

Experience and Pictorial Representation:
Wollheim's Seeing-in and Merleau-Ponty's Perceptual Phenomenology

Jason Gardner

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Laura Perini, Chair

Richard Burian

William Fitzpatrick

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(ABSTRACT)

Contemporary aesthetics includes a project directed at understanding the nature of pictorial representation. Three types of theories enjoy recent favor. One explains pictorial representation by way of resemblance or experienced resemblance between the picture and what it represents. A second employs interpretation: the spectator looks at a picture and interprets conventionally determined symbols found therein to mean what it represents. The third describes pictorial representation as a matter of experience. On this approach, when the spectator looks at a picture she has a visual experience of the thing represented.

Key components of representation include the representation bearing artifact and the human activity that produces it. An adequate account of pictorial representation must neglect neither. Theories focusing on resemblance fail to account for the human role in representation so that a picture may represent only what it can resemble. Theories making interpretation of conventional symbols the key fail to account for the role visible properties play in grounding representation. Wollheim's experience based theory, however, unifies the visible properties of the artifact and the intentions of the artist in a single experience, called seeing-in, whereby a spectator sees in a picture what an artist intends to represent.

Wollheim fails to specify just how visible properties of the artifact ground seeing-in. His account of seeing-in raises other curiosities as well. These issues can be dealt with if we apply phenomenological concepts developed by Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* to our experience of pictures as a method of enriching Wollheim's account of seeing-in.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In contemporary aesthetics a debate persists regarding ‘pictorial representation’: At first glance pictures appear to represent what they do because they look like those things. However, closer inspection shows that, regarding how they look, objects in the world differ in salient ways from pictures that represent them, while the similarities between the picture and object are not easily specified. Some take this as evidence that a different kind of account of depiction is required, others as evidence that more work is needed to understand the ways of “looking like” relevant to depiction.

The current major players in this debate reside primarily in three camps, with each camp having variety within and all camps drawn into attempts at cross-pollination between. They account for representation with theories based on resemblance, convention or the picture-viewing experience. This paper defends an experience-based theory: Richard Wollheim’s “seeing-in” based account of pictorial representation. This defense consists of two stages. In the first I argue that, as opposed to theories drawn from the other camps, Wollheim’s is formulated in a way that allows him to address all of pictorial representation’s most relevant questions. In the second stage I consider four issues, two of them potential problems and two requiring clarification, and shed light on them from a phenomenological perspective. The second stage aims to shore up Wollheim’s theory against certain potential criticisms while lending it plausibility simultaneously. Prior to this defense, several steps are necessary to introduce and situate what is to come; these constitute the current chapter.

The first step comprises a brief discussion of the recent debate about depiction, locating Wollheim’s account within it. It will familiarize the reader with the central

problem for those who theorize pictorial representation, namely, understanding how this type of representation works. The next step is sketch of Wollheim's final published account of pictorial representation. This gives the reader a clear, if not comprehensive, sense of what Wollheim is up to. It also flags the issues I raise later. The final step consists of an outline of the pending defense of Wollheim's theory.

Pictorial Representation

When a typical viewer encounters a representational painting or drawing she experiences it as being *of* something. She experiences a picture as referring to an object or objects that are or could be in the world. Aestheticians label such pictures "pictorial representations." In trying to provide an account of them they seek to make sense of a representational phenomenon, the peculiar way in which we experience pictures as referring to things. The central question regarding pictorial representation is formulated in a number of ways, the clearest formulation perhaps being "in virtue of what does a picture represent what it does?"¹ (Files, "Goodman's Rejection of Resemblance", p. 399)

Aestheticians advance a number of accounts that purport to explain how representational artifacts represent. Included among these are accounts that focus on representational art as illusion, interpretation of representations according to conventional rules, resemblance between artifact and thing represented, and the experience of viewing pictures. This list is not comprehensive, nor will we consider all of the accounts it

¹ We can further analyze this into two questions, one regarding what constitutes representation or aboutness itself and the other regarding how a particular representation has content. For more on this see Craig Files, "Goodman's rejection of resemblance." *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36:4 (October 1996), pp. 398-413

mentions. This thesis deals primarily with Richard Wollheim's account of pictorial representation. His account attempts to explain representation by way of our experience of representational pictures. In advocating Wollheim's theory I compare it with the two types of accounts prevailing in recent literature: resemblance and conventionalist accounts.

Resemblance accounts of pictorial representation can be found at least as far back as Plato and Xenophon (*Republic*, Book X; *Memorabilia*, III). These accounts carry a strong intuitive appeal; they claim that pictures represent the things they do by "looking like" them. The most pressing philosophical task for an adherent of a resemblance-based theory is to delimit the resemblance relevant to representation. For example, a painting of a mountain will be unlike the mountain in many ways. Just to name a few, it will be much smaller, two dimensional and meteorologically less dynamic. The resemblance theorist needs to specify in what ways the painting does resemble the mountain and how these aspects of the painting are relevant to its representational capacity. On the resemblance account it is in virtue of the picture resembling its referent in some relevant manner that it represents what it does.

The strongest challenge to resemblance accounts comes in the opening chapter of Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art*. Here Goodman argues that resemblance is neither necessary nor sufficient for representation. Resemblance is not necessary because, he claims, anything can be arbitrarily employed as a representation for anything else. Resemblance is not sufficient because things can resemble one another without representing each other, like identical twins or two autos from the same assembly line. Goodman's theory of pictorial representation epitomizes the conventionalist approach.

On his account a picture is interpreted according to the rules of a symbol system in which it occurs. These rules are stipulated conventionally, often as a matter of tradition. So it is in virtue of our conventions of interpreting symbols of a particular system that a given painting represents.

The debate between resemblance and conventionalist accounts of pictorial representation boils down to this: Resemblance has a strong intuitive appeal but is difficult to specify. Conventionalist approaches are intuitively unimpressive and seem to treat pictures too much like language, but are appealing if we buy Goodman's argument against both the necessity and sufficiency of resemblance for representation or if no satisfying account of resemblance is forthcoming. Much of the literature attempting to explain pictorial representation includes an attack on one of these types of account and presents an account of the other as a better candidate. Not everyone, however, thinks resemblance and convention are mutually exclusive. Recently there have been attempts to formulate a compatibilist account of pictorial representation where pictures represent by way of conventions and resemblance itself constitutes one such convention (Files, "Goodman's Rejection of Resemblance").

As I presented it above, the project of understanding pictorial representation is to understand a phenomenon, namely our *experience* of pictures as representing something, as being pictures of something. Some aestheticians downplay the role of resemblance and convention and claim that our investigation should focus on the phenomenon itself, that is, the viewer's experience of a picture as a representation. A theory that explains pictorial representation by way of resemblance alone will focus instead on the picture, the thing pictured and a relation between them. A conventionalist account will focus on a

symbol, its referent and the conventions that orchestrate their relation. But neither of these accounts touches on the viewer's experience and it is this, the experientialist argues, that we really need to understand if we are to make sense of pictorial representation. Wollheim advocates an account of this type. Additionally, he thinks that neither convention nor resemblance underlies our experience of pictures as representations. What follows is a sketch of Wollheim's account, with its focus on the viewer's experience, as he presents it in "On Pictorial Representation."

Wollheim "On Pictorial Representation"

Central to Wollheim's account is an aspect of the experience of looking at pictures labeled "seeing-in." This is like "seeing" a rabbit in the clouds or "seeing" a face in the bark of a tree. In fact, these are both examples of seeing-in, though they will not count for Wollheim as cases of pictorial representation. On his account, successful pictorial representation includes a viewer's experience of seeing in a picture that of which it is a picture, where the latter is determined by the intent of its producer.

Wollheim's account is crafted to meet what he takes to be the minimal requirement for any theory of pictorial representation, i.e., that it account for the role of perceptual experience. He formulates this requirement using three criteria. First, for a picture to represent it must be determined to do so by a visual experience. Wollheim calls this the "appropriate experience." Second, any person sensitive enough, having enough information and, if necessary, sufficiently prompted will have an appropriate experience upon viewing a picture that represents. Wollheim labels any such person a "suitable

spectator.” Finally, the experience must “include a visual awareness of the thing represented” (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation,” pp. 217, 219).

According to Wollheim, his minimal requirement rules out the best available conventionalist and resemblance theories. He argues that conventionalist theories fail to meet the first criterion because, for them, understanding a picture is a matter of interpreting it under some set of conventional rules while the minimal requirement demands that it be a matter of perceptual experience. Wollheim does not claim that conventionalist accounts leave out perceptual experience entirely. As he sees it, the best of these accounts involve perception as regards both the viewer’s awareness of the surface and her recognition of particular symbols upon it. But Wollheim takes conventionalist accounts as disavowing the role of perception in a third and, for him, necessary respect: the conventionalist’s viewer grasps the meaning of the representation by way of an interpretive rather than perceptual process. In other words, the conventionalist’s viewer interprets what the picture represents after perceiving the surface and its symbols whereas Wollheim claims the viewer’s dealings with the picture qua representation are perceptual and not interpretive (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p. 218). As Wollheim conceives it, his minimal requirement demands that the viewer perceive what is represented, while conventionalist accounts have the viewer understanding what is represented by interpreting the picture.

Wollheim feels that certain resemblance theories fare somewhat better, but ultimately fail as well. Such theories can be crafted in terms of experienced resemblance to meet the first two requirements, but they fail to meet the third (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p. 220). The third requirement is that the appropriate

experience must include visual awareness of the represented object itself. But the experience laid out in the resemblance theories Wollheim criticizes is limited to experience of the representation and of the resemblance between the representation and the represented. The represented itself is not experienced, there is no visual awareness of it, and this is what the third criterion requires.

Before discussing seeing-in, the core of Wollheim's theory, more should be said about appropriate experiences and suitable spectators. Wollheim describes the appropriate experience as constrained by the intention of the artist (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 226). That is, if a painter paints a painting and intends that it be of the Eiffel tower, then the appropriate experience of that painting will include a suitable spectator's having visual awareness of the Eiffel tower. However, an artist's intention and a suitable spectator are not sufficient to generate an appropriate experience. The actual viewing of the painting is what matters. If the painter paints poorly or otherwise fails to meet Wollheim's requirements for representational painting, a suitable spectator may not have the appropriate experience upon looking at such a painter's work.

As noted, the suitability of any spectator is determined by three conditions. She must be perceptually sensitive enough to have the appropriate experience, sufficiently informed for the same, and, occasionally, she must be prompted as well. For our Eiffel tower example, a suitable spectator would be one who has normal vision, knows what the Eiffel tower looks like and, if additional information is necessary for her to do so, can have a visual awareness of the Eiffel tower with prompting when looking at the painting. In this case prompting might amount to another spectator telling her, "that's the Eiffel tower!" This third and occasional condition can be collapsed, at least for present

purposes, into the second. The requirement regarding prompting is just that if the spectator is not already adequately informed she will, given sufficient additional information, have the appropriate experience. We can regard the suitable spectator simply as someone with minimally sufficient perceptual capacities and epistemological basis for understanding a particular representation. Prompting does, however, bring out an important aspect of Wollheim's account. It shows that our experience of a picture is vulnerable to the influence of information from the world beyond the frame.

Now we can discuss seeing-in, which Wollheim takes to be the core of his theory (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 221). He describes seeing-in as a perceptual skill that provides the appropriate experience necessary for successful representation. Seeing-in is not limited to representation but occurs whenever we see something in something else, as in the earlier examples of the rabbit in the clouds or the face in the tree. Insofar as it can be had without an artist's intent, in fact without an artist and even without art, Wollheim says that seeing-in is "logically prior" to representation. He speculates that it is also historically prior, in that non-representational instances of seeing-in preceded the historical emergence of the representational arts (Ibid).

Wollheim characterizes seeing-in as "twofold." Originally he conceived of this twofoldness in terms of the constitution of seeing-in by two concurrent perceptions, one of the object seen in some surface, e.g. the Eiffel tower in a painting, and the other of the representational object, e.g. a painting, itself. But Wollheim now describes seeing-in as "a single experience with two aspects." The aspect that comprises seeing a painting as a painting Wollheim calls "configurational". This aspect amounts to that part of the experience where a flat surface of a particular reflectivity covered with blotches of color,

brush strokes, etc is perceived. The other aspect, i.e. seeing what a painting depicts, he labels “recognitional”. This aspect amounts to a visual awareness of the depicted object itself. This single experience is not decomposable into its two aspects. The configurational aspect is not the experience of seeing a painting without seeing something in it, and the recognitional aspect is not the experience of seeing something in a painting without seeing it as a painting. Wollheim elucidates this non-decomposability by analogy to feeling a pain in some part of the body, where the experience cannot be decomposed into just feeling pain and just attending to some part of the body (Ibid).

Wollheim claims that seeing-in and representation have the same “scope”: whatever can be seen-in can be represented and vice versa (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p. 223). Wollheim elaborates this shared scope in terms of an ontology of what we can see-in or represent and a constraint on what we can neither see-in nor represent. He claims that this ontology consists of objects and events as well as particulars and things of particular kinds. A thing that is of a particular kind is merely seen or represented to be of that kind, but not some particular instance of it. So, a painter could paint, or a spectator could see-in a painting, the Eiffel tower or a generic tower, and the tower so seen might be an object or a tower falling, an event.

This shared scope is constrained by what can be *visually* represented or seen-in (Ibid). Interestingly, Wollheim construes the visual constraint on representation and seeing-in as less restrictive than an analogous constraint on what can be seen. One way in which he elucidates this difference derives from his ontology of scope: Things of a kind, he claims, can be seen-in or represented, but not seen. Wollheim suggests that seeing-in and representation might extend beyond seeing in another way as well:

information could prompt us to see things in a picture that are not explicitly included. He gives the example of a spectator viewing a painting of ancient ruins and agreeing, with prompting, that she can “see the columns as having been thrown down some hundreds of years ago by barbarians”, though neither the past nor the barbarians are explicitly depicted (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p. 224).

I now turn to what Wollheim has to say about what seeing-in is not. He raises three considerations against the claim that resemblance grounds seeing-in. The first consideration is that pictorial surfaces are littered with elements irrelevant to representation (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p. 222). Such elements might consist in random dabs of paint or elements deriving solely from the style of a painting. If resemblance grounds seeing-in, an explanation is needed for why something is not seen in such elements, why a non-representational red splotch does not represent.

Secondly, Wollheim claims that if seeing-in is primarily a matter of resemblance, then the spectator must be able to “attend to each pictorially significant element” and “experience it as resembling something” (Wollheim, p. “On Pictorial Representation”, 222). The problem here relates to circumscribing pictorially significant elements. If the significant element of a painting of a king is the part resembling him, then resemblance can be determined only after we see the king in the painting, and resemblance cannot be said to ground seeing-in if the latter is prior to it. If, on the other hand, certain patches of colors in the painting resemble certain patches of color on the king, it would seem that the painting could better represent some other two dimensional array, another representation of the king, than it does the king, for it resembles that more closely. That

is, if resemblance is cashed out as grounding seeing-in in this manner, we ought to see patches of color in pictures rather than some real or fictional world.

Finally, Wollheim believes that an account of seeing-in grounded by resemblance requires that we be able to account for how something is represented by reference to a picture's resembling elements (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 223). This can pose two sorts of problems. On the one hand, an artist might want to represent a particular person as a hero. If this is the case, there needs to be an account of how to visually resemble qualities like heroism, and things like heroes. On the other hand, imagine a painter who paints in "squat style", a style where objects are always wider than they are tall. If a painter paints the Eiffel tower in this style, and if resemblance grounds seeing-in, we need an account of how this painting can represent this particular tall tower rather than some short, wide one.

Wollheim also argues against the view that imagination underlies seeing-in. The kind of view he has in mind is one where the spectator's experience of a picture is twofold in that on the one hand she sees the pictorial surface and on the other she imagines that she sees what is represented. Wollheim argues that the spectator's imagining that she sees what is represented and her seeing the picture as a picture are mutually exclusive because the imagining in question is an imagining of perceiving. His claim is that we cannot simultaneously perceive and imagine that we perceive. If the spectator successfully engages in one of these activities, he claims, she cannot simultaneously engage successfully in the other. (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 224)

This concludes Wollheim's negative account of seeing-in. We can now summarize his account of pictorial representation as follows: First, any theory of pictorial representation must meet the minimum requirement of accounting for the appropriate experience had by a suitable spectator upon viewing a successful representation. This experience will include the spectator's visual awareness of what the picture represents. Central to such an experience is a perceptual skill called seeing-in. At the heart of seeing-in lies neither resemblance nor imagination. The experience of seeing-in will have two contemporaneous and inseparable aspects, one by which the spectator sees the representation as a picture and the other by which she is visually aware of what is represented in the picture.

Of the challenges aimed at his theory, Wollheim views the call to say more about what the experience, seeing-in, is like as the most rampant (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 221). Though he fails to say more, his theory requires supplementation regarding seeing-in to resolve four issues. One is Wollheim's use of "visual awareness". Later on we see that this awareness is both sensory and "conceptual", and to address another issue we need to say something about how these aspects of visual awareness interact. That issue, the second, is the role of prompting. Prompting entails that information can alter the experience we have of a picture, and something needs to be said about how this works. These first issues are not problems for Wollheim so much as curiosities that warrant further consideration.

The other two issues are not exactly problems either, but they are aspects of Wollheim's theory that leave him open to criticism and therefore need shoring up. The first of these is twofoldness. Twofoldness describes a single experience containing two

aspects, each of which includes visual awareness of something. But the “somethings” differ, and twofoldness implies an apparent paradox: we are visually aware of two different things at the same time and in the same place. More needs to be said about seeing-in so we can understand why this is only an apparent paradox rather than an actual impossibility. Finally, by not saying more about seeing-in, Wollheim may appear to have skirted the pictorial representation debate in a central respect. It is not clear how a particular surface leads a spectator to see something represented in it. A critic might claim that Wollheim has failed to say what makes a picture representational, by giving only the shallow answer that we can see something in it.

I will fill out Wollheim’s account of seeing-in by appealing to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s perceptual phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty describes perception as a process in which world and body mutually orient each other. The world is grouped and ordered by a body insofar as its elements present possibilities to the capacities of that body. For example, an overhead projector stands out as an object in the world because something can be done with it. Elements of the world themselves motivate and direct the body by constraining or allowing for its activities. So, my body is what it is because it is in this world, with these possibilities open to it. Neither of these organizing tendencies, that of the capacities of the body to order the world or that of the world to delimit these capacities, is seen as prior to the other. A body organizes the world and at one and the same time that world motivates the body (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 290-291).

Merleau-Ponty takes it that a given spatial orientation of the body to the world is not uniquely determined as such (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 290).

That is, the way my body is oriented to the world around it at a given moment is not the only possible way for it to be oriented and the present state of the surrounding world is not the sole determinant of this orientation. For instance, what Merleau-Ponty calls the visual field can lead the body to take up an orientation that is not its own, that is, one that is not constituted by the entirety of its sensations as such. For instance, we have the capacity to relate ourselves to things that are not in any way sensibly present to us, as in pantomime. It is important to note that Merleau-Ponty gives the ordering of the world over to *capacities* of the body rather than the body itself. The selection of one among possible orientations is determined by attaching to it a setting and this setting need not be an “actual setting”, but simply one that corresponds to what a body is able to do (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 295).

Defending Wollheim

As stated, the defense of Wollheim occurs in two parts. The following chapter begins with a consideration of the various senses of the phrase “pictorial representation”. This exercise allows us to spot two important aspects of the problem. One sense of “representation” refers to an object, like a drawing, and labels it as having whatever property or properties are necessary for it to actually represent something. Another sense refers to an activity, specifically a human activity, and reminds us of aspects beyond the artifact that are also important if such an artifact is to actually represent something. We take accounting for both senses of pictorial representation as our criterion and see how three theories measure up.

We find that while resemblance-based theories focus primarily on the properties of the artifact and conventional theories focus primarily on the situation surrounding it, only Wollheim's theory makes both central. The two folds of seeing-in unite the object and the intentions of the artist, fusing them at the point where a spectator views the artifact and sees what the artist represents in it. Having shown that Wollheim's theory fares better than conventional and resemblance theories, we move on to articulate the four issues mentioned above.

The second part of defending Wollheim consists in addressing the four issues by considering seeing-in and visual awareness in the light of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of perception. We begin with a discussion of various notions developed by Merleau-Ponty that will help us to make better sense of Wollheim's theory. We then apply these notions, first to visual awareness and then to seeing-in. This provides a deeper understanding of the experience of pictures, allowing us to resolve or clarify the four issues.

Chapter 2

Two Senses of ‘Representation’, Three Theories of Pictorial Representation

What follows is an argument for Wollheim’s approach to pictorial representation. In the first section I consider the vicissitudes of the meaning of ‘representation’ and its variants. We find that ‘representation’ has two distinct meanings, one that describes an object as having certain properties and another that labels an activity of persons. An understanding of representation in both senses, as well as their relation, will benefit any theory of pictorial representation. Given this distinction, I consider Hopkins’ experienced-resemblance account as an exemplar of resemblance-based theories of pictorial representation, showing how such theories tend to obscure representation qua human activity in favor of representation qua properties of an object. I move on to consider Goodman’s conventional theory of pictorial representation in the same light. Here we find that convention-based theories tend to make the same error as their resemblance based counterparts, but in the opposite direction. Finally I consider Wollheim’s account, showing that it suffers from none of the problems that arise for the others while making an experience of representation in both senses central to its project.

Uses of “representation”

Consider the following statements: 1) In her *Times* photograph, she represents occupation forces patrolling the streets of Baghdad. 2) This photograph represents soldiers on patrol in the streets of Baghdad. Though each declares that some thing represents some object, the two uses of “represents” are not the same. The first sentence

says that a *person* represents: an agent with particular intentions, opinions and beliefs about what she represents and why and how she does and ought to represent it. This “represents” refers to an instance of some agent engaging in an intentional activity. In the second statement an *artifact* is said to represent. It has no beliefs or intentions, not even an intention to represent. In this case, “represents” indicates that the object has certain properties, including the property of being or being seen as a certain type of object, in this case a picture, and thereby directing people to make use of it in a particular way.

Parallel and attached to these senses of “represents” are two senses of “representation,” “representing,” etc. Like the first, there is a sense of representation that labels a human activity, the practice of representing. With the second, there is a sense that labels an object, e.g., a painting or a text. For the remainder of this chapter, “representation-bearing” and its variants, e.g., “bears representation” or “representation-bearing object” often replace variants of “represents” and related terms when the thing said to represent is an artifact. “Intentional representation” and its variants, e.g. “intentionally represents” or “artist”, for “one who intentionally represents”, usually replace variants of “represents” where the thing said to represent is a person.

I mean to emphasize that: (a) A picture is a passive, inanimate object; it cannot engage in activities. (b) A person is an intentional and active being; it can and will engage in activities. (c) Both are said to represent. Finally, (d) different things are meant by this. Of course, a person could bear representation. I might point to someone in the distance and suggest to an interlocutor that she think of that person as somehow being like I used to be, saying perhaps, “that’s how I used to be”. Here I would intentionally represent my previous condition by using a second person who, bears a representation of

that condition. A single person could even represent in both senses. I could, for instance, shave my head and paint it to look like the sun and paint circles that resemble the local planets on my arms. I would then represent the solar system in both senses.

When we say that a person represents some object, we have in mind a complex being engaged in a complicated process. An artist has feelings and thoughts about objects. She may have political ambitions. She may enjoy the challenge of deceiving others or it could be that she values honesty and objectivity above all else. Her attitudes toward an object, as well as her values and projects, may color how she sees that object and how she wishes to represent it. She need not represent it as she sees it. She may lack the desire or the ability to do so. This inability could arise because she lacks the required skills, or because the appropriate technology is unavailable. Often the “object” a person intends to represent is complex or abstract. A person might wish to represent nature’s beauty, evil, a battle, the plight of the masses, another person, or this person’s faults. If she uses a picture to do this, we can expect her to think long and hard about it. She might see her work as imitation, either of the thing itself or some aspect of it, or she might see it as conveying one of these.

When we say that a painting represents some object, we have in mind something other than its engaging in an intentional activity. To say that a painting represents is simply to say something about its properties. It might amount to nothing more than that painting has been stipulated as referring to something. This is the case if, e.g., a painter crafts an abstract piece that, as far as he is concerned, represents global turmoil. He might then describe the painting as representing global turmoil just because for him, and perhaps some others, it represents that. In this case the artifact functions much like an

ordinary symbol, that is, it refers to whatever some person stipulates it as representing without this constraining its appearance. I take it that such cases lie beyond the scope of what we ordinarily mean by “pictorial representation”. More often, and especially when we speak of “representational painting”, we mean that the artifact has certain properties that, when we look at it, allow us to see in it, or see it as, or experience it as resembling, or to understand as we interpret it, that to which it refers. In what follows, this is what I mean when I say that an object bears a representation. Most accounts of pictorial representation aim at showing exactly what representational properties consist in.

This way of thinking about representation-bearing is a bit ambiguous. Usually, when we say that a picture represents something, we mean both that it refers to something and that it has certain properties that facilitate its doing so. Hence, visible aspects of the pictorial surface do not alone account for representation. We do not call the bunny in the clouds a representation, even if it has the same visible properties as a bunny in a picture. Something further is required to make it actually bear representation: it must be used, by a human being, to represent.

In the following discussion we qualify representation-bearing, when necessary, as follows: we say that an object or artifact *potentially* bears a representation of some thing if its surface has visible properties that make it a good candidate for intentional representation but no human uses or intends to use it to represent that thing. We say that an object or artifact *actually* bears a representation of something if it has those same properties and some person employs it to intentionally represent that thing. Along these lines we could say that the cloud potentially, but not actually, bears a representation of a bunny. If I wanted to show someone what a bunny looks like and I did so by pointing to

the cloud and saying “those are its ears, those its feet, those its whiskers”, then we could say that the cloud actually represents a bunny. We draw it out this way to avoid ruling out labeling as a representation something that bears a representation potentially. The importance of this will emerge below.

Hiding beneath the phrase “pictorial representation”, then, are at least three uses. When we speak of pictorial representation we need to clarify whether what interests us is potential representation-bearing, intentional representation, or the combination of these, actual representation-bearing. This allows us to disentangle some of the debate as regards the nature of pictorial representation. Most accounts speak past each other, focusing on representation in one sense and neglecting the others in the process. For an example of what happens when one focuses on the potential to bear a representation to the neglect of intentional representation, we turn to Robert Hopkins’ account of depiction.

Hopkins’ Depiction and the Potential to Represent

Hopkins claims that central to pictorial representation, for which he employs the term “depiction”, is a spectator’s experience of the pictorial surface as resembling the thing depicted in outline shape and, when relevant, color. His account focuses on properties that issue from the picture itself, that is, certain properties that we experience when we look at the pictorial surface. Thus depiction, or pictorial representation, is pegged to visible properties of the pictorial surface. Depiction is sustained by our experience of resemblance between these and similar properties of the depicted artifact. Hopkins pays attention to representation primarily in the sense of potential

representation-bearing: his account is about visible properties of an artifact and how they should be if these are to facilitate its use for representing some object. That he makes room in his account for talk of depiction when no intention, indeed no human being, is involved, shows that he does not sufficiently concern himself with intentional representation.

Hopkins considers the case of a spy satellite which photographs a never before seen secret weapon. His intuitions tell him that this is a case of depiction, that is, that the photo is a pictorial representation of the secret weapon even though no human intended to depict it. Because, on his account, depiction is primarily a matter of resembling and because he deliberately constructs this example to rule out intention, Hopkins concludes that for something to depict something else *either* its producer must intend that it depict that thing *or* it must relate to the depicted object by way of a suitable causal link. That is, there can be depiction when, in addition to a spectator having the specified experience of resembling, we have a causal link but no artist's intent, in fact, no human intervention at all.

Note that as Hopkins lays out the example, intention does in fact come in: presumably humans design and build the satellite with the purpose in mind to photograph whatever is on the ground. Nonetheless, Hopkins' account is formulated to cover truly unintentional photographs. Imagine, for example, a telecommunications satellite that runs into space junk and, after the collision and, due to whatever unusual and improbable conjunction of circumstances, becomes light sensitive and intermittently beams still pictures to television receivers on the ground. Such a satellite takes pictures by accident,

indeed has the capacity to do so only by accident, and yet it still does so via a causal link sufficient to claim that the pictures it produces are representations on Hopkins' account.

By placing unintentional photographs in the class of depictions, thereby making intention unnecessary for representation, Hopkins severs the link between his own account and the sense of representation that makes of it a properly human activity. Intention still plays a role in most cases of representation, but it is a relatively inferior one. Hopkins account, if we take it seriously, has no need of this link: resembling in outline shape, a relation we experience as holding between the pictorial surface, which resembles, and the depicted object, which is resembled, is what really matters for representation. Like the proper causal link, intention is no longer necessary but merely sufficient to distinguish depiction from non-representational instances of resemblance, that is, to distinguish actual representation bearers from potential ones.

Note how this constrains an account of artist's intent derived from Hopkins' depiction. It would appear that the artist's role in representation, when she has one, is simply to decide what visible object or scenario to represent and then to craft an artifact that resembles it in outline shape and, sometimes, color. She can intend only to represent visible things, and only to represent them as they are shaped and, at times, colored. Any intention to depict abstract objects, like evil or greatness, is pointless.

Hopkins' account of depiction, and others implying that a picture represents what it does in virtue of some property or properties of the pictorial surface, seems to answer directly the question "in virtue of what does a picture represent what it does?" This question appears to pertain to representation in the representation-bearing sense. It can be understood as directed at the potential to represent, as in "what properties make this

artifact a useful tool for intentional representation?” Accounts like Hopkins’ serve us well if we want to know which properties of a picture facilitate its representing some concrete object. Hopkins teaches us that if we want to represent, e.g., a tree, then a pictorial surface that contains shapes we can experience as resembling those projected by the tree when we view it from a particular point will be useful for doing so. If a painter wants to represent a tree, she might pursue this end by painting, on a canvas, shapes that she experiences as resembling those projected by the tree when she views it from a particular perspective.

At this point we should ask ourselves if accounts like Hopkins’ give us what we want. That is, when we seek to understand the phenomenon of pictorial representation, do we only wish to understand what the properties of pictorial artifacts are that allow them to serve as representations? Another way of understanding the “in virtue of what question” is this: in virtue of what does a picture come to actually represent what it does? Hopkins would probably deny that his theory only answers the “potential” version of the question. He would claim that intention or a causal link plays a role in that one or the other converts a case of mere resemblance into a case of actual representation. But if the spy satellite photo represents the secret weapon in the absence of intention, it only does so as a potential representation bearer. That is, the causal link only provides the photo with certain properties that it bears qua physical object, properties that, because they are causally derived from the secret weapon, allow a person to use the photo to intentionally represent that weapon, making the photo an actual representation bearer. If the photo does actually represent the secret weapon, then we need an account of causal processes representing that is analogous to intentional representation.

If such an account is forthcoming, it will change either what we mean by representation or how we understand merely causal processes. In the former case, an artifact qua actual representation would no longer just be something a human uses to represent, and the activity of representation would no longer be an essentially human and intentional process. In the latter case we would understand causal processes as having properties analogous to intentions. Without such an account, Hopkins cannot distinguish between cases where an artifact has the potential to bear a representation and those where it actually does.

Another complication for Hopkins appears when we consider the “what it does” of “in virtue of what does a picture represent what it does”. Resembling by way of experienced visible properties of the pictorial surface is a limiting factor for what can be represented. That is, nothing besides what we can experience as resembled in outline shape can be represented.

If we take seriously the human practice of representation and the intentions involved therein, the class of things people represent is far more extensive. The photographer might want to represent rapacious occupation forces maliciously patrolling and wantonly dishing out punishment, or she might want to represent virtuous liberators bravely defending freedom, but it is not clear how Hopkins’ account could sustain either of these. Our photographer might be reduced to representing things that look like people in uniform either posing or walking on what looks like a street in some locale with an apparently dry climate. Furthermore, Hopkins’ view will not be able to distinguish the representation of malice from that of goodwill unless we follow Xenophon’s Socrates and agree that character traits manifest themselves in a person’s appearance, and then go

beyond him to say that analogous traits of actions are also visible (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, III.X.1-III.X.5). Otherwise, it would be impossible for one editor to use an AP photo to represent brave troops defending freedom while another uses it to represent occupation forces brutalizing civilians. However, it seems that such cases are common, with context and employment, aspects of intentional representation, altering the content of the photo, what it represents.

When we say that a photograph, taken purposefully and with consideration, represents troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad we mean more than that the artifact has certain physical properties that allow it to serve as a representation. For it does more, it actually represents, both for the photographer who snapped it and the readers of the *Times* who look at it. Human intervention is needed for the jump from potential to actual representation. In the case of the photograph, it matters for its content that someone chose to place it where we find it, with a purpose in mind, above a particular caption and beside a particular story. Human intervention is not just a link in a causal chain from object to picture. A person frames the picture, decides when to take it, and involves her feelings about how these things are accomplished. The potential to represent is certainly a part of the story of pictorial representation, but only because *actual* representations can result from it. Hopkins' satellite photograph is not an actual representation until some person uses it intentionally to represent the secret weapon. Because Hopkins has neglected to consider adequately the intentional sense of representation, a human activity, he misses a large part of what it at stake in understanding pictorial representation.

The same will hold for any account of pictorial representation that holds up resembling, or any group of the artifact's visible properties, as the lone key to

representing. This is because the relation in question references too narrow a class of the properties of pictures to account for actual representation. Besides the shapes and colors of the pictorial surface, it's milieu and the feelings of the agent who produces or uses it must be considered. That resemblance is necessary for representation requires a narrowing of the latter concept, more than Hopkins makes clear when he employs the term 'depiction'. Even if all pictures are *suitable* for depicting in virtue only of resembling, more remains to be said about the human practice of representing things by depicting them.

Goodman's Denotation and Intentional Representation

If Hopkins is "guilty" of thinking about representation in too much the potential-to-bear sense, Nelson Goodman is also guilty for neglecting this in favor of intentional representation. We see this when reading the first chapter of Goodman's *Languages of Art*, where he famously and infamously presents arguments against both the sufficiency and the necessity of resemblance for pictorial representation, arguments that ultimately portray all properties of a pictorial surface as representationally irrelevant. Before getting to this, we can work our way into Goodman's project by considering some terminological similarities and differences between his account and Hopkins'.

Both present their projects as being about the peculiarly pictorial mode of representation. Goodman often uses "representation" as shorthand for "pictorial representation". He does not distinguish this from, in fact he coextends it with, 'depiction' (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, note p.4). Hopkins makes a point of using 'depiction' to distinguish the representation that interests him from other kinds of

reference, kinds that he might still label representation, also involved with pictures. He tells us that he is interested in “specially pictorial” representation and that symbolism and expression are not this (Hopkins, “Explaining Depiction”, p. 425). Goodman also distinguishes pictorial representation as it interests him from symbolic or non-pictorial forms of reference, by which he means at least to exclude speech and written language (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p.4). He also gives a separate but related account of expression, distinguishing it from representation. For Goodman, pictorial representation is a matter of interpreting a picture according to a symbol system. The picture's elements are symbolic, referring to things in the world. Tradition stipulates what refers to what and resemblance is irrelevant.

Neither of the two wish to confuse literary representation with pictorial representation, but the differences they see are not the same and they mean different things by ‘symbolic’. Hopkins allows that pictures can have symbols in them, like a ‘depicted’ raven that symbolizes death. The depiction, but not the symbolization, is what interests him. Goodman’s meaning is complicated a bit by his overall account. There ‘representation’ is a kind of reference—denotation—and ‘symbolic’ labels specifically non-pictorial reference, which Goodman describes as non-representational (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, note, p.4).

While Goodman and Hopkins primarily talk about the same thing, pictorial representation, subtle differences distinguish the scope of their accounts. Both consider pictures and how they connect, for us, with the objects they represent. The “for us” is important for both of them, but in strikingly different ways. Hopkins carefully words his account to make central our experience of resemblance, while Goodman attends to the

social, or conventional, aspect of understanding pictures. In the next several pages I show how the two differ, in terms of how they see representation and how these differences relate to the two senses of representation. It is evident that Hopkins is concerned primarily with “representation” insofar as this labels an artifact that bears representation. Now I will give a sense of how representation as an intentional activity, where the term describes a human practice, preoccupies Goodman.

Goodman exhibits his favor for the intentional sense of representation when he argues against the claim that representing is a matter of copying and for the claim that linear perspective is a matter of convention. Against the former he contends that representation is achieved by an interpretive and constructive process (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p.7). He pushes against the idea that an artist can represent or even see things “objectively”, either as they “actually” are or as they appear to unadulterated perception. On his account no thing is merely represented, but is always represented *as* something. It is in the ubiquitous “as” of representation that we necessarily find interpretation and construction.

Goodman uses several words or phrases to describe and color the activity of representation as he conceives it: conveying, “catching a likeness”, “translation of a sort” (Ibid, p.14). When he speaks of representation, he means a complex process involving intentions and beliefs about the object and how it is and ought to be represented, that is, what it should be represented as. He sees pictorial representation as a kind of denotative reference where denotation amounts to describing and labeling.

As noted, the opening chapter of *Languages of Art* contains arguments against both the necessity and the sufficiency of resemblance for representation. In his argument

against necessity Goodman breaks with concerns regarding the suitability, for representation, of the properties of an artifact considered in isolation. He makes the heady claim that “almost anything may stand for anything else”, where “standing for” is equivalent to denotation, which Goodman describes as “the core of representation” (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 5).

The “almost” of “the almost anything” that “may stand for anything else” needs untangling. Goodman’s project in *Languages of Art* includes thinking about a variety of arts and their intrinsic reference relations. He maps these relations in terms of symbol systems that sustain them. On this account, a given picture represents what it does in virtue of its possession of symbols from some particular symbol system as well as the use artists and spectators make of them. “Almost anything may stand for anything else” means that while what symbol will refer to an object can be set arbitrarily, no symbol can stand for an object if it has not been determined to do so.

Arbitrariness is here, as always, a slippery matter. What Goodman means is that determination of symbols is the product of convention or tradition rather than a matter of natural fit between symbol and referent. To bear a representation, a picture must play a proper symbolic role, that is, it must be a symbol. The representational properties of pictures on this account are not visible properties that make pictures ‘look like’ their objects. While these are relational properties that include the visible properties of the picture, it is not the picture’s visible properties that sustain representation by fitting the properties of the object. Rather, it is a matter of convention assigning these elements the role of symbolizing their objects. So, it is not what these visible elements look like, but that convention chooses them, that allows them to bear representation.

Goodman does not break entirely with concerns about the suitability of properties of the artifact; no theory of pictorial representation can ignore the artifact completely. His account does not ignore or make a break with the representation-bearing sense entirely. Rather, it undermines the privileged position often given to the visible properties of the artifact, e.g., having a triangle in some specified region, for determining what the artifact represents, e.g., a pyramid. It makes the artifact's role in representing merely contingent by referencing properties that it has in virtue of tradition's stipulation of certain symbolic relations to account for representation-bearing.

The foregoing considerations exemplify what does and does not concern Goodman when he considers the problem of understanding pictorial representation. He is interested much less in the properties of the isolated artifact, which he seems to think are irrelevant, since almost anything can represent any object, than he is in the culture, intentions, biases and concerns of the artist. Furthermore, and central to the project of his book, Goodman wants to understand the role of technologies that underlie the activity of representation. These are not just any technologies, but the symbol systems relevant to pictorial representation.

There is no place in Goodman's account for the spy satellite photo as Hopkins intends us to understand it. Besides pointing out some inherent flaws in believing that photographs copy what the world looks like, he notes that choice between cameras and lenses, as well as the photographer's use of them for framing a particular object, are part of the process of construal that, on his account, representation is (Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p.9 note). Since representation is a way of denoting objects, and this is a matter of interpretation, description and construction, representation is not something that can be

achieved by a spy satellite unless it is one too intelligent to satisfy the intent of Hopkins' example. The spy satellite cannot engage in "representation-as", and on Goodman's account there is no pictorial representation that is not also this. Representation without intention simply has no place in his conception of the issue. He might still want to say that the photo is a representation, in that it is properly symbolic, but he will need some account of how intentions are involved, thus changing the nature of Hopkins' example. The picture might count for him because technicians on the ground build the satellite to photograph secret weapons, or because an intelligence officer employs the artifact produced by the satellite to represent the weapon.

Goodman's account answers a slightly different "in virtue of what" question than does Hopkins'. Goodman specifies the properties a picture has if it is an actual representation bearer. These are its symbolic properties, the ones it gets from conventional stipulation, and other properties it has in virtue of being employed by a person to denote something. If one object symbolizes another, it is already involved in an intentional process. Goodman's account implies an arbitrary relationship between the visible properties of a picture and the fact that it actually represents something. Hopkins' potentially representational properties are shape and color, these are visible properties of the pictorial surface. But Goodman's properties are a matter of the history of the surface: what has happened to it, the culture that surrounds it, and its place in the human activity of producing it. These are things we cannot arrive at just by considering the visible properties of the artifact.

Goodman's view leads us away from the pictorial surface, and any representational potential it might have, to seek an understanding of representation in

terms of the practice of producing pictures and the symbol systems allegedly employed therein. On his account, what remains on the pictorial surface is of no use to us in the absence of these other considerations and, even given them, could always have been otherwise, perhaps strikingly otherwise. So, although we can give an answer to the “in virtue of what” question, our answer is not one that says what it is about a particular artifact that makes it suitable for representing what it does. Rather, it is an answer that leads us away from the artifact and references the traditions and conventions surrounding its production as well as the intentions of the artist, that is, it provides a list of properties common to actual representation bearers.

We can now ask of Goodman the same question we earlier directed to Hopkins: Does this account give us what we want? Goodman does pay considerable attention to the human role in crafting representation. He also has an account of properties that an artifact needs in order to be a picture, even if the visible properties of the artifact are merely contingent and not representationally relevant on their own merit. What is particularly satisfying about Goodman’s account is that it acknowledges that photographers intend to represent “occupation forces” or “liberators” patrolling the streets of Baghdad, even though the two are identical in outline shape, while allowing us to describe their pictures as representations of these things. Only the availability of symbols constrains what can be represented. But Goodman’s account suffers from the fact that it is simply hard to swallow. This is because in making the relationship between the visible features of the artifact and what it might represent arbitrary, pictures have been stripped of their intrinsic potential to represent.

It is hard to believe that a photograph showing troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad is able to represent them simply, or even primarily, because convention and tradition have lead us to read the surface of the picture and to interpret it in this fashion. It is even harder to believe that convention and tradition could have me interpret from the same photo that children are eating candy at the circus or that troops are not patrolling the streets of Baghdad. Finally, it is hard to even imagine how convention and tradition might have me interpret from some grossly different grouping of lines and colors that troops are patrolling the streets of Baghdad. But these are all compatible with, if not consequences of, Goodman's views on pictorial representation. What Goodman lacks and badly needs is some way of constraining the arbitrary movements of convention and tradition.

Several factors might work for this, separately or together, but certainly one candidate is resemblance. Resemblance could be employed for determining whether or not some property or part of an artifact qualifies it for service as a bearer of some representation or not. This would mean that a photograph of troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad would be good for representing what it does, and other things of similar appearance, but not for representing children eating cotton candy. Furthermore, there would be a constraint on just what could denote troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad, and while a child's drawing in crayon might do this, just any pattern of lines and colors cannot. We could explain why resemblance constrains convention by arguing that it gives certain objects or artifacts a potential to symbolize whatever it is that they resemble.

One reason that these examples are so damning for Goodman is the involvement of photography, where a non-arbitrary and causal relationship holds between visible properties of the representation bearer and thing represented. Another complication for Goodman is how little satisfaction arises from a consideration of how he might deal with Hopkins' spy satellite photograph. It is not meaningless to call this photo a representation, even if doing so only means that it has some potential to be used as such. Goodman must account for this meaningfulness in terms of symbols and symbol systems. He cannot do so by reference to some kind of natural fit between the photo and the secret weapon it represents. Goodman's account, aimed at disqualifying resemblance, rules out any kind of natural fit at all. "Almost anything can represent anything else", so long as tradition stipulates that it does.

Goodman's account ultimately fails because he has nothing to say about the potential of an artifact to represent what it does on its own merit, via its visible properties. Hopkins' account fails because he claims that what a picture represents derives from these properties alone, failing to consider pictorial representation in all its richness because he relegates the intentional activity of representation to a secondary role. We now return to Wollheim's account, which unites the visible properties of an artifact and the intentions of the artist just when we would hope to find them together: when the spectator looks at the picture.

Wollheim's Twofoldness and Pictorial Representation

If we wish to understand pictorial representation, there are several things to consider. One is the representation bearer, the artifact. Another is intentional

representation, the process wherein that artifact is produced. That these two share a symbol is significant, for the former is usually a product of the latter and the latter usually amounts to producing the former. In the foregoing considerations we also encountered the represented object, the artist who represents it and the viewer who looks at the pictorial surface. Each element and the relations that hold between them must be properly understood if we are to make sense of pictorial representation.

Both senses of representation are important for an adequate account of pictorial representation, as shown by the failures of Goodman's conventionalist theory and Hopkins' resemblance account. In fact, no conventionalist theory that neglects the suitability of the artifact for representation will work. Artifacts differ in their intrinsic potential to serve as representations and artists, no doubt, are aware of this. Nor will any theory claiming that actual representation is sustained only by a relation between the visible properties of the artifact and those of its object provide an adequate account. Between object and representation there is a mediating and filtering influence: the human practice of representation with its peculiar intentions, dreams and technologies. To emphasize these points, we can review the shortcomings of the two accounts just considered and how they relate to the two senses of "represents" enumerated earlier.

Hopkins' account does not distinguish between cases where an artifact is used by a human being to represent and those where, by way of some causal link to its object, it has properties that only give it the potential to do so. He does not provide resources that permit an artist to represent anything beyond what a representation bearer might visually resemble. Finally, his account runs into problems when two objects look very much alike and the representation is of only one of them. Each of these complications arise because

Hopkins' eye is too trained on the visible properties of the artifact and his mind on representation-bearing. They result from insufficient consideration of what the artist is doing when she represents something.

Goodman seems to avoid these problems, but in focusing his attention on issues that allow him to do so he runs into others. He needs an account of what constrains the suitability of symbols for service in the human practice of representing, that is of what accounts for the potential a particular object has for bearing representation. Certain examples make it very hard to accept that convention and tradition are alone responsible for determining whether some symbol can refer pictorially to an object. Goodman hits another bump when he attempts to describe photography as a conventional mode of representation, especially when we consider how the form of the represented objects constrains that of photographs of them. It is more than plausible that this is the case beyond photography, even if, e.g., the painter's activities are not so precise as the camera's mechanism.

One tactic for solving these problems is to combine the two accounts. We might construct an account wherein resemblance constrains the conventional movements of representational practice. Craig Files pursues a course not very different from this (Files, "Goodman's Rejection of Resemblance"). An account of this type, while inheriting the benefits of both symbol-system and resemblance-based accounts, also inherits their drawbacks. Such an account would have a representation bearer resemble the represented object and thereby refer to it. However, it seems that something other than reference is at stake in pictorial representation. It is not a matter of a picture symbolizing some thing as much as it is of the picture allowing us to see it. Additionally, there is still

the difficulty of specifying resemblance in a meaningful way. Finally, Richard Wollheim's account of pictorial representation already pays proper attention to both senses of representation and has the additional advantage of connecting these two senses as one of its central features.

As we have already seen, Wollheim's view is that pictorial representation is a matter of some spectator's seeing in a picture that of which it is a picture, where this is what the artist intends to represent. Seeing-in is a twofold experience of seeing a picture as a picture and at the same time being visually aware of the thing depicted. Another way of saying that we see a picture as a picture is to say that we see a physical object as a representation bearer. This aspect of seeing-in is an experience of the visible properties of the picture. The other fold describes our seeing what the artist represents, that is, what the artist wants to represent, in line with her intentions, thoughts and considerations. Another way of saying this is that we have an experience circumscribed by intentional representation. Wollheim's claim is that seeing-in includes both aspects, simultaneously and inseparably. Seeing-in ties his account to a view of our experience of art that fuses the visible representation-bearing properties of an artifact with representation qua intentional process of the artist by having us see in the former what the intentions involved in the latter prescribe.

Wollheim's seeing-in is the experience central to his account of pictorial representation. A spectator has this experience when looking at a picture. On this account, the range of things that can be seen in a picture is striking. Wollheim has argued that we could see in a painting of ancient ruins that they were thrown down by barbarians centuries ago, even though nothing experienced as resembling a barbarian is apparent on

the canvas (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p. 224). What accounts for our being able to see it is the acquisition of information that changes how we see it or what we see in an artifact. We might, for example, acquire this information because the artist tells us what she intends to represent. In this way Wollheim avoids the problem Hopkins runs into regarding the disparity between what artists do, or at least intend to, represent and what experienced resembling can sustain. Wollheim can solve the problem of determining which of two objects having very similar outline shapes is depicted in a similar manner.

Also, while Hopkins' account lacks the resources to distinguish between potential and actual representations, Wollheim's does not. That we can see something in something else is what accounts for its potential to represent, but an artist with intention is required for actual representation. For instance, Wollheim allows that we can see things in the clouds, but not that clouds represent. The artist's intent is necessary to circumscribe representational content, or meaning. In this way Wollheim can avoid Goodman's problem of not accounting for the meaningfulness of calling the spy satellite photo a representation while still resisting the claim that it is one in the same sense, the "actual" kind of representation-bearing, that a photograph taken by a human being, or a painting, is. Whether or not it represents, the photo is one that we can see the secret weapon in. Seeing-in has the additional advantage of giving the cloud-bunny the potential to represent, even though this may be a problem for Goodman.

At first glance it hardly seems worth noting that Wollheim also avoids Goodman's problem of constraining symbols for representational purposes, since seeing-in is not a matter of interpreting symbols. However, we can ask whether Wollheim

adequately addresses the suitability of the visual properties of pictures for representing their objects. He denies that we see some object in a picture because we experience the latter as resembling the former. If there is something about the visible properties of pictures that makes them particularly suitable for seeing represented objects in them it will not be, for Wollheim, that which Hopkins contends it is (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Representation”, p.222).

Note that what is at issue here is not what is at issue as when we ask about what properties account for a picture’s potential to bear representation. Seeing-in is Wollheim’s answer to that question; that we can see something in it is what accounts for some thing’s potential to serve as an actual representation. Here we wonder whether the represented object itself, particularly its appearance, constrains the class of possible pictorial surfaces in which it can be seen. The issue for Wollheim that we liken to Goodman’s symbol constraint problem is a question of whether the visible properties of pictorial surfaces “arbitrarily” admit of something being seen in them or if there is some fit between such properties and the represented object that further accounts for their potential as representations. There is, at least insofar as Wollheim would claim that there is.

The notion of fit, like resemblance, suffers from problems of ambiguity and arbitrariness, but that does not make them useless notions. They serve us well in certain peculiar cases where we perceive a salient, but nonetheless difficult to specify, relation between two things. Both of these notions are likely cover a range of distinct relations. Their ambiguity simply reminds us that there is more work to do. In the case of a photograph, for instance, ‘natural fit’ is particularly useful because there is, indeed, an

easily described causal relationship between the object and the artifact that represents it. In photography the object does, in a causal way, constrain the form of the photograph.

What, then, is the fit between an artifact that represents and that which we see in it? Seeing-in is an experience wherein both the pictorial surface qua surface and the represented object itself are somehow visually encountered. The relation constituting fit in this case is the potential for simultaneous presentation to visual awareness. For instance, if the surface contains a circle but nothing like a square, we cannot have a simultaneous visual awareness of it and a cube, but we can of it and a sphere.

Four Issues for Wollheim

It would be helpful to say “what a surface must be like” so that both it and what it represents can present themselves simultaneously to visual awareness. This would allow us to account for the potential of an artifact to bear representation by saying more than that it simply allows for seeing-in. However, we cannot rely on Wollheim’s account to provide much about the relation of the pictorial surface to seeing-in. In *Painting as an Art*, where he first presents his seeing-in based account of representation he writes, “I doubt that anything significant can be said about exactly what a surface must be like for it to have this effect”, i.e., of triggering seeing-in (Wollheim, *Paining as an Art*, p.46). I expect that when Wollheim wrote these words he was thinking about the issue in a narrow sense. Perhaps he meant that nothing significant can be said about the visible properties of a pictorial surface considered in isolation that would explain why we see what it represents in it. For if nothing at all can be said about what a surface must be like to produce seeing-in, seeing-in becomes uncomfortably magical. Furthermore, regardless

of Wollheim's remark, at least one significant comment can be made about the pictorial surface: it must be a surface such that we can have visual awareness of it while at the same time having visual awareness of what it represents.

It might seem at this point that resemblance once again enters the picture, that is, that resemblance grounds seeing-in. However, Wollheim denies this (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p.219). He believes that resemblance accounts draw their intuitive force from instances like one where a spectator looks at a painting of a tree and say "that looks like a dogwood". His reading of such an instance is not that the spectator experiences a resemblance between the pictorial surface and a dogwood but, rather, that she sees a tree in the surface and experiences the tree as resembling a dogwood. That is, seeing-in is prior to resemblance.

If resemblance does not account for the potential of a pictorial surface to enter into a spectator's visual awareness contemporaneously with what it represents, and if Wollheim has nothing to say about what the surface must be like for this to happen, then his answer to the "in virtue of what" question regarding the potential to bear representation remains shallow and unsatisfying. He says that a surface can represent (bear a representation) because we can see something in it, whereas successful representation (intentional) leads to some spectator's seeing in a surface what an artist intends. From his account we can derive further that the surface must be such that we can visually experience it and what it represents simultaneously, but this, he argues, is not because they resemble each other. For a seeing-in based account of pictorial representation to have any substance, some plausible story must be told about how a

pictorial surface relates to the visual awareness a spectator has of the object represented when viewing it.

The first issue for Wollheim, then, is this: his explanation of what gives a picture its potential to represent is inadequate and, as we see in the next chapter, a more adequate explanation can be given in terms of seeing-in. By not accounting for this potential, it might appear that Wollheim has skirted the recent debate on pictorial representation in a central respect. For instance, Hopkins' primary concerns himself with just this aspect of representation. Furthermore, a similar problem is just what makes Goodman's account unacceptable. Similar, but not the same, for Goodman makes the visible properties of the surface irrelevant while Wollheim, who acknowledges the relevance of such properties, fails to say what this consists in. If Wollheim's account is to be held to the same criteria the previous accounts have been subjected to, something needs to be said about why we see represented objects in the surfaces that we do.

This is not the only issue that results from Wollheim's shallow account of seeing-in. Another regards twofoldness. Wollheim describes seeing-in as an experience with two aspects, each of which is like, but not identical to, an experience itself. Just what this difference is needs elaboration. Furthermore, each aspect includes visual awareness, one of the artifact and the other of the thing represented. This means that we have two simultaneous visual awarenesses, of different things, in more or less the same, at least in overlapping, regions of the visual field. Given that we are usually visually aware of only one thing in a particular region of the visual field at one time, and that the two things we are aware of in seeing-in are saliently different, it might seem that visual awareness of one thing precludes our having visual awareness of any other. Because twofoldness is so

central to Wollheim's account, as the experiential junction of the artifact, the represented object and the artist's intentions, it would be nice to explain how twofoldness is possible.

We can address both of these issues by considering them in the light of Merleau-Ponty's perceptual phenomenology. This account of perception provides conceptual tools that allow us to make sense of how a single experience can have multiple experiential aspects as well as how the visual field can produce an awareness of something not present in it, as is the case when a pictorial surface grounds our experience of a represented object. In addition to addressing these issues, his account allows us to say more about a curiosity that has not yet explicitly arisen: the nature of visual awareness or the 'seeing' of seeing-in.

It is easy to think of seeing as a purely sensory matter, wherein our eyes take up and transduce light reflected from the visible aspects of objects. However, if we take visual awareness in this way, we obscure the conceptual aspect of this notion as Wollheim uses it. When we see something in a picture, the recognitional fold of seeing in does not amount to seeing a lot of visible properties. What is seen is always something that can be subsumed under a figurative concept. We see persons, or furniture or states of affairs in pictures, not the visible properties of some object. In addition to addressing the two issues above, we use Merleau-Ponty's perceptual notions in the next chapter to emphasize this "conceptual" aspect of seeing-in. In fact, we do this first, as having a richer understanding of visual awareness will help us with the other issues, especially with twofoldness.

This brings us to the fourth and final issue to be addressed in the next chapter. The experience a spectator has of a picture can change if she is given new information.

Consider the necker cube which can be seen unquestionably in one orientation but when, if the spectator is told that she can see it another way, can be seen in another. The same goes for the duck-rabbit and for pictures containing hidden figures. In the case of the duck-rabbit our awareness seems to alternate with the concept under which we classify the thing we look at. The sensory aspects of the drawing remain the same, but our experience changes for conceptual reasons. Visual awareness must in some way combine sensory and conceptual aspects, and it must do so in such a way that the information we acquire can change how we experience what we perceive. In the next chapter we will also look to Merleau-Ponty for tools that help us understand how concept and sensation combine, as well as how information might change the visual awareness we have of an object or picture.

Chapter 3

Seeing-in in the Light of Phenomenology

The concerns raised in the previous chapter relate to the experience we have of pictures under Wollheim's account. They do not point out contradictions or other fatal errors in the account. Two are explanatory issues. First, by failing to explain how seeing-in relates to the pictorial surface, Wollheim opens himself to the complaint that he has done little or nothing to explain the potential that a picture's visible properties have for representing. Such an explanation constitutes a key component for any comprehensive account of pictorial representation. Secondly, there is a question about how seeing-in comprises two distinct instances of visual awareness. These issues are potential problems for Wollheim's account, and a more comprehensive discussion of seeing-in should aim to shore them up. To rectify these issues, more must be said about seeing-in, and preliminary to it, visual awareness. We must understand visual awareness first because it bears much of the conceptual weight in Wollheim's description of twofoldness. In seeking to understand visual awareness, we can at the same time make sense of the two curiosities inherent in our experience of pictures. First, that this awareness seems to have a conceptual as well as a sensory component and, secondly, that information can alter our pictorial experience. The aim of this chapter is to address these curiosities and potential problems by saying something more specific about the phenomenology of seeing-in.

Wollheim once wrote, "Criticism of my theory of representation has largely taken the form of asking for more: specifically more about the phenomenology of seeing-in" (Wollheim, "On Pictorial Representation", p.221). He never provides this, but he does

make a few remarks about what such a project might amount to. One is that “the philosophical point of phenomenological description” is “for us to see how some particular experience can, in virtue of what it is like, do what it does” (Wollheim, “On Pictorial Rep”, p. 222) This remark brings us directly to our present aims. First, we seek to know how visual awareness combines conceptual and sensory aspects. This helps us to understand, secondly, how information can impact the experience we have. Third, we seek to know how seeing-in can have two aspects, each like an isolated experience itself, but neither separable from the other. Finally, we seek to know how the recognitional aspect of seeing-in, whereby we see what is represented in a painting, comes about from the painting itself, the actual object in the world at which we look. In pursuit of these aims we employ a conceptual toolkit deriving from Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*.

Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenological Account of Perception

When describing perception, Merleau-Ponty aims above all to emphasize that this is a human process in an actual world. That is, perception cannot be understood by considering only a thing perceived, a perceiver and a certain causal process that transduces aspects of the former into the mind of the latter (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 3-74). A variety of relations hold between the perceiving subject and its world, the perceived thing and this world, and that thing and the subject. These must be considered if we are to understand perception at the level of meaningful, lived experience.

Consider seeing a desk. Merleau-Ponty attacks the view that the desk has certain visible aspects that reflect light which is then transduced by the nervous system and arranged somewhere in the brain to produce the image of a desk. This would produce little more than a patch of, say, varied shades of brown. His view is that when we perceive the desk, we perceive a desk in all its glory as a desk in this room where we find it, as the thing we pile our work upon and sit behind. The desk is perceived meaningfully because the perception in question is a human's perception, and it aims to and does perceive the desk in this world, relating it to the perceiver and the surroundings in which he perceives it.

The perceiving subject is not merely an object, like a machine that takes in light and puts out images, but an intentional and embodied being that lives in this particular world. Embodiment means that the life of the perceiver is defined by certain needs and capacities. For instance, the human needs to eat and has the ability to look for and to pick fruit. The fact that the human has certain needs and capacities that relate to fruit leads to a structuring of perception that includes the ability to see, and to locate and identify fruit, and to identify it as something to be eaten. On this account, once a person is familiar with fruit, its edibility is not something she arrives at reflectively after she perceives, say, an apple. Rather, insofar as she perceives something as an apple, she perceives it as edible, and in doing so she is not understanding a propositional fact distinct from her perception, but entering, as a living, embodied subject, into a relationship with it. The needs and capacities of the body structure our perception because the senses constitute a tool of the body to meet these needs and aid in the exercise of these capacities (Merleau-

Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 112-170). This structuring of perception produces a perceived world oriented to the perspective of the perceiver.

Living in this particular world further circumscribes our perceptual lives. That this world has edible, nutritious fruit also leads us to perceive fruit as something to search for and to pick. We can climb a tree to pick an apple because the tree has the strength to support us and because gravity is too weak to hold us to the ground. That the tree can be climbed and that we can leave the ground are perceived in the same sense as is the edibility of the apple: our perception of the tree, its pre-reflective meaning, is a way of relating to it as a living body. The world becomes a background against which we perceive, meaning that perception takes it into account. This taking into account occurs automatically, without our thinking about it, as a part of the organic process of perceiving, rather than as the result of judgment or deliberation (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 30-59).

The world offers itself up to us and perception organizes it in a meaningful way that references our capacities and needs. That is, perception gives the world a meaning based on these needs and capacities: an apple as perceived is not just a red thing, but is also something to eat, and it is perceived as such because we need to eat and we can eat apples. These are not capacities and needs that persist distinct from the world. They are specific to bodies in this particular world. That the tree is perceived as something we might climb or an apple as something we might eat depends on how the world and the body are, and how the two fit together. In this way Merleau-Ponty's view of perception avoids the poverty of an account that explains perception only in terms of an object and the photons that it reflects to an eye which transduces them into electrical impulses for

assembly in the brain. From such an account it is difficult to reach the rich and meaningful experience that life consists in. On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty's account describes a perceived world endowed with meaning from the beginning, a meaning circumscribed by conditions holding in the actual world and the capacities of the body to interact with things found in it.

In any given instance perception derives its meaning from a variety of 'horizons'² against which the perceived stands out, and which the world comprises insofar as it is a background against which we perceive (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 25, 78, 117, 169). The horizons Merleau-Ponty discusses include, but are not limited to, the physical, the biological and the cultural. The physical horizon of perception allows us to, pre-reflectively and, of course, fallibly, understand any object as, e.g., movable or immovable. The biological allows distinctions like edible and inedible. The cultural includes the fashionable and unfashionable. These horizons permeate the entirety of the perceived world, and it is only insofar as we see an object against one or more of them, as its background, that it has meaning. If I am hungry, the apple on my desk will mean lunch against the background of a biological horizon. But if I have just eaten, and am sitting down to paint, it might mean, against a cultural horizon, 'model for a still life' instead. Exactly which horizons give meaning to a particular experience depends heavily on the actual situation in which we find ourselves, the needs we have therein and the possibilities of meeting those needs, the capacities, available to us. Merleau-Ponty argues that without such horizons, i.e., if we considered sensory data alone and abstracted from its place in a lived situation, we would perceive nothing

² Insofar as Merleau-Ponty's terminology arises here, the English words employed follow the Colin Smith translation.

(Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 5). By this he means that our perceptions would be meaningless, they would lack all content.

Perception occurs within an ‘intersensory’ field that constitutes our experience (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 380-381). It comprises several particular sensory fields, like touch and vision, which the body coordinates and translates into a singular flow of experience. The body combines things so that when I touch the cold metal of the doorknob at which I look, I perceive the doorknob to be both brassy and cold, rather than seeing brassiness in one perceptual field and feeling coldness distinctly in another.

Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of particular sensory fields primarily addresses the visual, which likewise is primarily of concern for the pending discussion. He describes the visual field as “an opening upon a system of beings, visual beings” (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 251). The visual field is an organized, seen world, comprising relatively determinate things, like people, and not mere patches of color. Relatively determinate, because while novel appearances might first be hard to organize, even so we see them as ‘something’, even if we can discern nothing more about them. Additionally, even for things we understand well, we may always look more closely and perceive more, seeing them more determinately. Things, rather than patches, arise in the field because the perceiving body automatically organizes it into objects that relate to its capacities (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 263). Things visibly stand out as graspable or prickly, as tools or obstacles. This structuring of the visual field into determinate things is a matter of this body polarizing the field according to its needs and

capacities. The determination of the field is simply the living body's natural positioning of itself within a world, according to its possible actions.

An important aspect of the visual field is that it has no definite limits. It is not coextensive with what I see now, but extends beyond to what I can see. The desk and the computer I look at are at its center. But the room wraps around me and even what is directly behind me plays a role in my visual field. My experience is not of a few things in front of me surrounded by darkness or a void. Rather, the bookcase behind me is there, I am aware of it in a visual way and I need only turn my head to see it clearly. On the other side of the door to my right is this whole town, extending into the distance. All of these enter into my visual field, more or less conspicuously as I attend to them and more or less clearly as I get close to them and really look at them. Its center is what I do see, but its edges extend to cover what I might see, especially insofar as such things as I might see are connected with the situation that now presents itself.

The visual field is organized spatially, with depth. Merleau-Ponty writes of 'spatial levels', which he calls "a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 291). This spatial grasp of the body on the world comprises relations like beside, above and below, behind and in front of, and, also, far away from or near to *me*, the perceiver. Here we have a spatiality constituted by the relations of things to the perceiving subject. To emphasize the role of the body's capacities in spatially organizing the visual field, Merleau-Ponty makes much of a somewhat metaphorical use of 'grasp' to describe the *potential* hold we have on things through vision. Depth is just the body's potential to actually grasp those things that vision presents to it. For something to be far away is for

it to be harder to get to, harder to hold on to, than something nearby; for it to be near, with nothing in front of it, is for it to be within easy reach: as I see my friend disappearing into the distance, my lingering gaze amounts to a vestigial grasp, a remnant of our final embrace, growing ever more faint with each step she takes.

The spatial level, then, is not the result of the position of my body and the distances and angles that describe the relation between myself and the things surrounding me. From the standpoint of the perceived subject, these measurements just amount to abstractions made after the experienced fact. Rather, a spatial level is “a system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenal ‘place’ defined by its task and situation” (Ibid). As such, there is not one continuous spatial level but, rather, many spatial levels, each referencing different tasks and situations. Furthermore, a spatial level need not be constituted by the actual world that surrounds me (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 291-2). It is simply a gearing of my body to the world, and I can easily gear my body to the world I will be in tomorrow, by imagining what I might do then, or to a fictional Buenos Aires of the late 1940’s by reading Julio Cortázar’s *Final Exam*.

We obscure Merleau-Ponty’s point if we persist in thinking of perceived space as a three-dimensional, geometrical array. I see a dictionary across the room and its weight holding it fast to small table. There is a desk between it and myself. The dictionary is away from me, I must interrupt my reading and walk if I am to go after it. The desk is an obstacle, a certain course is necessary to circumnavigate it. When I get to the table, I must deal with the dictionary’s heft and lug it back here to my desk. On this account, the spatial level is just the aspect of my visual field that relates the possibility of approaching

things, that is, how far I have to go and what obstacles I must traverse to get to them.

The space of the geometer, Merleau-Ponty would argue, is simply an abstraction: I do not see myself at Y, the dictionary at X and calculate that I need to travel a certain distance to get there. Rather, getting the dictionary is a certain amount of work, and I have a certain amount of need for it, and perhaps, after all, as I am enjoying reading, I do not need to know exactly what ‘phalanstery’ means anyway.

If I imagine something that I might do tomorrow, I must still posit a spatial level, for it is in space that I do things. I consider that I have to go across town, that I will have to drive to get there. Likewise, when I “see” the scenes Cortázar describes, I relate myself to a park bench or a street light, or I put myself at the table in the café. If I can sit at a fictional table, it is because my arms can rest on a table, my legs can dangle from a chair beneath it, and I know what it ‘means’ to speak to someone on the other side of it. Merleau-Ponty’s claim is not that my imaginary wanderings in a fictional city could be mistaken for actual wanderings in a real city. He articulates the difference between the spatial level at which I live my actual, present life and other orientations I take up to the world or to fictional worlds in terms of clarity, richness, sensory integration and what might be called interactivity. He labels the spatial level containing the actual, present situation the ‘perceptual ground’ (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 292). It has sufficient and balanced degrees of ‘clarity’ and ‘richness’, arises in a perfectly integrated intersensory field and we can interact with it physically (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 371). Before considering how these factors vary between levels, we can understand them if we think about how they vary between things within a level.

Clarity and richness both relate to the ‘relatively determined’ nature of perceived things. Clarity is the distinctness with which I see a thing as a particular thing. The teacup I hold in my hand is very clear, as is the person I see through the window, in the distance, but the table I see vaguely from the corner of my eye and the bookcase behind me, which I do not see but of which I do have a visual awareness, are less so. Richness is richness of detail, the density of details we see within a determinate thing. The teacup is also very rich: I see a scratch on its handle, a pattern of coffee stains and small bits of tea leaves on the inside. My perception of the person in the distance is less so. I see that she has a face, with a mouth, nose and eyes, but I cannot make out her expression. She holds something in her left hand, it is white, but I can perceive nothing more about it. The table in peripheral vision is much less rich than she. I perceive it as a table because this is my office and it is organized for me with a table there. Something blue is on it, this is a dictionary, but I can make out none of its details in peripheral vision. The bookcase behind me is barely rich at all. It is a mass looming behind me, it holds books, my awareness of it is visual, but none of its details are distinct. At times there is a certain tension between richness and clarity. If I look at the wall before me, it is clear as a wall and relatively rich; I see holes from the nails previous tenants used for hanging pictures, large swaths of plaster that were never painted over, and the occasional mark from careless furniture moving. But if I go right up to the wall, I see the miniscule fissures of aged, cracking paint. I see the texture of the paint in rich detail. And now it is the small cracks, the texture that become clear to me while the wall itself recedes into a hazier background, losing clarity as it gains in richness.

As I sit here, only the teacup has substantial intersensory integration. I feel it in my hand and I smell the tea that fills it. If I tap it with my fingernails or swish the tea around, I hear its sounds. I can taste the tea, even the teacup. It is also interactive. When I touch it, it responds with pressure. If I lift it, its weight pulls against me. The teacup is at or near the center of my perceptual ground, but the person, the table and the bookcase share this spatial level with it. I have the capacity to get closer to and focus on any one of them and they will prove just as rich and clear, they will present aspects to each of my senses and they will invite me to make certain actions and respond in kind.

Now consider the perceptual ground in contrast to Cortázar's fictional café. The table there has a clarity and distinctness similar to that of the bookcase when it is behind me. Large parts of the café are entirely indistinct, only the table where the narrative action takes place presents determinant things. I still orient myself to it as a table in the situation the narrative provides: a tense discussion in a café, about fleeing Argentina, as rioters and the military battle it out nearby. In the same way, that is, without much in the way of richness or clarity, that I am visually aware of the table I can also "hear" the discussion and perhaps "smell" the cigarette smoke that pervades the air, but I cannot at all bring myself to "feel", tactilely, that I am there. My senses are not integrated. Physical interactivity is entirely absent. I cannot impact this world, I cannot reach out and touch a glass on the table and feel its response. I cannot raise my own voice above the din of the café and with the result that others listen.

Merleau-Ponty provides one final notion of relevance for the discussion of seeing-in. This is 'motivation'. Articulation of the intersensory field and the several particular

sensory fields is best described not, he argues, in terms of causal determination, but instead as motivated (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 57-8).

Motivation describes the power a variety factors have to influence the organization of perception. The world we perceive is perceived with the ‘meaning’ it has for us because the capacities of the body and the situation, including the world, in which we find ourselves motivate perception to organize it as such. A variety of factors, and kinds of factors, give us ‘reasons’ to perceive what we do. For instance, a perceiver might see something as an obstacle because, finding it in her path, she needs to get to the other side. These ‘reasons’ are not reasons in the sense that we ponder them and decide, consciously, to act upon them. Rather, they are motivating factors that together lead us to perceive in a certain way. This is not to say that the perceiver is determined by or at the mercy of these motivating factors. They are shaped in part by her various projects in the world, in some of which her own goals and choices play a role, and in so far as she decides to take up some particular project, her own choices give shape to the motivations that organize the world she perceives (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 301).

Elaborating Seeing-in: Four Issues

To restate briefly, Wollheim’s seeing-in based account of pictorial representation poses four issues, each requiring the further elaboration of ‘seeing-in’. Two involve Wollheim’s use of the notion ‘visual awareness’ insofar as we have come to view this as an amalgamation of sensory and conceptual elements. An elaboration of two points will

help us to make sense of this notion and aid us in shoring up Wollheim's account against two potential criticisms.

The first point is this: what are we to make of a visual awareness that is partly sensory and partly conceptual? That is, what more is there to say about the interplay of sensation and conception that makes up visual awareness? This will enable us to address the second point. Presumably, the awareness we have of things we see face to face can generically be labeled visual awareness. This awareness is, though fallible, quite stable in the vast majority of instances. But on Wollheim's account our experience of pictures, on the other hand, can change in the light of extra-pictorial information. The second point for elaboration, then, relates to how such information effects the visual awareness we have when viewing a particular artifact.

After considering visual awareness we will be better positioned to discuss twofoldness. Wollheim proposes that seeing-in is a single experience with two aspects, but he does no better than to describe each of these aspects as being like a single experience, each with its own particular object of visual awareness. The result is that there appears to be one experience comprising two potentially mutually exclusive and yet inseparable experiences. This opens his account to criticism on the grounds that seeing-in is simply impossible, as we cannot have a dual aspect visual awareness when each aspect itself contains visual awareness. The third issue is this: how can one experience have two such aspects?

Finally, with these issues resolved, we move on to consider a potential problem that plagues Wollheim, the problem of accounting for how the visible properties of the surface ground seeing-in. That is, when I look at this particular picture, a painting of a

leaf in fall, how is it that this particular pictures leads me to see a leaf in fall in it?

Wollheim denies that resemblance or imagination accounts for seeing-in, but says little about exactly what does. Especially for theorists who focus on the visible properties that give an object its potential qua representation bearer, Wollheim fails to provide a satisfactory answer to the question “In virtue of what does a picture represent what it does?”

Visual Awareness

The first question we ask, then, is how can visual awareness be both conceptual and sensory? Wollheim’s account of representation requires that a spectator see some thing or fact represented in a picture. That the awareness we have of what we see there is not merely sensational is shown when we consider the impact of information on seeing-in. For instance, a spectator may see two generic men and a bowl on a riverbank in Poussin’s *Landscape with Diogenes*. But, if the spectator is informed that one is Diogenes and the other a youth who has bested him, he may now be aware of these characters in particular. The bowl that at first merely lay on the ground is now seen as the one Diogenes has cast down. The conceptual aspect of awareness alters how the picture is experienced and how it is arranged in perception.

If this is hard to swallow, consider the duck-rabbit. When this picture is related conceptually to a duck, we see the eyes “looking” in one direction, when the rabbit concept is attached to it, they look in another. In the same way, the man standing in Poussin’s painting appears to stand differently once we know that this is Diogenes and

that he has just discovered this youth who has bested him in simplicity. His expression changes from one of curiosity to surprise. The right hand, simply held aloft for the spectator in ignorance, enters, for the informed spectator, the concluding phase of a particular gesture, casting down the now obsolete bowl.

What we see in a picture, our visual awareness of it, has a conceptual as well as a sensory component. The question, then, is what does this amount to? We can begin to enrich this formula, visual awareness equals sensation plus conception, if we consider it in the light of Merleau-Ponty's general comments regarding perception. As he describes it, all perception has 'meaning'. As we perceive, this meaning is not yet conceptual, but when we reflect on what we see we can ascribe qualities to things and think or speak of them in conceptual terms. The pre-conceptual meaning is a meaning for my body, for its needs and capacities, an aspect of the relation between it and whatever is perceived, that is, the world and, more specifically, the situation immediately surrounding it.

A bowl that merely sits on a riverbank beside two men has a different 'meaning' than one that has just been cast off. Against a social horizon, the first bowl belongs to someone. It is apprehended as not to be taken, or as hard to take, because it appears to belong to someone else. But a bowl cast off might have a different meaning, as free for the taking, or as trash. Merleau-Ponty stresses that meanings such as these are not conceptual, but are just the particular way that a human perceiver in a social milieu orients itself to a particular situation, with certain concerns providing a horizon or background in relation to which the meaning takes shape. Our concerns—in this example: social concerns—motivate us to experience the world in a certain way, e.g. the

bowl as owned or for the taking, and we take up those meanings insofar as they concur with our present project in our present situation.

Visual awareness, then, is not conceptual in itself. Rather, it arises with a meaning that precedes the conceptual grasp we have of a situation when we reflect on it. This meaning is simply the perceiving subject taking into account its possibilities in relation to its situation which, Merleau-Ponty argues, is built into perceiving and is a necessary factor for navigating the world. If perception did not arise with inherent meaning, we would find ourselves in the midst of a mass of mere sensations, with no bearings and reasons, no motivations, for even the most basic action.

The refined formula for visual awareness is this: visual awareness consists of sensations that arise with meaning insofar as our body orients them and itself towards them in accord with its present needs, capacities and milieu. Visual awareness is not conceptual, but we can see why it appeared to be: visual awareness has a pre-conceptual meaning that admits of easy conceptualization later. The pre-conceptual meaning of a thing comes with our perception of it, and this meaning comprises how we might interact with the thing and how it relates to our present situation. This should allow us to better consider the second issue relating to visual awareness.

The second issue is: how can information affect the visual awareness we have of a picture? Seen in the light of our recent considerations, we can reformulate it thus: given that visual awareness has pre-conceptual meaning, how can information, conceptual by nature, impact and change this meaning?

That this happens is clear from the example just considered. To make better sense of the problem, we can reflect on Merleau-Ponty's conceptions of 'motivation' and

‘horizons’. At times he uses them almost interchangeably, and a certain relation holds between the two. He often speaks of horizons as backgrounds. The past, for instance, constitutes a temporal horizon and we perceive present events against it, much as we see the object in the center of our visual field against the building in which we find it as a spatial horizon. As I walk down Draper Road in a drowsy haze, I have no need to reflect about where I am heading. The coffee shop I visit every day will still be there and I am oriented towards it because I am aware of it, in my past, and this is what leads me to it now. Horizons motivate the structuring of awareness. They provide reasons which we take up to form a relatively determinate world around us.

The totality of my horizons comprise my world and this combined with my present projects constitute my situation. Any element of my situation has the potential to motivate perception’s structuring of my awareness, including its pre-conceptual meaning. Draper is the road to the coffee shop because that is my destination. But if someone walks by and asks, “did you hear, the café burned last night?”, my situation changes. The world is no longer the same world and the motivation of my past that leads me to see this as the way to the café is superceded by a change in situation that makes me understand that I must seek a café elsewhere, or that leads me to forget coffee and seek assurances about my friend who was working there last night.

How, then, does the novel information alter my perception of the coffee shop? Let us consider the café in its visual aspect. The visual field extends beyond those things on which the perceiver can directly lay her eyes and encompasses the world of things that might be seen, with some regions richer and clearer than others. As I take my morning stroll to the café, I have a visual awareness of it, more distinct than I do of other places in

town I frequent less, and less distinct than I do of the buildings lining this section of sidewalk where I presently find myself. I am aware of it as a visible thing.

This visual awareness I have of the cafe is structured by a variety of factors. For instance, I perceive it more clearly now, when I am actually on my way there, than I would if I were merely going downtown to find something to do and I was aware of it as one of many possible destinations. As noted, my history and my temporary situation also structure how I see the café. It is the place where Carla works, it is owned by the woman who ejected my friend for drunkenness and also a place where he and I can no longer meet. But especially it is where I go when I need coffee, or just to get out of the house, or where I always stop on my way to or from the office. All of these things make me feel a certain way about the café, make it a comfortable or uncomfortable place to be, a respite or an obstacle to be circumnavigated depending on the present project.

When I hear that the café has burned, I learn that my situation differs from my awareness of it. It no longer makes sense to see the café as respite or obstacle. If my world and myself as a perceiving subject are to remain in accord, an alteration is required, even in my visual field. The new information is a sign that a region that was once relatively determinate must be seen differently. Until I approach the wreckage, or the new building that will replace it, that portion of my visual awareness loses its vivacity. If I want that vivacity back, I must go and look, and this is what the information motivates me to do.

Now reconsider the *Landscape with Diogenes*. When we look at the painting, we put ourselves into a situation that involves the characters portrayed. If we are not properly informed, we perceive them as people we know nothing about. But with the

information that this is Diogenes and that the youth that bested him, we are alerted to a misalignment between our awareness and the depicted situation. Motivated always to be properly aligned with our situation, the information leads us to look for the state of affairs depicted in the picture. We look for Diogenes casting down the bowl, and we see him doing this. It is not that the information changes the situation, but, rather, that it alerts us to something different or unnoticed about the situation that we must look for. When we receive information, our relation to picture is altered first. We learn that there is something to look for, something to see, and we seek it. This is the situation for me when I try to see the necker cube other than as it originally appears to me. I first decide that I must make a certain side the bottom, and then I force my visual awareness to take up this situation. The uninformed spectator of *Landscape with Diogenes* organizes the picture into strangers whose activity he can only vaguely specify. But the information alerts him to a more determinate experience and, if he attempts to reorient himself to Diogenes and the youth, he may have it.

Twofoldness

The preceding discussion of visual awareness is important for Wollheim's account because seeing-in includes a visual awareness of whatever is represented in a picture. This is what Wollheim calls the recognitional aspect of seeing-in, and it is like but by no means identical to actually seeing the thing represented face to face. The other aspect of seeing-in he calls configurational. This is like, but again by no means identical to, seeing the picture as a picture, that is, as a flat artifact, with patches of color, hanging on the wall of a gallery or held to the refrigerator by a magnet. The problem we now

address is: how does a single experience, comprising a single instance of visual awareness, also comprise two inseparable aspects, each of which contains a single instance of visual awareness and each of a different thing than the other?

We begin the approach to this problem by considering how the two aspects differ in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological terms. The perceiving subject grasps a perceived world by orienting the latter in terms of his or her possibilities, or bodily capacities. As noted, this need not be the actual world. I can pantomime playing an instrument or eating an apple even if no instrument or apple is there. I can visualize something I might do tomorrow afternoon, even if I am actually firmly rooted in the present. Any of these will involve placing myself in a spatial level organized by the possibilities I have of approaching it. I propose that we think of the configurational and recognitional aspects of seeing-in as two distinct spatial levels, that is, as two distinct worlds towards which we orient ourselves. Though Wollheim considers the two aspects inseparable, I consider them separately for the next couple of paragraphs to better get at their differences.

At the configurational level I might find myself oriented within a gallery, attending to the paint that covers a flat surface. At this level I find the perceptual ground, with the proper balance of richness and clarity, intersensory integration and interactivity that Merleau-Ponty speaks of. If I scratch the canvas, the paint comes off in flecks. If I touch it, I feel paint on a canvas. My intersensory field is integrated: I can feel what I see; and it is integrated with my actions, they produce effects that reverberate across this spatial world. If I look very closely at the canvas, so that only a portion of it fills my vision, I still see it as the canvas of a painting, or I see the woven strands as woven strands of this fabric to which this paint adheres.

At the recognitional level I orient myself towards a different spatial level, one that persists only so long as I attend to what I see in the painting, rather than to the brushwork qua brushwork or the wall on which it hangs. I see a bicycle in it, and I consider riding it, or I see a tree and admire its foliage. But if I reach for the bicycle or the tree, I only touch paint. If I try to chop down the tree, I put a hole in the canvas and the wall behind it. My visual awareness is neither integrated with my other senses nor most of my actions. Still, I can take up a position in relation to the bicycle or the tree and, as opposed to merely imagining, I can look at them, I can run my eyes from one end of them to the other and consider details of the bike and tree that pre-exist my awareness of them and which gain both clarity and richness, compared to mere imaginings, thereby. But if I get too close the bike and the tree disappear: I only see canvas, paint and brushstrokes. And this paint is not the paint of the bicycle, it is the paint of a painting: this spatial level is poorly articulated. This difference of clarity holding between the recognitional and configurational aspects of seeing-in is the same as that between the visual awareness at play in seeing-in and the visual awareness involved in what Wollheim calls seeing “face to face”.

This allows us to say something about what seeing-in is. When we see something in a picture, aspects of the picture motivate us to orient ourselves to a non-present spatial level, the world of the picture. This world does not motivate us as strongly as does the real world, but more strongly than mere imagination. It contains perceived things, but we cannot put ourselves entirely into this world, we cannot smell it and interact with it. But unlike mere imagining, the things we perceive in the world of the picture are relatively

determinate, they are oriented in a space, and if nothing else we can look at them and think about them.

The question remains: how can the perceiving subject simultaneously orient itself to two worlds? Here again we can consider the notion of ‘horizon’. Sometimes when Merleau-Ponty uses horizon, he merely means background. The horizon is an aspect of our situation that stands behind what we attend to more centrally and, in motivating how we see it, supports the perception we have of it. When I stare at the computer screen as I type this, the room around me shows itself only as fuzzy and indistinct, but it remains there. Without it I would perceive a screen floating in space, which, since I am from this reality, would prove grossly disconcerting. What I am doing, typing, makes the sense it does to me in part because this is my office, my notes hang on the wall in my peripheral vision, and my desk underlies the computer and I see it as if through a sort of haze.

In the same sense the configurational aspect remains as a sort of ground against which we see the recognitional. This is not to say that we experience both with equal vivacity, just the opposite. When I orient myself as clearly as the situation allows to the bicycle I see in the picture, everything else becomes less distinct. The brush strokes, even if they are garish and remain quite visible, cease to have the same value as brush strokes insofar as they can motivate the organization of my visual field. I can orient myself to these two worlds simultaneously because I can focus on one, relegating the other to the role of background. Wollheim himself says at much, noting that as we look at the picture “one aspect comes to the fore” and “the other recedes”, and claiming that as long as an aspect only recedes and does not evaporate entirely from awareness, the experience we have qualifies as seeing-in (Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 47).

What Grounds Seeing-in

This brings us close to our final consideration: what grounds seeing-in, or, what is the relationship between the visible properties of the painting and what it represents such that I see the latter in the former? Wollheim himself is reluctant to say anything about this. As noted, in *Painting as an Art* he writes that he doubts “anything significant can be said about what exactly a surface must be like for it to have this effect”, i.e., the effect of producing seeing-in (Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 46). I suggested in the previous chapter that the problem he alludes to might be this: nothing can be said about the pictorial surface *considered in isolation* that explains why it produces seeing-in.

By not addressing the visible surface, Wollheim fails to address substantial key component of the recent debate about pictorial representation, the role of the visible properties of a pictorial surface in determining that it represents a particular thing. This is because he thinks nothing significant can be said about the pictorial surface’s role in seeing-in. This, it seems, is because when we consider the surface in isolation, nothing can be said. A pictorial surface alone cannot sustain seeing-in. However, if we consider a pictorial surface in its actual context, the one where the spectator views it, we find that, in the proper situation, the visible properties of the surface do matter.

To provide a general answer as to what grounds seeing in, we can look to a concept of Merleau-Ponty’s that is in no way limited to the pictorial surface, or even the visual field. It unites disparate elements under their tendency to lead to particular organizations of perception. This is the now familiar concept of ‘motivation’. The factors that motivate the structuring of visual awareness derive from several sources.

Some of them can be described as situational facts and others as facts about human beings. Additionally, the configuration of the visual field itself contains factors that motivate the organization of awareness. By understanding not just this last source of motivation, but also its place within a variety of other factors that influence the organization of perception, we should be able to say something significant about those properties of a surface that motivate a spectator to see things in it.

Situational factors motivate us to look for something in a picture. When a pictorially competent spectator looks at a picture, she takes up the project of looking at it and places herself in a picture-looking situation. Somewhat like when I try to see the other orientation of the necker cube, the person looking at a representational picture approaches it with the intention of seeing something, not necessarily something in particular, in it. The gallery patron generally has experience with pictures and wants to enter the worlds they present. When she walks into the gallery, she is open to the experience, ready to use her capacity to enter non-present worlds, the same capacity she employs in reading a novel or visualizing her future actions.

Factors about herself and the world will influence the organization of these non-present, represented worlds. The worlds she finds in pictures will consist of relatively determinate things in the same sense that her actual world does because, like her perception of the actual world, the worlds of the pictures will be organized into things she can deal with as a human in a world with these conditions. In this respect, the organization of what we see in a picture must be somehow like the organization of what we see in general: the visual field is organized because we come to it with certain needs and capacities and these motivate us to organize it into things with which we can deal or

things we can make use of. This need to organize leads us to take up motivating factors in the visual field and to produce therefrom a certain organized structure. Merleau-Ponty discusses convergence and apparent size in this regard.

We perceive depth, he argues, because it aligns the world and our capacities. Depth is not visible in the visual field, just as it is not in the canvas. Rather, when perception aligns our capacities with the state of the world it “pulls” the dog that covers a larger area of the field than does a mountain into the foreground and “pushes” the mountain into the background. When we try to see the world of a picture, we use the same perception that relates things in depth. We see depth in the canvas because here too the small mountain must be pushed into the background and the large dog pulled into the foreground if we are to see this as a world with which we can interact, which, on Merleau-Ponty’s account, is the only way in which we can see a world. The convergence of represented parallel lines works the same way. As the sides of a road, real or painted, converge in my visual field, my perception pushes the converging end away from me and brings the diverging end closer. Also, consider occlusion. If one figure occludes part of another, the occluding figure must be seen in front of the occluded.

On Wollheim’s account depth is the most basic element of representation. A painting might represent depth and little more, but it must represent depth to be representational (Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p.8). Depth is not something we can calculate from a two-dimensional visible array, e.g., a painting. Rather, it is a relation between ourselves and things that we experience as the result of situational factors interacting with our tendency to make ‘something’, i.e., something that we can grasp and interact with as bodies, out of what we see. Certain configurations of paint on canvas,

like converging lines, relative size and occlusion, motivate us to take them up and experience depth so that we can experience something. Seeing figures can be seen along similar lines: a simply drawn smiley face has no deep similarity to any actual face, but it presents enough to motivate a being that watches for faces in her world to see one. A curved line and two or three circles, in the proper orientation, are enough to motivate our seeing a face if we want, or if some situation or life in general gives us a tendency, to see one.

In general, for a spectator to see something in a surface it must, at the minimum, contain visible factors that motivate her to experience depth, things like relative size, convergence and occlusion. In any particular instance of pictorial representation, the factors of the surface must be ones that can motivate her to see what is represented as it is represented in space. That is, if she is to see a road leading away from her in a picture, then the sides of the road must converge towards the top of the surface and diverge towards the bottom, *or*, some other factors must motivate her to see it as leading away. For instance, the sides of the road might remain parallel and it might run vertically across the picture, with houses lining the road at the bottom of the surface painted larger and occluding increasingly smaller ones as the artist moves up the canvas. Remember that motivating factors are just that, they are not ‘determinants’. If a surface contains contrary motivating factors, the spectator might consciously take up one and then the other, as in the case of the necker cube or the duck rabbit, or it might be that one is strong and the other is weak so that the former plays a role in what she sees and the latter goes unnoticed.

We can evaluate what this account of seeing-in gives us against the complaints addressed to Goodman. Goodman's theory, because it makes the relationship between the visible properties of a pictorial surface and that surface's capacity to bear representation arbitrary, allows for three disconcerting results. We considered the case of a photograph that represents troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad. The first was that it was that it is hard to believe that the role of the visible properties of the surface is arbitrary for representation, especially since this is a photograph and there is a demonstrable causal link between what is represented and the representation bearer. Given Wollheim's account, we could say, but not very satisfyingly, that the photograph can represent the troops because its visible surface is such that we can see the troops in it. The elaboration of seeing-in as motivated gets us a little further. Now we can say that the photo can represent the troops because it contains elements that motivate us to see troops, and to see them related to us, as spectators, in a certain spatial world. Certain aspects of the surface motivate us to see fatigues, faces and weapons. That one figure occludes another motivates us to see that figure in front of another. Furthermore, we can see these troops as oppressing occupiers or as liberating freedom fighters depending on the situation of the picture. We might find it beside an article about troop abuses, or one about heroic actions, or we might look at it after an anti-war rally, or in the wake of a terrorist attack.

The second disconcerting result for Goodman is that, given his account, convention and tradition might have led me to see in the same picture, not troops on patrol, but children at the circus eating candy. On our account, motivated seeing-in allows that a certain range of represented objects or states of affairs can be seen in a

picture, but not that just any can. In this world, in this situation, it is not possible for the photograph to motivate us to see children at the circus eating candy. In another world, where children are taller and generally have very short hair and dress in fatigues, and where candy looks like weapons do in this world and where the circus looks a lot like Baghdad, we might. However, motivation is not determination, and the visible features of the surface are not the sole motivating factors in seeing-in. So, not only can this photograph motivate us to see troops on patrol, but given our situation it might also motivate us to see occupiers or liberators.

The final disconcerting result for Goodman's account is that it seems to allow that convention and tradition could lead us to interpret any configuration of lines as troops patrolling the streets of Baghdad. Motivated seeing-in, of course, does not allow this. It only allows those configurations of visible properties of the surface that can motivate us, in certain situations, to see the patrolling troops to represent them. The photograph gives us a strong motivation to see the troops. A child's crayon and marker drawing will, in the right situation, do the same. The child might first have to tell us what his picture is of. But one of Caspar David Friedrich's nineteenth century landscapes, or a photograph of Che Guevara in his youth, resting on a balcony in Buenos Aires, will not motivate a spectator to see troops on patrol in Baghdad.

Conclusion

In the foregoing pages we began by considering the word ‘representation’. We found that in one of its senses, ‘representation’ refers to artifacts and other objects suitable for, we can now say, motivating us to see certain other objects or states of affairs, in a situation removed from our own, in them. In another sense, we saw that ‘representation’ refers to an activity, one peculiar to humans, that brings the intentions, world views, and situations of artists and spectators to bear on our experience of the pictorial surface.

We then considered three accounts of pictorial representation. The first was Hopkins’. It focused on the visible properties that give artifacts their capacity to serve as representation bearers, but too much so. By making the content of representation derive from these visible properties, Hopkins limits the meaning of pictures in an extreme fashion. Next we considered Goodman’s account. We found that Goodman pays excellent attention to the intentions involved in representation qua human activity, as well as to the situation surrounding this activity. But he makes the relation between the visible properties of a pictorial surface and what it represents an arbitrary one and, so, provides an account of pictorial representation that says very little about pictures insofar as they are objects that we look at.

Finally, we looked at Richard Wollheim’s account. This account focuses on the spectator’s experience of representation and here, in the experience, Wollheim is able to unite the visible pictorial surface with the intentions of the artist who makes it. He does so by positing seeing-in, a recognitional skill whereby we see in a picture what it represents. Seeing-in is a twofold experience where, in one fold, we have a visual

awareness of the pictorial surface and, in the other fold, we have a visual awareness of what the artist represents, where this is prescribed by her intentions.

However, while Wollheim is able to say that for a visible surface to represent some object, it must be one in which we can see that object, he provides us with no deeper understanding of how the surface relates to what it represents. In doing so he leaves himself in a position similar to that of Goodman, for though the relation between the surface and the represented is not arbitrary on Wollheim's account, there is still no account of what this relation consists in.

Furthermore, we found that Wollheim's account presents three additional curiosities worthy of further consideration. One is the peculiar 'meaning' we find in our visual experience. Another is how information impacts this experience, changing its 'meaning'. The third is the twofold nature of seeing-in, an experience with two aspects, each of which contains visual awareness of a distinct object. To address these four issues, the three curiosities and the missing explanation of the relation between the visible surface and what it represents, we sought to understand more about the phenomenology of seeing in. Wollheim acknowledges that this has been asked of him, but he never takes up the project himself.

To consider the phenomenology of seeing-in, we drew on several concepts from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, a phenomenological approach to perception in general. We then applied these concepts to visual awareness and seeing-in as a way of addressing the four issues. We found, first, that what we see is perceived with a meaning, peculiar to the perceiving body in its present situation, and given structure by its needs and capacities qua body and the conditions holding in the world

around it or resulting from its present projects. We then found that information can impact this meaning by alerting the perceiving subject to a change in its situation, directing it to seek a clarification, or to look for something it has missed, in the world it perceives.

In the discussion of twofoldness we learned that our experience of pictures consists in giving our body a dual orientation to two perceived worlds. We found that the recognitional aspect of seeing-in differs from the configurational aspect, and from seeing face to face as well, in terms of the richness, clarity and interactivity of the orientation of the body to that aspect, as well as in terms of the integration of the senses in the respective orientations. When we see something in a picture, it is less clear and less rich than the things we see in the world, and this seeing is not integrated with our other senses nor does it present us with some object with which we can interact. As such, the world we find in pictures does not have the same capacity to motivate us as does the real world, though in this sense it is stronger than mere imaginings. We also found that both aspects may be experienced simultaneously because, as we focus on one, bringing it to the fore of our visual awareness, the other recedes into the background but does not disappear altogether.

In considering what grounds seeing-in, we began by underscoring the mistake Wollheim makes when he says that nothing significant can be said about what “a surface must be like” to result in seeing-in (Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 46). It appears that Wollheim concludes this because nothing can be said in this regard about the visible properties of a pictorial surface when we consider it in isolation. However, when we consider the picture as it is actually experienced, in a picture-looking situation by a

human from this world, we find that we can say something about the relation between the visible properties of a surface and what that surface represents.

We saw that there are a variety of factors that motivate seeing-in, some external to the visible surface and some properties of it. We found that when we consider that a person is looking at a picture, with the intention to see something in it, that properties like convergence, occlusion and relative size can be ascribed to surface and considered as motivating factors for seeing depth in it. Furthermore, there are other factors that account for our experience of complex figures, and these will vary with the figure in question.

In the course of all of this a tangential issue has arisen, though not explicitly, and I would like to devote these final paragraphs to considering it. Philosophers presenting accounts of pictorial representation are often keen on distinguishing pictorial from literary representation. However, from a phenomenological perspective, there seems to be room for a project directed at a unified theory of representation, and, perhaps, a unified aesthetics of representational arts. One of the problems we encounter when considering seeing-in in the light Merleau-Ponty's concepts is exactly what seeing something in a picture amounts to.

In the foregoing discussion we found that when we see something in a picture, we orient ourselves to a non-present world. We enter it partially, with, so to speak, a portion of that visual aspect of our being. On the account we have considered, looking at a picture is not merely a fact-finding project, it is a way, an impoverished way, of interacting with a non-present world, of entering into a situation that is not our actual situation. Literature can be viewed in a similar manner. Reading a novel is not about collecting facts. *In Search of Lost Time* is not a compendium of facts about the life of a

man in France around the turn of the 20th century. It is an opening onto a world, a series of experiences that we can take up, a network of social interactions that we step into when we read the novel. We do not read that Charlus is pitiful, we pity him. We do not learn that the narrator is driven mad by Albertine's affairs, rather, we experience them as maddening in a fleeting way. In the same way, the photo of the condemned man or of the starving child invokes pity in us, or perhaps rage, because through the picture we enter a world with them.

Obviously, we can differentiate pictorial and literary representation in terms of visual awareness, as pictures present us more distinct and richer images than do novels. What remains is that both modes of representation involve artifacts that motivate us to orient ourselves to some non-present world. In the future, it might be worth considering a unified theory of representation on these grounds, attending closely to the differences in the motivating factors and the instances of awareness produced by pictures and literature.

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VITA

Jason Gardner

Address: 103 Lee Street
Apartment A
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Phone: (540) 961-5035
E-mail: jagardn1@vt.edu

Education:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
Master of Arts in Philosophy, 2005

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, 2003

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, 2003

Teaching Experience:

Instructor, *Virginia Tech*
Beginning in summer of 2005. *Global Ethics*.