderlines between inside and outside, namely in the windows, as well as at the boundary between what belongs to the body and what surpasses it, namely Max's spectacles. These surfaces yield screens for movies-within-the-movie that mediate the narrative. The viewer experiences inside and outside as entwined, the registers folding over into one another.

A similar dialectic between the internal and the external characterizes the affective relationships between the cabbie and his passengers. The destabilizing impact of the intimacy Max experiences in interaction with Annie and the troubled closeness he develops with Vincent arise in virtue of the cabbie's and passengers' lack of familiarity. The cab's heterotopic qualities push its occupants' quotidian worlds to the background. The fact that driver and fare do not know one another in ordinary contexts facilitates their self-exposure. The resulting intimacy rests on anonymity. The obverse also obtains. The anonymity provoked by aerial city shots comes into relief by contrast with feelings surfacing in the cab. Rather than opposing the personal to the impersonal, the individual to the general, concrete particularity to abstract metropolis, Mann shows how these elements take shape in relation with one another.

Dialogues between the cabbie and his passengers underscore the impersonal nature of the intimacy presented by the film. Platitudes pervading tête-à-têtes in the cab stand in a humorous contrast with the movie's persistent manufacturing of suspense and the conspicuously sublime quality of its imagery. Hypernormalized language turns comedic. Canned observations undergird candid, mutually touching exchanges that appear to awaken hitherto unsounded reaches of the soul. Marking chance encounters that somehow were destined to be, Mann displays deeply felt one-on-one exchanges as partial products of anonymous discourses antedating them. *Collateral* uses action, cinematography, and dialogue to challenge oppositions that inform Vincent's existential antinomies. The film's aesthetic modalities foreground the entwinement of minute and monumental registers of the linguistic, spatial, and ethical constellations the movie explores, countering the hit man's hierarchized juxtaposition of expansive and reduced scales of action.

THE TAXICAB AS A FIGURE FOR RACIAL MOBILITY

A related contradiction of Vincent's consists in the tension between his rhetoric of improvisation and his conviction that things are determined at a macrolevel of organization. The genre of adaptation that he advocates requires improvisation. However, as the film shows us through Max, impromptu agency tends to surpass a person's adjustment of his behavior to an outcome settled in advance; moreover, it can exceed the competitive pursuit of self-interest. Enjoined by his passenger to tap his improvisatory skills, the driver outdoes his advisor in this area. Max carries his aptitude for extemporaneous action further than Vincent. In accentuating the transgressive powers of the cabbie's improvisatory resources, *Collateral* stresses the limits of the passenger's earlier attempt to master black culture by way of his consumption of jazz and through his informed jabber about music history. The film restores to a black man a quality that is typically connoted as African American. Exposing the murderer's muddled view of spontaneous conduct, Mann takes him to task for violating improvisatory modes on the part of a black musician by liquidating him as dictated by his work order. Ever the dedicated professional who abides by his assignment—an occasional lapse notwithstanding—the killer declines to be swayed by rudimentary feelings of tenderness he may unexpectedly have felt for the trumpet player, whose music he has enjoyed and with whom he has struck up a conversation. The cabbie's coup, in a sense, rectifies the rift between the assassin's credo and his actual behavior.

An additional point of vacillation for Vincent attaches to his understanding of Max's métier. He repeatedly puts down the latter's occupation, for example, by asking him why he is still driving a cab. At the same time, the criminal urges the cabbie to stick to the job of chauffeuring the car. The film's pragmatic, satirical reply to this inconsistency is to have Max wreck the vehicle, the tool of his own and Vincent's labor. Exerting control over his automobile as a cabbie, Max then outlives his profession. Ironically, by destroying the car, he realizes Vincent's dual admonishment: to adhere to his job as a driver, and, in that very capacity, leave the taxi behind.

Another comedic aspect of the killer's fluctuating attitude toward human achievement involves his belief that people should make true their dreams. Vincent commands his buddy to take charge of his romantic wishes and call Annie, should he survive their current ordeal. Playing out the criminal's counsel of self-realization against himself, the driver trenchantly follows through on this advice. At the practical level, accordingly, *Collateral* straightens out Vincent's disjointed convictions by letting him trip over them.

Again, the film's treatment of the cab complicates its pragmatic approach. Having smashed up his vehicle, Max resorts to other modes of transportation: running, walking, riding elevators, and hopping onto the subway. The cabbie proves himself to be a flexible worker, one who outstrips his initial vocation. Max transfers to new domains the arts of locomotion he has rehearsed to perfection in the cab: he moves speedily; his timing is unrivaled; he brings the journey on which he takes Annie to an exemplary end. The corollary of this view of the driver's position is the taxi's role in the film as a figure for mobility. We have already considered the cab's mediating function, the trafficking it allows between spheres of work and intimacy, the legal and the lawless, morality and immorality, delimited locality and illimitable metropolitan topography. This heterotopic functioning also marks the taxi's racial operations.

Max's meeting with Vincent in the taxi immediately entwines their professions. The assassin forces the driver into complicity with his project: Max helps shovel corpse Number One into the car trunk; he assists in the pair's circumvention of a damning vehicle inspection by the police. The cabbie becomes a delinquent himself, who ties a policeman to the crashed taxi; he turns into a robber, who snatches a passerby's cell phone. If Max moves into illicit territory, Vincent ventures into the ambit of the law. The murderer comes to the cabbie's assistance, when, in reply to the dispatcher's tirade about the car's damaged front window and his reprimands about Max's erratic contact with the taxi center, the assassin stands up for the employee's labor conditions. The strained nighttime collaboration between driver and passenger throws both into unfamiliar provinces. Max's entry into criminality is accompanied by Vincent's uptake of ethical advocacy in the scene in which, contrary to the killer's espoused subordination of detail to the larger whole, he defends Max's legal rights against the cab company. The night's ride has Vincent make overtures toward the side of his torn self that is liable to moral emotion and sensitive to spasms of rectitude. Likewise, the hours in Vincent's company bring out a determination and fury in Max, the presence of which his genial temperament did not foreshadow.

With both protagonists hazarding into uncharted terrain, *Collateral's* images of the city highlight human forlornness. Shots of coyotes crossing a deserted street set a tone of desolation. An aura of metropolitan solitude and existential foundationlessness resounds with Vincent's displaced anxiety— the hit man has consigned the disturbance attendant to his ethical stance of egoism to the harrowing phantasm of an interminably circulating unmarked corpse. A mood of estranging anonymity pervades the urban landscape. Underscoring aloneness, alienation, as indicated earlier, also heightens the embodied reality of human togetherness within the automobile's confines. As passengers and driver engage in interaction, their roles become diffuse. A reciprocal process of change takes effect, in which characters shift places, positions lose stability, fates are upended.

Collateral 's cinematography foregrounds the indeterminacy that results when the scripted structure of a taxi ride, established early on by means of an initial set of passengers, a squabbling couple, gives way to unmapped circumstances. Craving limits to the role switching that finds him in an exchange of gunfire with the cabbie on the subway, the assassin yells out impotently, "Max, I do this for a living." Ironically, soon after his exclamation, the killer collapses. By this time, the characters' line of work has brought them into an intense communication with one another that far exceeds carrying out their jobs.

The antagonists' travails in the taxi entangle them in a dense web of exchanges that unsettles the oppositions in which Mann casts the pair at the film's onset, those of ruthless criminal and affable attendant. Max's ultimate victory notwithstanding, Vincent's internal muddle and the imbroglio it produces dominates the duo's relationship. These two clear-cut loci of control in the contest between white and black masculinities, however, delimit a broad sweep of transactions, substitutions, and shifting offices. The film's interest lies neither in a full-fl edged struggle nor in a final reconciliation, but in an array of not altogether determinate possibilities for connection and disconnection stretching out between and beyond more readily legible moments of racialized exchange. Looking into, through, and out of the cab, we are invited to see these possibilities shimmer in the manifold lights gleaming indistinctly in the windows, enveloped by the dense, nebulous glow of nocturnal Los Angeles.

The cab in *Collateral* comprises a heterotopic technology of race: it initiates unpredictable processes of change, engendering a passage of racial development, the direction of which it does not decisively stipulate. The taxi itself thereby only takes us so far. Max's abandonment of the vehicle allows him to enjoy continued social mobility by alternative means. Throughout the film, the taxi distinctly points beyond the realm of interactions that it hosts. Like many other movies featuring the cab as a site for a contest over social status, *Collateral* ties taxi driving to the question of one's prospects for the future. Quitting the cab may bring you a step closer toward becoming lovers with a higher placed person.

CURTAILING THE CAB'S RACIAL EXPLOITS

Max and Vincent operate alone. The island that offers the cabbie peaceful equilibrium is a pure, sunlit, unspoiled blob of white sand in the ocean. Traces of local culture are lacking. The film leaves it open whether Max is a Caribbean immigrant or a native of Los Angeles, his home. He initiates friendly chats with the Latino owner of a gas station/convenience store, obediently visits his mother, and weathers the frenzy of his workplace, but besides the contact with his passengers, leads an apparently solitary life, as does Vincent. It is the cab's liminal character, its function as a go-between, that enables the film to showcase the cross-racial mingling of two randomly united loners.

Marking a trajectory between the realms of professional labor and intimacy, the moral/lawful and its voiding, delineable enclosure and unlimited metropolis, *Collateral* interweaves the destinies of a black and a white male, joining them in a fervid homosocial bond. In this imaginary scenario, Los Angeles constitutes a city in which arbitrary encounters permit us to bridge a foundational U.S. racial divide, and to fulfill deep-seated social longings.

The combined services of rental killer-and-driver bring the two into contact with a wide array of people, accelerating interactions through links with other modes of transportation, including shuttle busses, subways, air travel. Crossing heterogeneous human provinces and participating in multifarious technological circuits, the taxi engenders a flow of globalized, multicultural exchange. This surge of relationality, I have argued, rams into racial blockades. Vis-à-vis Latino and Korean-American participants in its encounters, the film installs checks on movement and transmissibility. As indicated in the case of the "Mexican" story of Pedro and Santa, Latinos are barred from the process of interracial role switching and transculturation envisioned by the film. So are Korean-Americans, who serve narrative interests that lie elsewhere. Mann affords the black-white split priority in a vision of multiculturalism that elides the place of Native Americans as well as that of black Latinos, and allots Latinos and Asian-Americans peripheral roles.

Contrary to the black and white protagonists, the movie's Latino characters participate in communal bonds. It is on detective Ray Fanning's entry into the apartment of target Number One, Ramone Gallardo, in the hope of picking him up to go out for a drink, that he finds out that the witness has died. Meanwhile, Felix, the drug baron, is bound to the other members of his gang through ties of mutual, ethnically solidified cooperation. Situated within racially homogeneous social groupings, in the orbit of the law as well as that of criminality, Latinos occupy a static position in the film. Their engagement with one another affords them a measure of independence from other racial groups. Unlike the black man, they fail to supply the alienated white man with a missing mother. This diminishes their usefulness as a remedy against white male alienation. Plausibly, their companionship with one another feminizes them, by contrast to the film's isolated lead characters. Another possibility is that the film withdraws their gender identity. Either way, their masculinity slips away from them.

Ensconced in intragroup collectivity and demasculinized, the good and bad Latino offer commentaries on race relations that disappear from view. Felix reiterates a scheme of antiblack racist domination; Fanning rejects antiblack racist judgments on the part of the police force. *Collateral* pushes these interventions to the fringe of its racial forum.

The movie's gendered antithesis between isolation and sociality intersects with its polarity of affect and detachment. I have indicated that the alliance of the black and the white man involves Vincent's edging his way into Max's family. Yet more significantly, their association thrives on the complementary relation between the former's pathological disconnectedness and the latter's emotional sensitivity. *Collateral* 's duality of feeling and affective disengagement masculinizes whiteness and feminizes blackness. The film's gendered dichotomies unite Max and Vincent in a state of reciprocal dependence. In the course of the evening, the film nudges the cabbie in the direction of the criminal along both gender axes. Colonizing the cab, Vincent catapults Max out of the conviviality he typically enjoys with his clients, and forces him to be ever more the loner. Exacerbating this process, the killer drives the cabbie to a state of reckless indifference, in which Max, seemingly no longer having anything to lose, wrecks the cab. Both of the film's gendered oppositions, accordingly—the register of solitude/sociality and that of emotion/ disaffection—expedite Max's initiation into white male adulthood. *Collateral*'s racial vicissitudes pronouncedly stand out in their gendered composition, and the movie's gender formations reveal their racial nature.

At the level of the plot, the film privileges white/Anglo-black bonding over Latino-black loyalty and fellowship amongst Latinos. Another stage in the white-Latino competition emerges in the plane of aesthetic confabulation. Recall again the gang leader's "Mexican" saga of Pedro and Santa Claus. Unbeknownst to the drug baron, the racial codes characterizing his fable's hopelessly rigid allocation of narrative positions prohibit his becoming Santa to Max's Pedro. Santa is destined to remain elsewhere, beyond the Latino's purview. The movie, accordingly, consigns Felix to the sidelines, along with his all-too-schematic tale. The film folds the legend's inapposite take on the black-white binary back into the stream of action connecting Vincent and Max. The filmmaker, we discover, tells a better story about this chasm. The saga's pivotal role in organizing the triangle connecting Felix, Max, and Vincent notwithstanding, the tale obtains no foothold in narrating the film's vision of communal life. Contrary to Mann's narrative, the drug lord's parable of race relations falls flat.

The filmmaker's view of race in a globalized, multicultural United States trumps the Latino's outdated myth. Just as white hegemony over a black man outshines Latino dominance, a white fiction of cross-racial role switching and translation eclipses an anachronistic Latino vision broaching similar terrain. Mann's contemporary allegory of racial uncertainties and instabilities supplants a regressive "Mexican" story advanced to address analogous concerns.

Collateral 's aesthetic self-positioning repeats the tenor of its overall organization of key interracial relationships: Max's alliance with a white dominated multiracial law enforcement regime supersedes Fanning's efforts to restore lawfulness and moral order and to rescue the cabbie from the biases of the legal/police system. White/Anglo-black normative, morally regulatory collectivity takes precedence over Latino-black collaboration, society building, and attempts to achieve justice.

Why this repeated effacement of Latino agency? My reply is cryptic and speculative. The marginalization of Latinos allows Mann to keep the film's focus on the black-white binary, on which it confers a flexibility that transcends the dynamics of both overt antiblack racism and of explicit challenges to such racism. It supports the movie's fantasy of L.A. as a local island within broader global territories in which the black-white schism can become attenuated, and as a culturally heterogeneous society, built on a relatively just social order that acknowledges and alleviates a form of racial grief. This picture of the community appears to demand a dismissal of the threat Latinos pose as global actors in criminal circuits as well as a diminishment of contributions they offer as globalized participants in ethically, politically, and legally constructive networks. It rests on an evasion of questions about the distribution of labor and consumption goods, about immigration, gender, the politics of international relations, and the complicity of U.S. policies in Latin-American poverty and narco-trafficking. The city, so conceived, makes an essentially pragmatic, partial, phantasmatic, and affective break with white male hegemony that restores power to a black man, without having to revolutionize broader, transnationally and historically grounded racial conditions and assumptions necessitating such acts of repair, and without demanding more rigorous endeavors to ameliorate the social fabric. Despite its allusions to L.A.'s cosmopolitanism, the film restricts the cab's global reach and its capacities to forge linkages across races and between the local and the global. Mann slams the brakes on the racial journeys the film initiates.