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EXPRESSION: FEELINGS, ART AND COGNITION

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La valeur esthétique ou artistique est une valeur ultime, intrinsèque, une valeur finale qui ne mène nulle part au-delà d'elle-même... La connaissance et la sagesse peuvent nourrir et servir l'esthétique, mais l'esthétique -! comme l'éthique, la morale! - ne peut être utile qu'à elle-même.
Clement Greenberg.

Il me semble que ces peintures, d'une forte charge émotionnelle, ne doivent pas être admirées pour des raisons techniques ou intellectuelles, mais ressenties.
Brice Marden

Practice, perception, and the several arts are equally ways of gaining insight and understanding. The naive notion that science seeks truth, while art seeks beauty, is wrong on many counts. Science seeks relevant, significant, illuminating principles, often setting aside trivial or overcomplicated truths in favor of powerful unifying approximations. And art, like science, provides a grasp of new affinities and contrasts, cuts across worn categories to yield new organization, new visions of the worlds we live in.
Nelson Goodman

Neither art nor science could flourish if it did not give satisfaction, or if satisfaction were the only aim. Constable urged that painting is a science, and I suggest that science is a humanity. Putting them in opposition misconceives and hurts both.
Nelson Goodman

Abstract: In his 1976 book, *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman tackles the difficult problem of expression: what does it mean to say that such and such a work of art express sadness/melancholy/happiness/etc.? His answer is that such utterances dealing with works of art are metaphorical and that expression should be defined as metaphorical exemplification, that is as reference to the property or feeling expressed and metaphorical possession of this property or feeling. This definition is, obviously, heavily dependent on what Goodman means by "reference", by "possession" and by "metaphorical". In this paper, I will try to show that Goodman's definition of expression (and hence his thesis that art is or consists partly in a peculiar way of using feelings cognitively) is the center of his aesthetic theory, relying as it does on notions used in other parts of that theory. I will also try to develop the implications of both this definition and the notions it implies for a cognitive research program on the relationships between cognition and art.

1. Introduction

The four quotations¹ above illustrate nicely, I think, how one should not and how one should speak about art. They also show how revolutionary Goodman's attitude has been and still is in aesthetics.

There is no doubt that Goodman's main book on aesthetics, *Languages of art*, is innovative on many counts, but I think that its main contribution comes from the fact that he has shown that discourse about art could and should be radically different. He has made away with a great number of so-called "truths" about art, most notably all of those sayings about art's being ineffable, about art's lack of cognitive import (as in Marden's quotation above), about "aesthetic emotion" and about art's being its own end (as in Greenberg's quotation). To all of these "truths", Goodman replies by insisting on the fact that art, like science, is a way to knowledge and contributes to our construction of the world or worlds. He destroys nicely the distinction between art and sciences, based on the contention that art would rely on feelings while science would rely on reason; this highly reprehensible idea is claimed to be vindicated by the supposedly strong opposition between feelings and knowledge, reason or cognition. To these highly doubtful assertions, Goodman replies quite simply that there is no such opposition and that feelings do have a cognitive role. He also points out that art has a cognitive import and that science implies feelings as well.

This conception of art and science as two different ways of attaining knowledge is, I think, though not the only important thing that Goodman said in *Languages of art* (and subsequent works), the most important one. It has laid the foundations for a new way of thinking about art and science, cognition and feelings. I would like, in this talk, to outline the role of feelings in Goodman's aesthetics and to discuss it.

2. Expression and feelings

A good point of departure is the notion of *expression*: *what does it mean to say that a feeling is expressed by a work of art?* To answer this question, Goodman draws a first distinction between *representation* and *expression*, representation being of objects or events and expression being of feelings or other properties. Neither expression nor representation work by imitation. Expression of feelings, what is more, does not imply that either the artist or the viewer has the feeling or feelings expressed. Goodman points out, just as Diderot did more than two centuries ago, that an actor may express bodily a feeling or emotion which he does not have; he extends this claim to other artists: "A painter or composer does not have to have the emotions he expresses in his work" (Goodman 1976, 47). Goodman also shows that the emotions or feelings expressed are not those of the viewer either. Thus, expression is neither a matter of imitation nor a matter of causation. What is more, it is not distinguished from representation by a more absolute character: "With representation and expression alike, certain relationships become firmly fixed for certain people by habit; but in neither case are these relationships absolute, universal, or immutable" (Ibid., 50).

¹ I found the first two quotations in the french version of Thomas McEvilley's book, *Art, contenu et mécontentement*, where they appear respectively on pages 32 and 49. The two quotations of Goodman come from *Of Mind and other matters*, page 5.

Nevertheless, expression and representation can be distinguished by something more than their objects (feelings and properties for expression and objects and events for representation). Goodman notes that there are three kinds of things which can be said about a picture: a) what it represents; b) what its properties are; c) what it expresses. Those three kinds of things correspond to three different relationships, which, in the first two cases, are clear enough (respectively denoting an object and being an instance of a property), but which is much less clear in the third case. Goodman, to try and clear the matter, notes that when it is possible to say that a picture expresses sadness, it is also possible to say of it that it is sad. Up to a point, then, a feeling expressed by a picture is a property of that picture. Yet, clearly, it is not a property possessed by the picture in the same way as is, for example, the fact of being painted on canvas: “obviously works of art themselves do not feel what they express” (Ibid., 47). Goodman’s suggestion is that, for a picture, the difference between possession of a property such as being painted on canvas and possession of a property such as sadness can be found in the distinction between *literal* and *figurative* or *metaphorical possession*: whereas the picture **literally** possesses the property of being painted on canvas, it **metaphorically** possesses the property of sadness. This, however, is not the whole story about expression: expression **involves** metaphorical possession but it **does not reduce** to metaphorical possession. Rather, Goodman claims, “expression, like representation, is a mode of symbolization” (Ibid., 52).

3. Expression as symbolization

What mode of symbolization is expression? To account for expression, Goodman describes a peculiar type of symbolization, *exemplification*, of which he says that it “is an important and widely used mode of symbolization in and out of the arts” (Ibid., 52). The best way to describe exemplification is to use, as does Goodman, the example of tailor’s swatches of clothes: as Goodman points out, such swatches function as samples exemplifying some but not all of their properties. Typically a tailor’s swatch exemplify colour, texture, type and quality of material but **does not** exemplify size. What, then, is it that makes the swatch exemplify some properties which it has but not others, which it has as well? Goodman’s answer is simple: a swatch exemplifies only properties which it both **has and refers to**. Possession is intrinsic but reference is not and depends upon the system of symbolization used.

Thus, representation is denotation and the relationship is directed from the picture (description, etc.) to the object represented; exemplification is both possession and reference and both the relationship and the direction are double. It goes from the object to the label which may be applied to it (from the swatch to the color name for example) and from the label back to the object. Thus, “while anything may be denoted, only labels must be exemplified” (Ibid., 57), though the labels in question may be non linguistic. Under this definition, representation, possession and exemplification are clearly distinguished: *representation* is denotation and involves a relationship directed from the representation to the thing represented; *possession* is a matter of the object being an instance of some property and this relationship goes from the object to the label designating the property possessed; *exemplification*, finally, involves both possession and reference (it is in fact a peculiar type of reference, “a subrelation of the converse of denotation”, Ibid., 59) and is bi-directional.

Thus we have exemplification, and we can now follow Goodman and define *expression* as metaphoric exemplification. As we already have defined reference and possession, we must now go into Goodman's account of metaphor.

4. Metaphor

Goodman begins his account of metaphor by a comparison between *metaphor* and *catachresis*, or frozen metaphor. He wonders what difference, if any, there is, between saying of a colour that it is "grey" and that it is "cold". Saying that it is "grey" is obviously saying something literal about it, but somehow it seems that saying that it is "cold" is not much less literal, whereas speaking of alphabetical letters as colors appears rather more figurative². As he points out, "the usual (and metaphorical) answer is that a term like "cold color" or "high note" is a frozen metaphor - though it differs from a fresh one in age rather than temperature" (Ibid., 68). In other words, it seems that a metaphor gets more and more literal through its use. This fact, and the comparison between metaphor and catachresis is used by Goodman to justify looking at metaphors as not separated from "the actual": a metaphor says something which may be both literally false and metaphorically true. If this is the case, expression is not reference + false or pretended possession: "metaphorical possession is indeed not *literal* possession; but possession is actual whether metaphorical or literal³" (ibid., 68) and "the metaphorical and the literal must be distinguished within the actual" (Ibid., 68). This means that when we call a picture sad, though the predicate "sad" does not apply literally, it does nevertheless apply metaphorically. For all that, Goodman does not deny that the metaphorical application of a predicate is not straightforward and he points out that metaphor involves a conflict and gives as an informal definition of metaphorical use the assertion that "application of a term is metaphorical only if to some extent contra-indicated" (Ibid., 69).

This leads us to Goodman's main thesis about metaphor: metaphor is a matter of *transfer*⁴. However, it is not a single word which is transposed or transferred. Rather, according to Goodman, labels function not so much in isolation as in families or groups. Goodman remarks that categorizing is only possible within sets of alternatives and is relative to the other labels which might have but haven't been used, the alternatives being determined "by custom and context" (Ibid., 72). He introduces the following terminology: sets of alternative labels are called *schemata*, the extension of a single label is a *range* and the whole extension of all the labels in a given schema is a *realm*. Goodman insists on the fact that metaphor does not imply applying a label to a new range but **applying a whole schema (to which the label actually used in the metaphor belongs) to a new realm**. This is readily understandable if, as he claims, categorizing implies not only the application of a single label to an object, but the application of a label chosen

² The first two are Goodman's examples. The last is mine, coined from a letter of Nabokov, where he speaks about his small son: "He sees letters in color as Vera and I do and as Mother used to, but each of us has his own colors: for instance my M is a flannel pink, while his is light-blue" (Nabokov 1989, 59).

³ Italics Goodman's.

⁴ This may be the time for a pedantic reminder that "metaphor" comes from the Greek, *via* Latin, and means "transposition".

among all the other labels belonging to the same schema. In literal categorization, a label is chosen among all those belonging to a schema and applied inside the realm of that schema. In metaphorical categorization, a label is chosen among all those belonging to a schema and applied to a realm which is **not** the realm of the schema. As Goodman says, “the shifts in range that occur in metaphor, then, usually amount to no mere distribution of family goods but to an expedition abroad” (Ibid., 73). “A set of terms, of alternative labels, is transported; and the organization they effect in the alien realm is guided by their habitual use in the home realm” (Ibid., 74).

This invasion of one realm by an alien schema which, according to Goodman, is metaphor is both free and constrained: the choice of the realm which will be invaded is free, but the result of the invasion is constrained by the antecedent use (whether literal or metaphorical) of the label and the schema it belongs to. In other words, the choice of the peculiar label actually used among those belonging to the transferred schema is not entirely arbitrary and neither is the interpretation of the metaphor. When we apply temperature-terms to colors, we do not arbitrarily say that blue or grey are “cold” while orange or red are “warm”: our choice is conditioned by the normal use of temperature words. The survival of these semantic constraints explains why metaphor, though not literally true, may be true nonetheless.

Goodman then tackles the rather difficult question of what it is that metaphors say and what it is that makes metaphors true. He begins with the time-honoured claim that metaphor is an elliptical simile and that metaphorical truth of a metaphor is just the literal truth of the corresponding comparison. He remarks that this is a void claim in as much as anything is like anything else in some respect⁵; for it to make sense, simile must be construed as saying that the picture is like a person in that both the picture and the person, the first one metaphorically and the second one literally are sad. This, as Goodman claims, shows that the truth of the matter is not that metaphor is an elliptical simile or reduces to the corresponding simile, but that, on the reverse, simile reduces to metaphor and the difference between the one and the other is negligible. In this sense, metaphor and simile must be alike in meaning and the question of what makes a predicate apply literally or metaphorically might be answered through the answer to the question of the kind of similarity which must hold between things to which a predicate applies literally. As Goodman points out, obviously these things must have a certain property in common, i.e. the property which the predicate names. In other words, “the predicate must apply to all the things it must apply to” (Ibid., 78), and “standards of truth are much the same whether the schema used is transferred or not” (Ibid., 79). Goodman points out, quite rightly, that metaphor is subject to the same kind of things as is literal discourse: a metaphor may be vague, unclear, trivial, etc. And, just as literal discourse, metaphorical discourse may be trivially true, or true and non effective.

5. Metaphor and expression

The preceding exploration of metaphor was dealing mainly with verbal metaphor. How does this account fare when it is applied to possession or exemplification? Just as verbal metaphor was parallel to literal discourse, metaphorical possession and exemplification are parallel to literal possession and exemplification. And the above thesis about predicates and properties

⁵ About similarity, which is a very important problem both in linguistics and philosophy, see Goodman 1970.

applies directly to possession and exemplification: “a picture is metaphorically sad if some label - verbal or not - that is coextensive with (i.e. has the same literal meaning as) “sad” metaphorically denotes the picture. The picture metaphorically exemplifies “sad” if “sad” is referred to by and metaphorically denotes the picture. And the picture metaphorically exemplifies sadness if some label coextensive with “sad” is referred to by and metaphorically denotes the picture” (Ibid., 85). To this, it should be added that “a picture literally exemplifies only pictorial properties and metaphorically exemplifies only properties that are constant relative to pictorial properties” (86).

Thus, expression is strongly dependent on metaphor, but this should not lead us to think that any metaphorical statement about a picture, or more generally a work of art, has to do with what is expressed. In order to be about what is expressed, the metaphorical statement must be about the properties actually possessed (however metaphorically) by the work of art - that is, it must be about the work of art itself, rather than about the conditions of its production⁶, the property must be exemplified and not merely possessed and constant relative to pictorial properties. Thus, though all statements about what a picture expresses are equivalent or reducible to metaphorical statements about the picture, not all metaphorical statements about the picture are equivalent or reducible to statements about what the picture expresses.

Finally, though I will not go into it, for reasons of space and time, I would like to say a few words about Goodman’s theory of expression and systems of symbolization. *Languages of art* is neatly divided between semantics and syntax: there are a few semantic and syntactic requirements which apply to systems of symbols which the different arts may use, their notation or absence or notation, etc, their digital or analog nature, their repleteness, etc. All of this is what is meant by a system of symbolization.

To end this presentation of Goodman’s theory of expression, the best thing may be to quote his own summary: “If *a* expresses *b* then: (1) *a* possesses or is denoted by *b*; (2) this possession or denotation is metaphorical; and (3) *a* refers to *b*” (Ibid., 95).

6. Art and science, feelings and cognition

With expression, we have seen one of the central feature of Goodman’s aesthetics and one of the way in which feelings occur in a work of art. There are, nonetheless, quite a few other things which Goodman has to say about feelings and cognition, art and science. The first step and one which he undertakes rather quickly in his book, is to point out that the perception which we have of art, is not a static thing in two senses at least: for one thing, perceiving art is not a passive experience, but involves a lot if not all of our cognitive capacities; for another thing, our ability for aesthetic experience is not given once and for all. It changes through time and (hopefully) gets better and better through its very exercise: the more we look at art, the more perceptive of art we get. This is excellently illustrated in the chapter which Goodman devotes to *Art and authenticity* and in which he talks about the Van Meegeren’s forgeries of Vermeer. The Van Meegeren’s forgeries occurred in the thirties and the forgeries were only discovered when Van Meegeren himself said that the pictures were forgeries during his

⁶ I.e. it should not say that the picture could only have been painted by a drunk, a blindman, a madman, etc.

trial for collaboration with the Nazis in 1945. As Goodman points out, we, who know that the pictures are forgeries, find it difficult to believe that experts and museum curators could be taken in at the time. This, as he notes, comes from a double fact: the perceptive ability of the general public (not to speak of that of the experts) has become much better since the thirties; in the specific story of the Van Meegeren's forgeries, our awareness of certain features which differentiate Van Meegeren's forgeries and authentic Vermeer is much more acute because we have seen both the forgeries (knowing them to be fakes) and Vermeer's pictures and have been able to compare them. This apparently anecdotic story has two morals: the first one is that forgeries may not be that bad after all and the second one is that we actually have **knowledge** about pictures and not only **feelings** about them. This, however, does not mean that our knowledge and our feelings about pictures are entirely different things belonging to radically separate domains of our beings. In fact, just the reverse is true: knowledge about pictures, just as knowledge in general, is a matter of acute perception and discriminations and feelings enter it.

Goodman remarks that aesthetic experience is as disinterested an inquiry as is scientific experience and that it is highly doubtful that pleasure is a more prominent feature of aesthetic experience than of scientific experience. He also remarks that the postulation of a specific "aesthetic emotion" "can be dropped on the waste-pile of "dormitive virtue" explanation" (Ibid., 243). Thus, pleasure felt is not a distinctive feature of art, as opposed to science: rather, "in science, satisfaction is a mere by-product of inquiry; in art, inquiry is a mere means for obtaining satisfaction" (Ibid., 244). What is more, it is far from certain that all works of art give pleasure and it may quite well be that some of them are not more emotive than a scientific law⁷.

In fact, as Goodman points out, the endeavour to separate art from science on the basis of presence or absence of emotions comes from the traditional, and entirely false dichotomy between feelings or emotions on one side and knowledge and cognition on the other side. This dichotomy blinds us to the fact that emotions may function cognitively as they certainly do in art: "the work of art is apprehended through the feelings as well as through the senses" (Ibid., 248). This, however, does not mean that emotions and feelings, thus cognitively used, are different from what they are when they are not engendered by art, neither does it mean that they are less strong: "The fact that emotions participate in cognition no more implies that they are not felt than the fact that vision helps us discover properties of objects implies that color-sensations do not occur" (Ibid., 248). Thus, feelings may be and are very often used cognitively in the art, but this is not a necessary property of art: "cognitive employment of the emotions is neither present in every aesthetic nor absent from every nonaesthetic experience. (...) Indeed, in any science, while the requisite objectivity forbids wishful thinking, prejudicial reading of evidence, rejection of unwanted results, avoidance of ominous lines of inquiry, it does not forbid use of feeling in exploration and discovery, the impetus of inspiration and curiosity, or the cues given by excitement over intriguing problems and promising hypotheses" (Ibid., 251).

⁷ Goodman's examples here are respectively a (late) Mondrian picture or a Webern quartet and Newton's or Einstein's laws.

Finally, not surprisingly, one the main use of feelings in aesthetic experience has to do with expression: “emotion in aesthetic experience is a means of discerning what properties a work has and expresses” (Ibid., 248).

7. The advantages of Goodman’s Aesthetics

Goodman’s aesthetics has a lot of advantages and goes very far in the exploration and explanation of a number of problems which no other aesthetic theory has succeeded in accounting for. His plea for the renunciation of the dichotomy between feelings and cognition not only allows a parallel (and very welcome) renunciation of a lot of woolly-minded thoughts about art, it also promotes an entirely new field of research about art, feelings and cognition, and about feelings in cognition. I would like first to outline very quickly two of the problems Goodman’s aesthetics, and mainly his notions of expression and exemplification, helps to solve or to consider in a different way.

The first problem which is one which has been thought upon and written upon in aesthetics for a long time is the so-called *paradox of ugliness*. Roughly speaking, it is the question of how we can look at such horrible pictures as, for example, the central and bottom panels of Grünewald’s *Ishenheim Altar*, and yet feel pleasure rather than horror. Goodman’s reply resides partly in his remarks over the fact that what a picture expresses need not be a feeling which either the painter or the viewer have. His claims that pleasure is not necessarily present in aesthetic experience is another reply to the same effect. As he points out, under his assumption that emotion is “a mode of sensitivity to a work” (Ibid, 250), the paradox just dissolves.

This, however, is far from being the only problem that Goodman’s aesthetics helps to solve: another one is that raised by Thomas McEvelley in his book, *Art, contenu et mécontentement*, where the author attacks quite strongly the critics according to whom art should not have any content⁸. This opinion is meant to endorse the thought that art should not be figurative anymore. Quite apart from any agreement or disagreement with this opinion, it should be obvious that, unless content is defined as the thing denoted by the picture! - in which case, it should be clear, pictures of fictive objects have no content, which somehow does not prevent their being figurative! -, Goodman’s notions of exemplification and expression are a good answer to the question of the content or absence of content of a non-figurative picture. McEvelley fights as the champion of a content for non-figurative pictures and his informal argument could have been developed in a highly profitable way by the use of exemplification and expression.

These are only two of the questions which a judicious use of Goodman’s theory could solve in a simple and elegant way. His main contribution, however, has, I think, been very nicely pointed out by Roger Pouivet in his paper “L’esthétique est-elle inexprimable?”, where he shows quite convincingly that Goodman’s aesthetics⁹ provides a good argument against

⁸He quotes an especially questionable remark by Susan Sontag: “En dépit de ce qu’elle a pu être jadis, aujourd’hui l’idée de contenu est surtout une entrave, une nuisance, une forme subtile ou pas tellement subtile de philistinisme” (McEvelley 1994, 37).

⁹ Mainly its syntactic and semantic aspects into which I cannot go here.

Wittgenstein's claim (cf. Wittgenstein 1961) that it is impossible to say anything about aesthetics.

To end this paragraph, I would like to add that, by showing that emotion and cognition, far from being two opposite things belonging to radically different domains, are two faces of the same coin, Goodman provides us with a much larger domain of inquiry as far as both aesthetic experience and scientific experience are concerned. If he is right (and I hope I have not only said but expressed here how much I think he is right), inquiry about feelings and inquiry about cognition are both relevant to research on either aesthetic or scientific experience and, up to a point at least, inquiry about aesthetic experience and inquiry about scientific experience should merge. This means that a research program about art and cognition is not only possible but highly indicated and it should be remembered that such a program has been operating in Harvard for years¹⁰, under the name of *Project Zero*. As far as I know Project Zero was oriented towards experimental psychology and research in education. If this is the case, there should be some place left for a research project which might be oriented more toward Artificial Intelligence.

Finally, I would like to raise one question about Goodman's work concerning his relativism, with which I find myself in disharmony.

8. Some misgivings about Goodman's world of worlds

Despite my great admiration for Goodman, which I hope has been clear in the preceding sketch of his theory of emotion and cognition, there are some points with which I am not in complete agreement with him. The main one, which has hardly been prominent until now, has to do with Goodman's relativism, as it was exposed in *Ways of Worldmaking* and more recent works and which is, at least indirectly, linked with his aesthetics (as well as with his epistemology): according to Goodman, works of art as well as scientific research helps us not to discover the world we inhabit but to construct a world or worlds. There just is no world before any version which we construct and though versions are not equivalent in that some are bad while other are good, the evaluation of the versions does not depend upon their correspondance with a (non-existing) real or actual world. In other worlds, different worlds correspond to (but are different from) different **good** versions.

I think a good question was raised by Israel Scheffler, in his book *Inquiries*: he wondered whether Goodman was not ambiguous about that and whether he was not claiming at the same time that there is no world apart from any right version¹¹ and that "worlds are other than, and answers to, right versions" (Goodman 1984, 40). Goodman's answer is that we can have it both ways, that is worlds do not exist apart from right versions but they are nonetheless distinct from right versions. A right version is not a world because "a version saying that there is a star up there is not itself bright or far off, and the star is not made up of letters" (Ibid., 41). However there is no feature of the world which could exist independent of all versions: "what is true of a world is dependent on the saying - not that whatever we say is true but that whatever we say truly (or otherwise present rightly) is nevertheless informed by and relative to the language or other symbol system we use"

¹⁰ Since 1967.

¹¹ I will not have anything to say here about what it is for a version to be right or wrong according to Goodman.

(Ibid., 41). In much the same way, Goodman insists that we make worlds and stars¹², not in a way similar to the way we makes bricks or houses, not with our hands but with our minds, with languages and symbol systems.

I just cannot agree with that and I think that a very good proposal was made by Barry Smith in a recent ECAI workshop: he proposed what he called “categorical schema which is both critically realistic and comprehensive. Thus it enjoys some of the benefits of linguistic idealism¹³ and physicalism, without (or so it is hoped) the corresponding disadvantages of each” (Smith 1994, 15). Smith’s solution is both elegant and simple I think: it consists in preserving the actual world, allowing nonetheless the boundaries of objects to be, to a certain extent, arbitrary. “The entities in question (fiat objects and fiat processes) are autonomous portions of autonomous extended reality and are “objective” in this sense. The respective boundaries, however, are created by us; they are the products of our mental and linguistic activity, and of associated conventional norms and habits” (Ibid., 21). This also allows a preservation of the notion of truth: “Judgment-shaped parcels of reality can in this way be said to exist in autonomous reality, and to make our judgments true, yet the recognition of such entities is still consistent with that healthy respect for Ockham’s razor which is the mark of all scrupulous ontology” (Idem).

This leads us back to stars and constellations: in a reply to Israel Scheffler’s insistence that stars existed before any wordly versions, Goodman (1992) invokes the case of a constellation, namely Ursa Major, the Great Bear. He tries to show through a short but telling dialogue that not only constellations but stars do not preexist any version or world. I think that Smith’s proposal, very roughly sketched above, can help answer Goodman’s objection: there is an autonomous reality but its parcelling into things entering categories is arbitrary (and transient) to a degree. If, for example, we already have parcelled our world into stars and non-stars, we can construct constellations of stars. Goodman’s objection to this is presumably the following: “ce qui ne bouge ni ne bouge pas, qui n’est ni *en tant que* chose-ainsi ni *en tant que* non-chose-ainsi, se réduit à rien” (Goodman 1992, 17). This, it should be clear, is one of Goodman’s stronger hypothesis on representation¹⁴: it is impossible to represent something *simpliciter*; we can only represent something-as. This is certainly true for representation (and language!), but I cannot see why it should be true for existence. It can be only possible to have representation-as, but this does not entail that it is only possible to have existence-as.

Thus, I think that Smith’s proposal is a solution which respects the variety of versions without leading to discarding the actual world or the notion of truth. I also think that it is consistant with Goodman’s aesthetics if

¹² Stars come in because Scheffler has insisted (rightly, I think) that we cannot have made the stars.

¹³ I should probably point out that I do not take Goodman for an idealist. I take him to be what he claims to be: a relativist. Nevertheless, I think that Smith’s solution works well and is a good account of categorization while escaping relativism (it may be a matter of taste, but relativism does not appeal to me).

¹⁴ It is in fact nothing more nor less than the basis of his hypothesis concerning metaphor: there is no label in isolation but there are labels in schemata.

we reconsider his assertion that art consists in the production of world and say rather that art leads us to see the world in different and unaccustomed ways. It does not seem to lead to any difficulty as far as Goodman's semantic or syntactic requirements for symbolic system are concerned though it does lead to one difficulty: it is not easy to see how the rightness of a version could be accounted for in other ways than through its truth under Smith's proposition and truth does not seem very easy to assess for quite a lot of works of art (abstract painting comes to mind, but all non-verbal art is concerned in fact, just as is literary fiction). I think, however, that there are quite a few solutions to this problem (see Moeschler & Reboul 1994 and Reboul to appear) and that, however much a research program on art and cognition should adopt most of Goodman's aesthetics, it should not necessarily adopt Goodman's relativism.

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