Two Requirements for a Theory of Cognitivism in Art: Reconciling the Tension

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Abstract

If art has cognitive value, we expect a theory to be able to capture this value with some specificity, and in acceptable terms. Such a theory also needs to show why art is the only effective source for reaching the cognitive value. These are the requirements put forth by the anti-cognitivists. The cognitivists fail to reconcile the tension between them. They argue for a clearly expressible cognitive gain but justify it through its validity in other sources, like science. This precludes art from being the only effective source of this cognitive gain. The art becomes superfluous. I argue for a theory beginning with this second requirement. The aesthetic point of view is unique to art – the perspective in which we are disinterested in utility, pleasure, or other points of view which concern our normal life. This point of view allows artworks to invoke cognitive entities in us – concepts, percepts, and affects. Art has us contend with them as objects of interest, rather than as tools for navigating life. Art compels us to deal with these cognitive objects' boundaries, extent, and relationships. This satisfies the first requirement, without losing ground on the second

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0 – Introduction

The problem of cognitivism in art concerns whether we gain anything cognitively valuable from art. Cognitivists argue that we do get something; it could be knowledge, understanding, morally pedagogical experiences, etc. Anti-cognitivists argue that we do not. Art can be enjoyable, a distraction from boredom, emotionally provocative, an historical artifact, a financial investment, and many other things, but it is not valuable to us cognitively.

Any theory of cognitivism, no matter the cognitive value it argues for, must satisfy two requirements: clarity and uniqueness. Clarity is satisfied when a theory of cognitive value can point out a particular cognitive gain. Uniqueness is satisfied when a theory of cognitive value can identify a cognitive value that can only be effectively gained through art. Cognitivist accounts tend to fail the uniqueness requirement, while satisfying clarity. The reason is that there is a tension which builds when an account attempts to satisfy clarity before uniqueness. Theories that satisfy the clarity requirement do so by appealing to a particular cognitive gain that is achievable through other sources. This value is tethered to this non-art source, and thereby cannot only be gained through art. Uniqueness becomes unachievable. The clarity requirement fulfilled in this way precludes the theory from fulfilling the uniqueness requirement.

I reconcile this tension by changing the order of approach. I argue for uniqueness first. What is unique to art is that we approach art with a uniquely aesthetic point of view. While we can be interested in the aesthetic value of anything, art is the context which prioritizes this point of view and demotes other practical points of view. I then show that this aesthetic point of view puts us in the position to gain something cognitively valuable, and this can be put into words with some specificity, thus satisfying the clarity requirement. The aesthetic point of view, by denying our practical everyday concerns, allows us to deal with the cognitive entities of our experience as they

are. The percepts, affects, and concepts, which we use in our normal life, are made the focus of our concern, as we need not worry about their correspondence to our experience, or their utility. The cognitive value of art is that it allows us to deal with out cognitive objects (percepts, affects, concepts) as the objects of our concern, and reframe and reorganize them, when we take the appropriate perspective towards art.

0.1 - Section Overview

In §1, I cover the various anti-cognitivist objections to cognitivism in art. These objections approach cognitivism undermine various potential cognitive values. These are not my primary concern. What I aim to show is how these objections conceive of the problem of cognitivism. They put pressure on the two requirements - clarity and uniqueness. Peter Lamarque makes this most explicit, and so I rely on his concerns more heavily. Other objections are still relevant though, both to present a full picture of anti-cognitivism, and to underline that the two requirements are truly fundamental. This underlying concern attacks cognitivism at its core. It asks us whether there is a necessary connection between art and cognitive value, and thereby what must be made sense of to allow us to even broach the question of *what* cognitive value there is. Following this overview I present a fully-fledged account of the requirements for a theory of cognitive value.

In §2 I give an overview of the cognitivist theories of Martha Nussbaum, Noël Carroll, and Catherine Elgin. They each argue for different cognitive values, but they share a method of approach. Each satisfies the clarity requirement first. These views identify a cognitive value, and justify this cognitive value via its presence in another source, be it everyday experience, philosophy, or science. Unlike the anti-cognitivist charges, the cognitivists do not make the requirements explicit, yet still deal with them to some extent. Having established the anti-cognitivist charge however, such

theories will no longer suffice. The requirements are not only something imposed by anti-cognitivists, but are implicitly dealt with by the cognitivists as well. The cognitivists have a problem in their approach though, brought out by the aforementioned order. They all prioritize the clarity requirement first, and in such a way that makes the uniqueness requirement impossible to satisfy. Thus, if we do get anything cognitively valuable from an artwork, it is incidental rather than necessary that it came from an artwork.

In §3, I develop an account of cognitivism that reconciles the requirements from §2. In contrast to the contemporary views I presented, which attack the clarity requirement first, I attack the uniqueness requirement first. I argue that what is unique to art is that it is the ideal context of aesthetic experience. Engaging with art requires us to prioritize our aesthetic point of view, over other practical points of view. While non-artistic contexts require our practical, moral, or even existential concerns first, and only on occasion elicit an aesthetic point of view, art prioritizes the aesthetic point of view. This aesthetic point of view satisfies the uniqueness condition. Art is that context where this point of view is prioritized, and other concerns are dropped. This allows us to focus on our cognitive objects as they are, rather than on the world and our experience. For these cognitive objects I use Deleuze's notions of percepts and affects as well as concepts. These are cognitive entities which we use in navigating our lives, but in art, because the practical concerns have been dropped, we can experience these for what they are, and forge connections between them, which may not in be available to us in our normal lives. I support this idea using Deleuze's notion of irony and humor, which overlaps with the analytic incongruity theory of humor. We need not commit ourselves to Deleuze's overall theory, in order to accept this view.

1 - The Anti-Cognitivist Charge

Anti-cognitivist views are prevalent within philosophy, but at least anecdotally, are not commonplace outside of philosophy. In conversations I have had with artists, I often ask them about what their art does, or if they think there is a value beyond pleasure or appreciation in their art. Usually, they respond yes, unless they have some nihilistic views about the state of art in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, they cannot tell me what that value is. If they do try to point out a value, they tend to appeal to precisely the sort of cognitive value that the problem of cognitive value tries to press on: a vague cognitive gain whose value is inexpressible, a moving experience, or perhaps epiphany. Beyond artists also, this intuition seems pervasive. In a course on the philosophical value of art a guest lecturer, Prof. Timar, who works in literary studies, remarked that the question of cognitivism in art is practically nonsense in her field. It is assumed that literature is cognitively valuable. This is basic to so much of the work. Yet this cognitive value is never made explicit. That literature has cognitive value, and that this can be made clear, is the basis for treating literature as an area of study, as something that can be interpreted, and is worth spending time on outside of enjoyment.

These anecdotes show two things. They solidify the stakes of cognitivism in art. If this assumption about art (incl. literature) is false, then our engagement with art might need reassessment; we have been overvaluing art. They also clarify that the idea that anti-cognitivism only really develops against a background of implicit cognitivism. This means that we should take anti-cognitivism seriously, as a clarification of what we even mean by this cognitive value. Anti-cognitivists press on the unsatisfying idea of a vague value and have since had a response to many of the attempts to explicate a cognitive value.

In Lamarque's paper *Cognitive Values in the Arts: Marking the Boundaries (Lamarque, 2019)*, he goes through a series of ways that the cognitive value of literature and representational art, specifically knowledge, can be parsed out. There does seem to be value in art, particularly literature, in how it can aid our cognition. But this knowledge would always be secondary to literature as art. We do not read literature with the goal of getting knowledge, nor are we disappointed when we do not learn something from a novel. When we do learn through literature, it is not clear that this was crucial to appreciating the work. This is the strong objection from which I develop the uniqueness requirement.

Lamarque also brings up particular charges. If we are dealing with something as specific as knowledge, which deals with truth, the veridicality of this knowledge is not critical to the work. There seems to be more value in how Long Island is described in *The Great Gatsby*, and the social/geographic relations that it supports, rather than if West Egg is a real place – it is not. Moreover, the benefit of this sort of cognitive evaluation varies from work to work. We might learn about how life-affirming love is in one story, and how destructive of life love is in another. These specific charges are not categorically anti-cognitivist, especially if we move away from truth/knowledge, but they point out the kind of thing we might desire as a cognitive value. Then the strong objection makes clear that whatever the value is, it is not what we are primarily interested in in art. If we are interested in knowledge, for example, we ought to read a history book, or argue with friends. Even going to semi-reliable sources like Wikipedia will serve us better, as it has the aim of providing us with knowledge. That we learn from art, gain something cognitively valuable, is incidental for Lamarque.

Among the particular objections, M. J. Sirridge (Sirridge, 1975) argues against propositional knowledge from fiction. Sirridge identifies three ways in which we might get propositional

knowledge; explicitly in sentences, implicitly by a sort of poetic meaning, or a combination of the two. Sirridge attacks the justification of such knowledge. Propositional knowledge is the most stringent with its truth conditions. There needs to be correspondence with the world. If we were to get propositional knowledge from a novel we would not have reason to believe it, and we might not even know when we have it. If a proposition is made in a novel, and suppose it is true – *All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way* - the justification for this is tenuous. How could one prove this at all through the novel? Any proposition that would support this claim in the book only pushes justification back further. While the novel may be coherent, there is no justification from fact. It is epistemically irresponsible to gain knowledge from literature. Outside of this regress, there also needs to be something systematic about how the propositions, explicit and implicit, within the work gain their meaning. If this line from Tolstoy is explicitly true, we could take all other lines as explicit as well, interpretable in the usual way. But if other lines are implicit, the interpretation of these needs to be consistent, and cohere with the explicit propositions too. Implicit language does not have the form of factive propositions. It needs to be interpreted. Sirridge argues that literature does not give us any clear way of interpreting a work. This is evidenced by the sheer variety of interpretations that literature and art incur. We might object to Sirridge's argument, but the worry remains, that we probably cannot gain propositional knowledge from literature/art, and if it is possible, it is not epistemically responsible.

Whether we get propositional knowledge does not seem like the primary target for a cognitivist position. A novel that simply lists explicit facts might be the best way to get such knowledge. It would be clearly interpretable, coherent, and although the justification is still wanting, we can accept it tentatively. This does not press on the intuition I mentioned above, the intuition about some deeper cognitive value. No one really expects to learn propositional knowledge from art. The rest of the objections below still tend to focus on knowledge, but this is not crucial. I aim to

uncover what these objections make of the intuition about cognitivism, and knowledge is just an easily presentable target. These objections solidify the generality of the requirements.

Jerome Stolnitz provides another objection - *triviality*. Trivial knowledge is knowledge which, although it might be true, lacks any obvious construal. Consider the knowledge, *Hybris may destroy a great person if they do x*...(Stolnitz, 1992 p.195) This may be true, but in a novel it becomes either too specific, or too broad to be non-trivial. *Hybris may destroy a great person if they are not humbled*. This is an overly broad claim. Was this what we were meant to learn from a novel? This says so little, and what it does say might better be given to us through our common sense, by reading a history book, or as Stolnitz claims, even through religious truth. In the other direction, *hybris may destroy a great person if they fly so close to the sun that the heat melts the wax with which their wings are built.* It might be disingenuous to be this specific, but it drives the point home. If we try to avoid the broad triviality of artistic knowledge, the specificity of a book or allegory's knowledge is likewise trivial. This is the actual explicit knowledge learned through Icarus. Again, this is trivial for us, and could have better been learned though another source. We could have deduced this from our existing knowledge.

This introduces a further aspect of triviality. Art, although a group of works, practitioners, and media, has no coherence between them. There is no aim, and no basis from which art develops. There is no building from knowledge of one artwork to another. Art can be referential to a previous piece, take *Ulysses* as reference to *The Odyssey.* Art can also develop through genre, as cubism develops into de Stijl, dada, and others. These are clear developments and influences, systematically building off style and content, but no edifice of knowledge or cognitive value plays any part. This problem is supported by Noël Carroll (Carroll, 2012) in what he calls the *no-evidence* objection. Art provides no reason or evidence to accept would-be knowledge. Carroll combines Sirridge's worries about epistemic responsibility, and Stolnitz's worry about systematicity. Lack of evidence means we

have no epistemic justification, and in virtue of this our new knowledge cannot be used as evidence further on.

A further reason that artistic knowledge is trivial is that it is neither confirmable, nor disconfirmable. There is no way to check if a piece of knowledge from art is actually knowledge, we just have to accept it or reject it. There can be confirmable knowledge, like whether West Egg is a real place, but this falls to Sirridge's objection. Confirmation and disconfirmation regard these trivial sorts of knowledge like what we might learn about love. That love saves and destroys in two separate stories is not worrisome for artistic knowledge. Confirmation is crucial to scientific, moral, historical, and even religious knowledge. This objection Carroll also modifies a bit, as the *no-argument* objection. Even if we were to have evidence, art does not argue, or try to make clear what the cognitive value is. But how could a painting even argue, or try to present its cognitive value? What Carroll adds is that there is no argument for us as the viewers either. We do not primarily worry about having received any knowledge or learned anything. Lamarque also claims this. Beyond having it though, we do not worry about justifying this knowledge, or convincing others of it. We do not argue for it either. When we do discuss art it is often about the aesthetic value, the symbolism, even the historic or political interpretation. The cognitive gain we might get through interpretation, and discussing our interpretations, does not concern the artwork itself. It concerns the context of the artwork, its relation to other artworks and the world, but not the content or experience of the work itself.

1.1 - Anti-Cognitivist Main Points

These objections point to underlying requirements on cognitivism. The cognitive value should be particular and expressible in language – it should be clear. Knowledge is such a great metric for this value; it has very particular conditions and is expressed in language. No-argument,

no-evidence, non-systematicity, contradictability/provability; satisfying any of these requires having a particular cognitive value that is expressible with some specificity - without vagueness. Triviality brings this worry out the most. Triviality, if stripped to its essential point, is that artistic knowledge is vague. The way it is vague and trivial varies according to the specific objections, but no matter what, artistic knowledge is vague. The other condition is that the artistic cognitive value must be unique to the art. Lamarque made this clear, that anything we get from art that could be cognitively valuable, is not so due to the presence of the art. Sirridge's argument supports this indirectly. By showing that we cannot get knowledge from art because it is unreliable, we are pointed to this sort of epistemic reliability as being crucial to science for example. Stolnitz looks at knowledge gained, and part of its triviality is precisely that it could have been gotten much more effectively from another source. Art played an incidental role. Sirridge and Stolnitz also explicitly anticipate the uniqueness requirement. Sirridge mentions that there could be an *emotivist critique,* a critique that posits a less stringent cognitive value akin to *inflammatory rhetoric* – something that compels imagination. Sirridge thinks that this moves too far in the other direction of a cognitive value, that this is just a sort of invocation of feeling, and not truly cognitively valuable. She then follows this by saying that the cognitive value, if it exists must be shown to be "due to their [the works'] peculiar status as works of fiction" (Sirridge, 1975 p.470). Stolnitz, in a less optimistic tone, mentions that "None of its [art's] truths are peculiar to art" (Stolnitz, 1992 p.198). The cognitive gain from art is something we can better learn outside of art, and is trivialized in art.

1.2 - Two Requirements

The anti-cognitivist objections reveal two requirements for a theory of cognitivism if we want to really address the intuition at its core. They object that the cognitive value is not essential to an artwork as an artwork. They also demand that the cognitive value not be vague or trivial; that it

can be easily pointed out and expressed. These demands are reiterated from the cognitivist side by Eileen John (John, 2018; John, 2001). She claims that there are two desiderata for a theory of cognitivism. She thinks the theory must provide what the cognitive value is and how it is justified; but also, the theory must provide a reason for why the art was needed to achieve this cognitive value. For John these need not be fulfilled per se. I refine these into full-fledged requirements considering the objections above:

Clarity – a theory of cognitive value in art must be able to identify a particular cognitive gain, and capture this gain in language

Uniqueness – a theory of cognitive value in art must be able to identify a cognitive gain that can only be effectively gained through art

Clarity demands that our theory of cognitive value identifies a particular, and clearly delineated cognitive value. This contrasts with the vague intuition. Knowledge is beloved as a paradigm cognitive value because knowledge is clearly delineated. *Clarity* also demands that the cognitive value can be captured and expressed in language. We cannot just say it works through epiphany. Again knowledge, especially propositional knowledge, is a great example. Propositional knowledge is language conditioned - the knowledge must be a proposition. We should not conflate being able to capture the value in language with the cognitive gain being language conditioned. Understanding does not need to be put into language, but can still be described and pointed out with accuracy through language. Other than these epistemic examples, we might think that something is pedagogically useful, and therefore cognitively valuable, and this is perhaps best pointed to by example and description. It still fulfills clarity if it is particular and can be captured in language with some specificity.

Uniqueness demands that the connection to art cannot be incidental. If we do get a cognitive value from a work of art, even if it satisfies clarity, the fact that it was gotten from art needs to be necessary to the value. If we do not show this, then we are not really worried about cognitivism in art, but just a general theory of cognitive value. I call this *uniqueness* to depict the strongest version of this requirement. Uniqueness goes beyond showing the necessary connection between the artwork and the value, but emphasizes that the art as artwork is what determined the value. We could get a cognitive value, and have it be necessary that it was through art; take for example finding cave paintings in a region where previously no evidence of humans had been found. The paintings were necessary for this to have been learned. But this knowledge does not pertain to the artwork functioning as an artwork. The particular artwork, and the experience of it, is not necessary to the cognitive gain. Uniqueness more stringently demands that the art-ness is what we are interested in, as a way to get past Lamarque's objection.

Now we have these two requirements. Both are crucial to a theory of cognitive value, unless we are ok with accepting some of the objections. It remains to be shown how they are in tension. Only then can I put forth a view that would reconcile them. In the next section we will see that most cognitivist approaches do take these requirements into consideration, if only implicitly. How these theories approach the requirements will make clear that the tension between them is in virtue of the order in which cognitivist theories deal with them. They take on clarity first, which I will show makes uniqueness insoluble.

2 - Cognitivist Approaches

In the last section I outlined the requirements for a theory of cognitive value in art: *clarity* and *uniqueness*. This section shows how cognitivists have tried to answer the overall question of cognitive value in art, and how their views deal with these requirements. I argue that they inadvertently bring out a tension between these requirements, which precludes them from developing a satisfying theory of cognitivism. Following the exposition of these views, I clarify this tension and how the order of approaching the requirements influences the effectiveness of a theory.

2.1 - Cognitivist Views

The first two views take the cognitive value of art to be a tied to a particular type of experience. These views focus on emotional or moral development. The idea is widespread, so I only mention a few views which I think are the strongest versions of this view. Such an experience itself I do not take issue with. Rather, the justification for why we should accept these experiences as cognitively valuable is my target. Martha Nussbaum argues that literature helps us develop our moral/emotional capacities. This is justified by our acceptance that real-life experiences develop these capacities, and our acceptance that art can do the same thing, if not better. Noël Carroll argues for a similar moral development, but on the grounds that art does what thought experiment does, and we accept that thought experiment is cognitively valuable. The last view I consider is that of Catherine Elgin, which is an account of exemplification. This view argues that art functions in the same way as science, not only philosophy. Art is a particular instance where the features of the composition can be controlled and set up so that one feature is made more prominent and available for interpretation. This describes art, as much as a scientific experiment. Elgin extends the line of thinking of Carroll to not only be analogous to science, but shows that they are at their base, the same, in terms of cognition.

2.1.1 - Nussbaum

Martha Nussbaum, in *Cultivating Humanity*, argues that reading narrative literature develops one's compassion through *narrative imagination.* Narrative imagination is the broad cognitive action by which one enters the world and the stakes of a novel, and thereby can develop compassion for the real world.

> "[Narrative imagination] inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life, not all of which is open to view [in the actual world]; in the process, the reader learns to have respect for the hidden contents of that inner world, seeing its importance in defining a creature as fully human" (Nussbaum pp. 90).

We might not know what it is like to be of another race, live in another culture, or deal with certain hardships. We might never have these experiences in actuality. The narrative, by virtue of the detail and skill of the author, brings our imagination deep into these situations. This is where the development of compassion occurs. Compassion is defined as recognition of the suffering of someone similar to me, for which they are not fully blameworthy (Nussbaum 91). That I find the characters or situations like me and my own is important, since compassion also requires that I can recognize that I can be vulnerable to this misfortune too (Nussbaum 92). By giving us insight, which normal life does not provide, we begin to realize the similarity of our existence. Although I am not a member of this race, some of these experiences, thoughts and situations this character finds themself in humanize them for me in a very profound and specific way. They become like me, or I them, beyond their abstract humanity. This is compassion from imagination. It is a compassion born of fiction. Compassion is then a mix of emotional and moral capacities, both of which are cognitively valuable.

Suzanne Keen makes an important note to this value of literature. We might think that the fictional dimension of literature (and other art) makes it unreliable for developing our emotional/moral skills like compassion. If the story is false, then it may have created an inaccurate scenario, and the compassion we develop could just be a farce. Our compassion could be revealed in actuality to just be narcissism, or projection. Beyond art, we could also experience deep insights into other human experiences by reading journalism, or hearing confessions of real people. Such experiences cannot inaccurately depict a scenario in the way that fiction can. Keen makes the point that when we know that something is not true, not about reality, we let our guard down. In non-fiction, or in real life, we are suspicious of the truth of matters. Consider how many of us are shamefully suspicious of being asked for money by strangers who have a plausible backstory for why they need it. We want to know if the story is true. This is no concern in fiction. We are more open to being led to compassion in fiction because there is no worry of being deceived (Keen 29). Narrative imagination is uninhibited in literature and can thereby lead us to compassion better.

2.1.2 - Carroll

In a similar vein, Noël Carroll argues that art, and again especially literature, can give us moral knowledge. Carroll describes for us a *virtue wheel*, a structure within literary works through which the various characters appear in contrast to one another with respect to a particular virtue (Carroll 217). It presents a way to understand what a novel does through narrative in a more coherent way. Within a novel we see various characters spread around a central virtue or moral quality, and along various dimensions. Carroll uses the example of *Great Expectations*. The Dickens novel thematizes the virtues of parenthood. Only Joe Gagary can be considered a virtuous parent in the novel, as he shows selfless love as a parent (Ibid 217). This can be gleaned from only reading the sections with Joe, but the virtue wheel emphasizes the distinction between characters around a

virtue. In contrast to Miss Havisham and Abel Magwitch who view Pip as a means to their own ends, and in contrast to Pip's sister who views him as a chore, Joe shows the reader not only that his selfless love is virtuous parenting, but that the way in which his parenting is virtuous is by not acting like these other characters. What it means to be selfless as a parent is enriched by the particular failures of bad parenting. Selfless parenting means not viewing parenting as a task and seeing a child as a means.

The virtue wheel theory makes sense of what we learn from literature along the moral dimension. More than this, however, Carroll wants to say that the virtue wheel is not just pedagogically useful. It is not just that we learn about the dimensions of a virtue, but we can also home in on the virtue itself. We can question if we value parenting at all. In this way, literature works like a philosophical thought experiment. Thought experiments have a few main functions. "They contest or defeat alethic and deontic claims, claims about possibility and necessity and what ought be, respectively; they push claims of what is possible to further conclusions; and they motivate conceptual distinctions – refining our concepts and the spaces between them" (Carroll 212). The way in which thought experiments do this is not through normal philosophical argument, but by providing examples; examples which have a clear object of scrutiny, and variables which can be adjusted to yield different intuitions. The various Trolley problems are a great example of this. The general question of what one ought to do, is specified within a particular scenario, and then the various actions one could do are played with. Do I pull the lever or not? Is this scenario giving the full picture of morality?

The virtue wheel does exactly this. It gives us a discrete scenario where we can imagine the distinct options and commit to one, or question the scenario overall. Whereas the thought experiment tries to remain as general as possible, literature colors in the options, truly trying to push

them to a realistic fulfillment. Thought experiments and virtue wheels then do the same thing, they perform the same function, but to different degrees of specificity; just like a mathematician and an engineer may use the same mathematical tools, but the former is looking to prove something in general, and the latter is trying to work out a real-world problem. Art in Carroll's view has its cognitive value in virtue of (one of) philosophy's cognitive value(s). That literature can guide us morally is justified by philosophy guiding us morally, via thought experiment.

2.1.3 - Elgin

The search for justification stretches beyond just philosophy. Catherine Elgin makes a similar argument to Carroll, only directly related to science. The important difference is that Elgin says that art not only works like science, or like philosophy, but genuinely works in the same way, in relation to cognitive value. Elgin argues that art exemplifies, and that this is what scientific experiment and philosophical thought experiment does. Her go-to example within science is the Michelson-Morley Experiment, which was the experiment which established the constant speed of light. It also rebuked the idea of an aether through which light passed, and would clear the way for special relativity decades later. This experiment she compares with Jackson Pollock's painting *No.9*. The point of comparison is in exemplification. Taking this function of art from Nelson Goodman, Elgin argues that *No.9* exemplifies a feature of painting, in the same way that the Michelson-Morley experiment exemplifies the speed of light. Exemplification requires that the exemplar, the thing exemplifying, refers to a feature and instantiates it. Instantiation means that the feature must be present in the work. Reference means that the feature is made open to interpretation.

The Michelson Morley experiment instantiates many things, an apparatus for observation, luminosity, the labor of scientists. However, the exemplification lies in the speed of light being instantiated. It is instantiated in a particularly salient manner. Every flashlight is an instance of the

speed of light, but it is hardly salient. Even if we just consider the speed qualitatively, it is harder to notice the speed of illumination of a flashlight rather than something like its brightness. Instantiation works the same way for *No.9*. It instantiates color, shape, shade, even the rectangularity of the frame, but it exemplifies paint's viscosity. All other paintings also instantiate viscosity, but the feature is made salient in *No.9*. Elgin emphasizes that it is not just a salient instance that matters. We can kick over a can of paint and have a salient instance of the viscosity of paint, and still not have exemplification. Reference is what makes such salient instances important for interpretation.

Reference turns a salient instance into a *telling instance*. In a telling instance, the salience of the feature is made interpretively important. The feature is made prominent against a background of interpretive assumptions. Brightness could also be obviously instantiated in the Michelson-Morley experiment, but by the context of the experiment – the apparatus, the theory, the desires of the scientific community – this is ignored. Likewise, *No.9,* rather than other paintings or a spilled paint can, exemplifies the viscosity of paint. The other instances lack the context which allows the viscosity to also be referred to. *No. 9*, against the context of painting as a medium, the traditional values of painting like representation, figure, play with light, exemplifies the viscosity of paint. By splattering beads of paint onto a canvas, Pollock makes these salient, and against the flatness of other paintings, and a narrow selection of colors, he refers to the beads.

Of course, we are not always interested in the exemplification of objective or factual features in art, like viscosity, color, or shade. More often we are interested in what Elgin calls *metaphorical* instantiation. These are things like emotional states, or moral issues – those things the experiential/simulative views are concerned with. Art does not actually instantiate these, but they are nonetheless real. This is supported again by a parallel to science. Elgin says that such metaphorical instantiation, like states of grief, of moral conundrums, are doing what thought experiments and

simulations do in science. We have already covered thought experiments, but actual simulations, Elgin argues, function in the same non-factive way. For example, experiments concerning absolute zero cannot be conducted at actual absolute zero. Instead, they are performed through computer simulation. Computers are not at absolute zero, and so the exemplified feature of the experiment is not *actually* instantiated, but it is still metaphorically instantiated, and thereby exemplified. That art is fictive cannot be an argument against art's exemplificatory function, unless we want to deny science along with it.

2.2 - The Tension of the Requirements

These views all point to cognitive values which I am compelled to agree with. The question is not that these theories do not achieve their cognitive aims, but more pointedly, whether they have fulfilled the requirements for an artistic cognitive value. In arguing for their respective cognitive values, each of these accounts makes an implicit move to satisfy the clarity requirement. Every philosophical paper aims for clarity and rigor, so this move is not at all a surprise. But as we will see, this move is detrimental to our aims. Satisfying clarity first, has the result of precluding the satisfaction of uniqueness. Before arguing for this ordered tension, I want to recount how these views have satisfied clarity, emphasizing the implicit acceptance of such a requirement.

For Nussbaum, developing compassion from narrative imagination is a bold claim, and we need reason to accept it. Compassion is prima facie a valuable emotional and moral capacity. This alone is cognitively valuable. That literature develops these through narrative imagination is not acceptable prima facie. Narrative imagination is justified as cognitively valuable, insofar as it develops compassion in a respectable way. Nussbaum needs literature to work how our actual experience works. A narrative work need not depict actual events, but it needs to be acceptable enough to the reader, such that the experience is like a real one. Compassion developed through

literature is possible in virtue of our real-world development of compassion. In this way we satisfy clarity. The cognitive value is particular – development of compassion. It is also expressible to the same degree of specificity as our real-world development of compassion.

The bolder claim, that we can gain access to experiences that we normally would not, like those of another gender, is the most valuable part of this view; and this is where literature approaches something unique that real life cannot do. But the justification from real-experience makes this harder to accept. That fiction is non-factive comes back to bite this account. Accepting that a narrative is non-factive, and nonetheless imagining narratively into the work does not keep this experience anchored in real-life experience. This is especially problematic when the experiences are not ones which I can relate to through my own experience. I am accepting non-factive experience of another as though it were real experience. The compassion that I develop could be entirely inaccurate. It would then not be useful to me in real life. I could just end up projecting these false experiences onto others, completely misunderstanding their experiences, and not developing compassion[1]. For Nussbaum, what satisfies the clarity condition, an argument from real-experience, detracts from what made the cognitive value unique to literature.

Carroll is still concerned with moral and emotional cognitive value, and so he introduces the virtue wheel to make sense of what art does. Carroll equates the function of the virtue wheel, and thereby literature, to that of thought experiment. If we accept that thought experiment is cognitively valuable, then we must accept that art is cognitively valuable, so long as we accept Carroll's demonstration that they work in the same way. Carroll's clarity requirement is satisfied much more directly than Nussbaum. Real-world experience is vague in comparison to thought-experiment.

[1] This inaccessibility of another through compassion goes back to Nitezsche "It is the very essence of the emotion of pity that it strips away from the suffering of others whatever is distinctively personal."(Nietzsche, p.269) Pity and Compassion are the same thing for Nietzsche.

However, this detracts from uniqueness with due proportion. That art does what thought experiment does makes them functionally coextensive. The question then becomes, what art brings to the thought experiment. Carroll replies that art is a fuller version of a thought experiment, filling in the bare bones abstract thought experiment of philosophy. Regardless, this makes no demands on art being art. We could just devise a detailed thought experiment, and still fail to create a novel. Nussbaum at least tries to directly address this; Carroll cannot even attempt it without abandoning clarity.

Elgin takes this one step further. Elgin's equating art with science makes clarity even more secure. No one can doubt that science is cognitively valuable, and experiment is one of the ways science achieves it. That art exemplifies in the way that experiment exemplifies is then a sure way of accepting its cognitive value. Elgin makes an important improvement though, not worrying about the cognitive value's relation to fact or truth. Exemplification need not correspond to truth, but aid in interpretation. For science this concerns truth, but in philosophy and art this is not as important. Subway maps are a good example outside of these fields. Many contemporary subway maps are made in the style of Henry Beck's London Underground map (*Figure 1)*. This style of map inaccurately depicts the world. The inaccuracy is purposeful, to exemplify the positions of subway stops in relation to landmarks and other stations, rather than accurately depicting the geography. Art can do this as well according to Elgin, without worrying about truth or fact. Thus, Elgin cannot be objected to in the way Nussbaum can. Still, the plethora of non-factive examples which demonstrate exemplification thoroughly satisfy clarity. But like Carroll, Elgin blurs the lines by satisfying the clarity argument. That art functions cognitively like science, philosophy, or cartography, purposefully ignores art as anything distinctive. That art and science have this similarity is wonderful, but it fully ignores the uniqueness requirement. Art seems to dissolve in this account. Science might be exemplification concerning fact, and with certain rules. Philosophy might be exemplification

concerning abstract entities that science cannot deal with. Cartography is exemplification concerning geography. Art does not retain any character regarding exemplification. Art concerns metaphorical exemplification? No, since both philosophy and cartography instantiate things metaphorically, not factually.

In each of these views, the theory makes significant effort to satisfy the clarity argument. When analyzed in terms of the satisfaction of the uniqueness requirement however, the efforts are either not present or mitigated. Carroll and Elgin do not seem to even attempt to satisfy it. Nussbaum does attempt, but fails. The reason for this is that satisfying the clarity argument first precludes the satisfaction of the uniqueness requirement.

2.3.1 - The Problem of Order

Order is not normally something that causes problems, but the discussion above hopefully has brought up a suspicion. The problem is not that in structuring these papers the cognitivists should have ordered the argument differently, that would be nonsense. The misorder comes from trying to satisfy clarity rather than uniqueness. Each of the views above achieved clarity by comparing and equating the cognitive value to a cognitive value in another field. The closer they get to equating the value to an undeniable cognitive value, the better clarity is satisfied. This, however, leaves uniqueness insurmountable. That art does what science does, or that it is justified in virtue real-life experience being justified, excludes any sort of argument for uniqueness. The value can no longer be unique to art since it is a value in virtue of these other fields. The art has become superfluous to the cognitive value. We need not deny that these theories describe cognitive values that are available through art, but they cannot be named artistic cognitive values with full force. They become theories of cognitive value more generally, but not of art. They are all still susceptible

to the anti-cognitivist objection that the cognitive gain did not require the art. Lamarque can ask, *what does art have to do with the cognitive value?*

3 - Positive Account: Uniqueness First

Against these other theories which argue for the cognitive value of art based on its relation to the cognitive value of other sources, my account makes sense of what we value in art, or what is unique to art first. The aim is to connect this value necessarily to art, to satisfy uniqueness, and from here show how it satisfies the clarity.

What is unique to art is that it concerns us aesthetically. A broad category, I narrow aesthetic down in the next section using the idea of the aesthetic point of view. When we engage with art we adopt an aesthetic point of view, rather than others. Art is not the *only* context which can interest us aesthetically, but it is the context in which this is prioritized. This aesthetic engagement is characterized by the negation of these other concerns. We are not dealing with the world practically, we are not worried about fact, we are not dealing with pleasure. What this leaves us with is the artwork as it concerns cognitive entities. Concepts, percepts, and affects, the latter of which I take from Deleuze, are what concern us. This is how I satisfy clarity. The cognitive value of art is that it provides us with a context in which we are only concerned with these cognitive entities, and they can be directly addressed and reorganized. In non-art contexts, we are concerned with using these cognitive entities for other purposes. In art we are given a place to prioritize these, reflect on them, experience them in unreal relations, and reassess them.

3.1 - Aesthetic Point of View

Art is the context in which we concern ourselves with the aesthetic above all else. This can be taken in two ways, both of which find support in one or the other of Monroe Beardsley's papers.

> "An artwork is something produced with the intention of giving it the capacity to satisfy the aesthetic interest." (Beardsley 2019, p. 25)

In this definition, Beardsley concerns himself with both the artist and the viewer. The viewer need only come at the work with aesthetic interest, but the creator is the one who has done the intentional work. The onus of aesthetic value lies more with the artist.

> "A work of art (in the broad sense) is any perceptual or intentional object that is deliberately regarded from the aesthetic point of view"(Beardsley 1970 pp.43)

In this definition Beardsley focuses on the recipient of the art. There is still a sense of the intentions of the creator, but it is not an intention about imbuing the work with aesthetic value. Rather, the artwork is merely an intentional object; the artist intended for it to be engaged with in a certain way. This certain way is via the aesthetic point of view. This puts the responsibility for an aesthetic value derived from the artwork onto the recipient. This is the view that I will adopt, putting the onus of aesthetic value onto the one engaging with the artwork, rather than the creator.

We might be concerned that ignoring the intentions of the artist and focusing on the point of view of the engager loses something important about art. But there may be value in this ignorance. Intentions, while perhaps not as clear as truth – can we reduce intentions to propositions? – could provide goalposts for the cognitive value of art. We can check if we got what was given. But recall that for Nussbaum, basing compassion on the factiveness of real experience hurt her theory; and the most art-centered feature of Elgin's theory was its ability to explain metaphorical cognitive gains, which is not measurable against any secure metric. The cognitive value that I argue for later is valuable because of its non-factiveness. The value concerns specifically our own cognitive entities, and so would not be bolstered by any goalposts like artist intentions.

3.1.1 - Beardsley

Art demands the aesthetic point of view from us. Beardsley defines what it means to take on the aesthetic point of view as follows.

> "To adopt the aesthetic point of view with regard to X is to take an interest in whatever aesthetic value X may possess." (Beardsley 1970 pp.43)

I claim that art is the context, the collection of intentional objects, which compels us to adopt this point of view over others, which differ significantly from the aesthetic point of view. Take as a point of comparison our engagement with architecture. Architecture is a realm of intersecting points of view. There is an engineering point of view dealing with the physics of the structure. There is a sociological point of view, which concerns a buildings effect on the community. There is a bureaucratic point of view, regarding the hoops that need jumping through. These support the idea that a point of view is a way of evaluating "*good of a kind"* (Beardsley 1970 p.41) *This building is good from an engineering point of view, because it is* …, or *this high-rise was a bureaucratic nightmare*. When we look at things from the aesthetic point of view, they do not conform to this idea of being *good of a kind*[2]. A plastic bag floating in the street can be viewed aesthetically, but is it an aesthetic object? Circularly, an aesthetic object might just be an object which provides us with aesthetic experience. Then it is quite redundant to determine good of a kind; an aesthetic object must have provided an aesthetic experience, and thus it is a good instance of an aesthetic object. Art on my view are aesthetic objects, but again this would only become circular, and the floating bag is nonetheless not art. We must pull away from making points of view exclusive to certain kinds. A point of view does not concern how this object fits into its category. The point of view concerns what we are looking for in an object.

[2] Gary Iseminger supports this idea of art's function being to afford aesthetic experience, but he stops his analysis of the value of artworks at good of a kind. The idea of art being valued in this way is not new, but Beardsley pushes point-of-view beyond Iseminger's functional account.

The point of view is to take interest in the value that the object might provide, where these values are appropriate to the object.

The judgement of values determines the appropriateness and inappropriateness of a point of view for any given object. It is appropriate to take on an efficient point of view when planning your daily commute – *I need to get there quickly, and limit stress and energy expenditure*. It can also be appropriate to consider your daily commute from the point of view of comfort – taking a relaxing train. It is inappropriate to consider your daily commute from an archaeological point of view. Here the difference between *good of a kind* and value becomes salient. Viewed as *good of a kind*, my commute becomes a bad archaeological endeavor, or a bad commute. In terms of value, it was inappropriate because I can find no value or harm in my commute by looking at it archaeologically. The point of view concerns not a total evaluation of something, but taking the object as what it is, and looking for particular values, of which it has countless, from countless perspectives.

Point of view concerns values rather than ontologizing the object. The aesthetic point of view remains odd within this framework. Beardsley makes the point that in many contexts we adopt *an* aesthetic point of view, but not *the* aesthetic point of view. This indefinite-articled perspective is where aesthetic considerations are important, but not prioritized. These are objects for whom the person engaging can consider aesthetic value that X possesses, or that is "*obtainable by means of X"*(Beardsley 1970, pp.44). This addition to the definition puts *an* aesthetic point of view below the dominating point of view. For example, in architecture, priority is given to an engineering point of view. The aesthetic point of view is always a later consideration, and always in service to the dominating point of view. We might desire a building with aesthetic value, but this is not

accomplishable without the engineering value first; whereas one can easily build a building only considering the engineering value, without ever taking on an aesthetic point of view.[3]

We might object that aesthetic considerations are a vital part of how architecture is evaluated, but Beardsley makes an important remark on this belief. If we think that we cannot judge a building as aesthetically valuable without taking interest in its engineering value we are still committed to there being a distinguishable difference in these perspectives (Beardsley 1970, p.44). The engineering value is necessary but not sufficient for the aesthetic value, so there is still a distinguishable aesthetic component to the aesthetic point of view. They are not equivalent. This idea invokes a foundational idea in aesthetics, which in its contemporary analytic form was clarified by Frank Sibley. The aesthetic[4] requires a non-aesthetic basis, but is not conditioned by this basis. We require a building which has engineering value for it to have aesthetic value. The reverse is doubtful, that the aesthetic point of view is necessary for the engineering point of view, let alone sufficient. The closest I can think is something like the *Plazza d'Italia* (*Figure 2*). The structure used various styles, symbols, and motifs of Italian architecture, like columns, frescos, and an Italy-shaped fountain. An aesthetic point of view was clearly on the minds of the creators, and this determined the engineering decisions. But if we want to evaluate this work architecturally, we still have to look at the structural merits directly. Despite the influence aesthetic considerations had in making the plaza, the structural merits do not concern the aesthetic. We could prioritize the aesthetic values, dropping the engineering point of view, but then we would not be engaging with the plaza as an architectural object.

[3] This is not to say that such a building could not have aesthetic value accidentally. Merely it was not intended by the architect. The architect never approached the design with an aesthetic point of view.

[4] Sibley is concerned with aesthetic concepts, but this can be applied to experiences, properties, values, points of view.

Dropping other points of view constitutes *the* aesthetic point of view, rather than *an* aesthetic point of view. The crux of this distinction is tied to the objects of engagement. Any object can be aesthetically engaged, but what matters is whether we are engaging with it primarily aesthetically. Thus, we should accept Beardsley's definition of an artwork. An artwork is an intentional object where *the* aesthetic point of view is the point of view to take. Other points of view are secondary to our engagement with it. Duchamp's *Fountain,* normally a urinal approached from a practical point of view, is properly engaged with aesthetically once it has been clarified as an artwork.

We do use other points of view when dealing with art. Art can be viewed financially. Art has value that does not correspond to the labor and material imbued into it, nor is it susceptible to saturation of similar products on the market, or knock offs. But when engaging with art financially, we are not concerned with art as art. Whether it is a gaudy NFT or an original Bosch does not matter. The same goes for art historians. They might enjoy the aesthetic value, but they deal with it as archaeologists deal with ruins. Other points of view can come into play, but it is with the aesthetic point of view that we engage with art as art. It matters that I am dealing with *this* work of art, and having this experience when I am engaging it through *the* aesthetic point of view.

The aesthetic point of view is the appropriate point of view to take towards art. This may sound right, but what does that amount to? In the next section, I go over Kant's thoughts on aesthetic judgement and art to show how art and aesthetic experience are connected. This will flesh out what is gotten out of the aesthetic point of view. This also sets out an old Kantian approach to the question of cognitivism in art, which is equally dissatisfying when held up to the two requirements as the contemporary cognitivists. Kant allows us then to move from the uniqueness of the aesthetic point of view for art, and the cognitive value that we get when using this point of view.

3.1.2 - Kant – Aesthetics and Art

Kant broaches the question of the cognitive value of art from section 44-45 of the Analytic of the Sublime. To understand this later section, I want to recount some of the features of Kant's more well-known aesthetic judgement. The relevant features of an aesthetic judgement (judgement of beauty) are found in its four moments (Kant et al. 2008. §1-22). First, beauty elicits a feeling of pleasure. This is not pleasure as it relates to me. Aesthetic pleasure is *disinterested* – it does not relate to me through desire, or morality, or by virtue of me being a particular subject. The second moment, is that the judgement is *universally* valid. It is taken to be a valid judgement for all viewers. This validity, however, is not deducible from some concept, as a non-aesthetic judgement like that of a chair might be. The aesthetic judgement does not follow from any concept, and yet it is a judgement that is taken to be universal, that all people ought to judge this thing as beautiful. The third moment, related to the non-conceptuality of the judgement, says that the judgement of beauty is both purposeless, but purposive. Because the concept does not come about from any concept, there is no proper end toward which the object is directed. Consider the non-aesthetic chair again. A judgement of a chair invoked through the concept of chair has a purpose, not only in the sense of a use, but in that the judgement has an end in mind. This sort of purpose is likened to a design which is held as the goal in fabricating the object. While there is no concept or design which corresponds to beauty, and thereby no purpose, the object nonetheless gives us a feeling of purpose. The final moment of the judgement of beauty is the moment of *necessity*. While *universal validity* has to do with a judgement being normatively universal, that everyone ought to judge this object as beautiful, *necessity* is a personal counterfactual. My feeling of pleasure from this object is a necessity of the object. I may not always feel pleasure, or experience beauty when encountering this object, but I have the experience that this object must have elicited this feeling in me – it could not have been otherwise.

We should take away from these moments that in aesthetic experience or judgement, there is no concept in play, there is no paradigm that is aesthetically valuable. Also, we should remember

that the experience does not concern us, or our interests. These are the most important features for further discussion.

Further on, Kant delves into artworks proper, no longer just the aesthetic. Fine art rather than agreeable art is his target, and this distinction is clearly delineated within his broader aesthetics. Agreeable arts are aimed at pleasure and/or purpose. In this sense they are what he calls *mechanical*. These are arts that, like science, can be conjured up by rules, and can be made by anyone with access to these rules. This echoes the notion of concept from earlier, that a judgement of beauty cannot come from a concept, as well as the unconditionality brought up by Sibley. Mechanical judgement is deducible from its concept or rule. In this way, Kant also wants to reject any possibility of a science of beauty, since a science has rules and employs proofs, whereas the aesthetic is immediate and requires the non-rule-bound faculty of taste.

Kant says that in distinction to agreeable art, fine art (aesthetic art) deals with modes of cognition. This is a Kantian cognitivism. Fine art deals not with sensation in its judgement, but in its cognitive effects. Summarily, Kant says, "Hence aesthetic art... is one having for its standard the reflective judgement and not bodily sensation."(Kant et al. 2008 p.135) This reflective judgement is that of the original moments of aesthetic judgement. These are the aesthetic judgement, which does not please through purpose or through sensation, but "... in the mere judging of it [beauty]". (Ibid. p.136)

For Kant, fine art, and aesthetic experience, is categorically cognitively valuable. To have an aesthetic experience, and what determines fine art, is that it is cognitively valuable. This value is not something particularly clear though, lest it be conceptual or mechanical. The value develops out of the free play of our cognitive faculties - the judgement of the aesthetic induces a feeling of freedom because it allows our faculties of imagination and understanding to play back and forth.

Kant is interested in broad and ungraspable ideas, and the free play of the imagination[5]. Measured up against our two requirements for a cognitive theory of art, we see a new result. The value satisfies uniqueness. Fine art and aesthetic experience are defined by this unique cognitive value. Clarity is not satisfied. Without being a full Kantian, it is not easy to just accept the free play of the imagination. We also need to commit to the vague notion of ideas, which are always beyond our complete grasp. The contemporary cognitivist views failed uniqueness, but we see that going back further, the same requirements pose a problem, only here clarity is not satisfied, at least by our contemporary standards.

This digression into Kant shows us a few things. We get a historical sense for what the aesthetic is, and how it might connect to our cognition. This gives us a precedent for finding art uniquely cognitively valuable. We do not need to agree with Kant, but the precedent is there. More importantly, Kant places aesthetic experience as a sort of negation of other experiences. The aesthetic experience is the one we have when we drop ourselves, our interests, utility, and pleasure, to the side. This is what we mean by an aesthetic experience and aesthetic value.

My step further is to lift the responsibility of this experience from the artwork. Adapted to Beardsley's perspectivist account of art, this sort of experience becomes a matter of intending the right point of view towards art. Kant does not concern himself with the person engaging with the art. The art becomes qualified as fine art when it can accomplish this aesthetic task. This divides art into clean, but ad hoc groups. I only divide between art and non-art. How blurred that line is I

[5] Although argued from an idealist position, Schopenhauer makes a remarkably similar sort of claim. Schopenhauer thinks the aesthetic mode of cognition is "the way of regarding things independently from the principle of sufficient reason."(WWR I 208) Engaging aesthetically means engaging with the representation of the Idea that does not concern the will (does not concern me), where making sense of things for myself uses the principle of sufficient reason. Aesthetic cognition is about communing with the Idea in a way that does not make the Idea the object of will. Art can do this, because it does not concern us. It cannot be an object of our will.

cannot answer in this paper, but all things that are within art, are to be engaged with from the aesthetic point of view, where this aesthetic point of view has been fleshed out by the Kantian aesthetic description. The aesthetic point of view is one where we do not intend to get anything for us that would be useful or pleasurable.

I am not going in circles here. It is not that what is unique to art is the aesthetic point of view, and that the aesthetic point of view uniquely concerns art as art. We can take the aesthetic point of view towards anything, like a plastic bag floating in the wind. The aesthetic point of view is broad, as are aesthetic experiences. Art is unique in that this is the appropriate way of engaging with art. Aesthetic value is the value we are interested in when engaging with art. It remains art when approached this way.

3.2 - Deleuze

I have shown that what is unique to art is that it concerns the aesthetic, and I have put the responsibility of that broad aesthetic priority onto the engager of art, as the aesthetic point of view. *Uniqueness* is satisfied. *Clarity* remains to be shown. In this section I present a view that there is a particular cognitive gain to be found through the aesthetic perspective taken towards an artwork, and that this can be captured in language. This gain is that the aesthetic point of view allows us to deal with the concepts, percepts, and affects that it invokes as the objects of our cognition. This is in distinction to the way in which we deal with these cognitive entities in our non-aesthetic lives. They concern us personally, and we need them to be practical. We are normally not interested in, nor can we commit our mental capacities to, examining and experiencing these as objects in themselves.

The argument for this will begin by looking at how Gilles Deleuze makes sense of art. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze covers the functional question, what does art do? For him, art provides us with percepts and affects, which describe cognitive entities which are not fully sensuous, but not

rational or conceptual either. They are properly aesthetic. This discussion I then couch in Deleuze's metaphysical terminology from *Difference and Repetition*, wherein sensations and basic perceptual material is the basis for our conceptualization. Deleuze mentions two aesthetic limits of conceptualization - humor and irony. These, in conjunction with percepts and affects, I take as evidence of how aesthetic experiences push cognitive entities to their limits. It then follows that art is in a unique position to develop our concepts and other cognitive entities.

3.2.1 - Percepts and Affects

Percepts and affects are what constitute our aesthetic experience for Deleuze. They are the *bloc of sensations* that remains beyond the object and the viewer. A complete, albeit cryptic definition goes as follows.

> "Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived"(Deleuze 2015, p.164)

Deleuze means that these entities, percept and affect, are not just features of the object like color or viscosity, while at the same time not being personal like emotions, or sensations of pain or pleasure[6]. This line of thought is followed with a justification akin to Sibley's thesis that aesthetic concepts are unconditioned. He says on this matter,

> "...sensation is not the same thing as the material. What is preserved by right is not the material, which constitutes only the de facto condition, but, insofar as this condition is

[6] We get another formulation that sounds similar to Kant.

> satisfied (that is, that canvas, color, or stone does not crumble into dust), it is the percept or affect that is preserved itself."(Deleuze 2015, p.166)

Artworks have a material base, but we are not concerned with this base. Nor are we concerned with how it makes us feel.

> "By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from the affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensation, a pure being of sensations."(Deleuze 2015, p.167)

Deleuze clearly concerns himself with the aesthetic experience and value that we have been discussing, but in a new terminology. What he adds with this talk of percepts and affect are cognitive entities that are more graspable than the vague *idea* of Kant or Schopenhauer. Wresting the percept from perceptions of objects, and wresting the affect from the affections to form this bloc of sensation is what we have in mind with the aesthetic point of view. These cognitive objects are the analogues of concept. Concepts function to identify the *what* of our perception of experience (Camp 2019, p.3). Concepts concern being able to identify things of a kind, or the same individual across circumstances. Elisabeth Camp explicitly says that "...concepts inherently abstract away from many details in our experience and knowledge about the subject, including especially perceptual details and affective responses." (Ibid. p.3) This is precisely where Deleuze wants to place percepts and affects. These would then fill the role of concepts, but regarding the messier details of our experience.

A percept corresponds to a perception, which is something in our perceptual field, but the percept is how it exists in us, rather than in the object. It is a cognitive entity. Deleuze rejects that the percept is only in us, invoking the Kantian universality of aesthetic experience, but this is not a rejection of its cognitive existence. This is more a claim about how it can exist for everyone. Like

concepts, percepts exist in each of us, while also being general if not universal. Deleuze adds to this idea that the percept is not just the correlate of a perception, but in an artwork this instance is constituted by a different materiality. While a concept can point out a physical chair and a painting of a chair as the same thing, percept concerns the cognitive entity that connects differing materialities. Paint can conceptually invoke a chair where none is, and it can invoke a certain percept which elsewhere is invoked by another materiality, or the same materiality. In this sense, the percept has an object independence, which a perception – seeing an actual chair, this particular material - does not have.

Similarly, an affect is the cognitive correlate of an affection. Deleuze takes this terminology from Spinoza, "By affect I understand affections of the Body by which the Body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections"(Spinoza EIIID3) It seems Spinoza means both the cognitive and the physical phenomena by the same word. In the rest of Part Three of the *Ethics, a*ffect is used as the cognitive correlate to those things which affect our body. Affection is used throughout this section to mean the representation of the physical object/experience, as well as the experience itself. Spinoza means something like the feeling of the thing affecting us, but in its more cognitive dimension. It is then correct to think of affect as a cognitive correlate to our more personal feelings and sensations. For Deleuze, an affect is the emotion or sensation, when it is depersonalized. It becomes a cognitive entity, still tied to sensation how percept is tied to the materiality, but without concerning me as the recipient of the feeling.

Percept is the cognitive entity that corresponds to the materiality of the object, and affect is the cognitive entity that corresponds to the feeling created by the object. That art can create a *bloc of sensation* means art concerns producing these cognitive entities themselves, rather than a particular

object, or to provide a feeling. They fulfill the Kantian moments about aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic point of view prevails as the correct way of interacting with art. We might worry that percept and affect are ad hoc solutions to fleshing out what aesthetic value is. And surely we cannot expect everyone to become a Deleuzian, just as not everyone is a Kantian. The point is to show that this is one way to make sense of what many aesthetic theories identify as aesthetic, which Baumgarten, the originator of the term, called - "the science of how things are cognized by means of the senses" (Levinson 2003, p.9). Deleuze gives us a more contemporary way of thinking about this aesthetic value that remains true to the necessity of experience - that we cannot have an aesthetic judgement or evaluation of an object without the experience of it directly (Levinson 2005, 337). These entities are still aesthetic, but the similarity to concepts makes them conceivable as cognitive entities.

It is not only in art that we come across percepts and affects though; they are clearly a part of all cognition. In the next section I show how art works with these entities, through our aesthetic point of view, beyond just creating a *bloc of sensation?*

3.2.2 - Differences in Intensities

Deleuze shows us how percepts, affects and concepts arise. To bolster this idea, we should look to *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze bases his entire idea of interacting with the world on differences in intensities. Intensities are the basic sensations of being in the world. They are not within some fixed field of options. They are not qualitative nor quantitative. An intensity is the most basic sensation/perception, unqualified. Intensities constitute the most basic part of our experience, prior to anything cognitive. This is a simplistic picture, that there is experience prior to cognition, yet it is presented like this not to deny the role of our mental faculties in our experience, but to show how these mental faculties are developed through experience. As we experience more, the

differences between intensities, and the repetition of these differences give rise to the cognitive entities. The experience of heat arises out of a difference of intensity from the preceding intensity (think Berkeley). The repetition and cognizing of this difference develops the concept/percept/affect of heat. As our cognition develops, parameters, qualities, and quantities build around our experience, and the intensities of our experience will fall within these. In my everyday experience I see many cars. My concept of car is robust and broad. New experiences and perceptions do not usually move the bounds of this concept. Something either is or is not a car, and the boundary is pretty clear. Put simply, my experiences fall within the expectations of my cognitive entities.

Deleuze calls these generalizations multiplicities of intensities (Deleuze 2014, 82). These amount to the same thing as ideas for Kant. Deleuze's framework is particularly helpful here. These intensities correspond to the affective, perceptive, or conceptive facets of experience and cognition. Ideas in Kant are ineffable, making the clarity requirement nearly impossible to satisfy. Even if ideas are not sufficiently constituted by these three things, we can still better put into language what the different cognitive pieces of the idea are. The heat example I used above may concern only a concept – a non-sensuous cognitive representation. It also can concern an affect which we might likewise call heat, and this would require the experience of a 'heat' intensity.

Deleuze makes sense of these cognitive entities, but does not make clear how these may actually be valuable. For him, the bloc of sensations, dealing with materiality and sensuality, are in themselves valuable. As expected, this could pose a problem for the clarity condition; we have put into language the cognitive system, but have not shown it to be valuable in any particular way. Moreover, Deleuze does not include concepts in his evaluation of art, perhaps a purist holdover dating back to Kant. For Deleuze, concepts are the domain of philosophy. In the next section I

make clear how aesthetic experience develops our cognitive entities, and thereby why art can too. I will include concepts in this discussion, both because their separation from art is ad hoc, and because through this written medium I will inevitably need concepts to talk about percepts and affects at all.

3.2.3 - Humor and Irony

Aesthetic experience occurs by the transgression of these generalizations; art is then ideally positioned to initiate these transgressions, through our intentional point of view towards it. Deleuze identifies two ways that these multiplicities are transgressed, both of which constitute an aesthetic phenomenon: irony and humor. Irony is the transgression of a multiplicity, or the relationship between them, beyond the actual events. It is to experience the *ought* as the *is*. (Deleuze 2014, pp.244-245) With respect to the law, Deleuze says "Irony is the process of thought whereby the law is made to depend on an infinitely superior Good" (Deleuze 1991, p. 82). The Good is the multiplicity, or for our purposes the cognitive entities. The law is the actual phenomenon. Irony is then the process of thought by which we move the law to the idea of the law. We take the law as it ought to be. The correlate to this in the other direction is humor, "humor is the attempt to sanction the law by recourse to an infinitely more righteous Best."(Deleuze 1991, p.82-83) The Best is not an idea like the Good, not a transcendent goal, but instead real solutions, real or possible instances. Humor is experiencing the *is* as the *ought*.

A basic example to distinguish the two is the following. I drop a glass on the tile floor. It *ought* to shatter. As it falls, its shattering is already what I cognize - I take what I *expect* as what *is*. When it does not shatter, the resulting difference constitutes irony. I proceed to pick up the intact glass off the ground and I throw it in the trash. The glass is intact. I just needed to clean it. Instead, I treat it as though it had shattered, its *ought*. This is humor.

This explanation of irony and humor shows that transgressions of our cognitive entities, our multiplicities, are aesthetic. This is not just an idiosyncratic view of Deleuze. He is not just using these terms without staying true to their everyday meaning. His notion of humor aligns with the incongruity theory of humor. Humor is when our experience and our expectations are misaligned. Take this joke for example.

A bear walks into a bar and sits down. The bartender asks, "What can I get you?". The bear says, "I'll have a.....pint of beer." The bartender asks, "why the big pause?" The bear replies "Oh, I was born with them."

We are compelled to rework what is meant by pause. There is an incongruity between what the bartender asks, and what the bear replies. This transgression is what we must assess and work through mentally, the experience of which is aesthetic – assuming you thought it was funny.

Irony works similarly. In *Oedipus*, the irony lies in Oedipus' doing what he thinks evades his fate. Against the prophecy he thinks *I ought not kill my father and marry my mother*. Then he takes actions aligned with this normative thought, and this leads him to kill his father and marry his mother. He took the prophecy as an ought rather than as the true state of the world.

These examples support the claim that this notion of cognitive transgression is in fact aesthetic. We can see them in play in both examples, and the ideas of irony and humor fit neatly. These were both examples coming from art. The joke is rather low-brow, but comedy is nonetheless art. Tragedies are unquestionably art. And this amplifies the claim that art and the aesthetic point of view are crucial to having this particular cognitive experience – the aesthetic experience. These two examples made perfect sense, because we approach them aesthetically, intending for a cognitive-aesthetic engagement. The earlier shattered glass example does not demand such a point of view. This example is frankly absurd; no one would act this way with an unshattered glass. The glass

example in real life might invoke irony, if we have time to formulate an expectation while it falls. And if we do find this small moment ironic, we are immediately taken out of this by the fact that cleaning it up concerns us. No one who is going about the world non-aesthetically would throw out the unshattered glass, so humor would not happen. It goes against a practical point of view (unless you are rich maybe). That the real-world example seems nonsensical, while the two artistic examples do not is because the proper way to address art is aesthetically.

3.3 - The Cognitive Value

A difficulty in speaking about this cognitive value is that I can describe it all I want, but to express it in philosophically rigorous discourse never shows you the percepts or affects. The two examples, the joke and *Oedipus*, demonstrated humor and irony, but in my explanation, they dealt a lot more with concepts than affects or percepts. This next example illustrates the connection between affects/percepts and concepts. Felix Gonzalez-Torres' 1991 installation - "Untitled" (*Figure 3*) is a conceptual art installation where he piles thousands of pieces of candy, each wrapped in shimmering cellophane, into a corner of the gallery. The weight of these candies amounts to 175 lbs. Viewers are then invited to take a piece of candy until slowly the pile ceases to exist. The concept is yet unclear, nonetheless there are certain affects and percepts that come into play for the viewer. You feel an affect of agency, though you are in actuality useless as an agent. Your action becomes part of the art. The diminishing glittery candy impresses a percept of camp, or of lightness. I can only describe them so well here. The experience of these is of course constitutive of the actual percepts and affects. I cannot express the relation between these affects and percepts, since it is a relation of the sensuous parts of experience. In philosophical writing I would just reduce it to language and concepts. I chose a conceptual artwork because it allows me to show the transgression that occurs for the concept. Gonzalez-Torres' work also goes by the name "Portrait of Ross in LA".

The concept he tries to invoke is the concept of loss, specifically the loss of his partner, who withered away from AIDS. 175lbs was Ross' target weight. The affects and percepts are then likewise part of the broader cognitive idea of loss. The artwork transgresses the concept-loss through the invocation of these affects and percepts. This is not abstractly a loss, but the loss of someone perceptively sweet, and glittery, and camp. It is not conceptual existence/non-existence, but the affective experience of a slow deterioration, and the lack of agency for the person observing it. The experience of the artwork makes each of these affects, percepts, and concepts the objects of our cognition. The aesthetic experience is precisely the cognitive experience when these do not align with one another, whether it is a new relation, a forgotten aspect, or a pushed boundary.

Humor and irony are the two ways in which Deleuze thinks the transgression of our cognitive entities constitutes an aesthetic experience. There are presumably many others, but that does not concern me here. What matters is that aesthetic experience is the transgression of cognitive entities, and this is cognitively valuable. This does not align us with fact or truth, but confronts us with the cognitive entities themselves, what our concepts, percepts, and affects even are. Put reductively, art is a reflective tool, but not a rational tool. The experience, the sensuousness of art, gives us the percepts and affects, and these then can overwhelm each other, or the relevant concepts. We cannot do this purely through reason, since we are not ever dealing with percepts and affects in reason, just concepts and non-sensuous experience, experience that is conceptualized.

4 – Conclusion

This view satisfies both requirements that the anti-cognitivists have imposed. These were:

Clarity – a theory of cognitive value in art must be able to identify a particular cognitive gain, and capture this gain in language

Uniqueness – a theory of cognitive value in art must be able to identify a cognitive gain that can only be effectively gained through art

I satisfied the uniqueness requirement first, since answering the clarity requirement first would have led to an insurmountable problem. Prioritizing clarity anchors the cognitive value in cognitive values from outside of art, as this is how such theories can identify and express a cognitive value. Such a theory cannot fully reach a unique cognitive value, having made art non-unique.

I satisfied uniqueness first by showing that what is unique to art is the perspective that we take towards it. We take the aesthetic point of view when approaching art. The aesthetic point of view is non-practical. It is a point of view that does not concern me as the one who is engaging. I seek no pleasure through the aesthetic point of view, nor do I worry about utility or action. Art is the category of things which are intended to be interacted with from this aesthetic point of view. Therefore, art are those intentional objects towards which we take on this aesthetic point of view. This is what makes art unique.

To satisfy the clarity condition I showed that art allows us to interact with the percepts, affects and concepts that are invoked by the artwork, when viewed in this unique way. Rather than using these cognitive entities as we normally would, in navigating our life in that practical, pleasure-seeking way, art allows us to experience these cognitive entities in their sensual dimensions, and as objects in themselves. Aesthetic experience is when these cognitive entities do not align, or the

experience pushes on their boundaries. This is the cognitive value of aesthetic experience, and moreover, art. Aesthetic experience is broad, but art is the unique source where we intentionally prioritize the aesthetic point of view. We are most receptive to this cognitive value in art.

This theory has further upside pertaining to its non-facticity, which other theories were so concerned with. That we are dealing not with fact or truth harkens back to Keen's point about literature being fictive. For Nussbaum, this turned around to bite the theory, since uniqueness would have had to been tied to real experience, and the fictitiousness of art precludes that connection from forming. My theory resolves this. We are decisively not interested in fact or truth. We are more trustworthy of the events in literature, and perhaps other arts, due to their non-relation to truth. This means that we are not dealing with art as it pertains to us, our pleasure, or our utility. We can accommodate Keen, because we have secured our cognitive value uniquely to art.

I can also make sense of Sirridge's worry that propositions in fiction lack the adequate connection to the world to constitute knowledge. Sirridge misunderstood the cognitive value of art. We do not get knowledge from art and use it in the world. On my own account, the relation is reversed. We have knowledge and understanding of the world, of which these cognitive entities are a part, and these are brought up via engagement with the work. The cognitive value of art is to bring this knowledge into our engagement with art, and have the art put pressure on it.

Likewise, for Stolnitz, I cannot say that we do get knowledge, but I can make sense of the triviality. Triviality only occurs when the cognitive gain is forced to be expressed in propositional form. This of course plays into clarity. But as I have shown the affects and percepts, not only the concepts, are at play in our engagement with art or fiction. The experience is necessary. It is not a surprise that the cognitive gains become trivial when reduced to either a broad truism, or a particular description of the event. The relation of this truism, the concepts involved, are completely detached

from the affects and percepts, the experience that brought it up. Cleanth Brooks makes exactly this point *(Brooks, 1975)*; we need the experience rather than a statement about the experience. To paraphrase, in this case paraphrasing the cognitive gain, will make it trivial, because it has been terminally reduced; like cutting the hand off an arm and expecting it to write. This is why clichés are clichés even if they have some truth to them, they lack a non-conceptual aspect. Stolnitz has removed a vital part of the cognitive value and then called it invaluable. Emphasizing the affects and percepts of art makes the cognitive value whole again.

If this idea is agreeable, that art is the ground for this non-rational reflective work, but that we are expressly uninterested in fact or truth, there might be a concern that I have not argued for any **value**. I have shown that this occurs, but why is it valuable? Knowledge, truth, understanding, pedagogical tools – these are all obvious values. Perhaps the best metric of value is if the cognitive value helps us in the world, in actual experience. This is the reason knowledge is better than a lucky belief. It will always help us, not just this once. Art's aesthetic-cognitive value I identified may not be universally valuable in the way knowledge is. Instead, this value is personal. But concepts/affects/percepts are also intersubjective; we use them to communicate, even if they do not totally align. Art, forcing us into this reflective work, does not mean simply accepting the new boundaries, and new relationships, but to realize that these are possible, and then to determine if we accept these.

One philosophical upside concerns imaginative resistance, which is the inability or unwillingness to imagine or accept morally deviant fictions (Gendler 2010). In fiction, morality can be reconstructed. Something horrendous in the real world, like infanticide, can be presented as virtuous in fiction. We often have trouble imagining this to be moral. My account can help explain what is going on. Fiction is doing cognitive work, forcing us to consider what our moral

commitments are, and reconcile this with the affect of disgust through imaginative resistance. Fiction could broaden our morality, say for someone with a racist morality upon confronting *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and at the very least it could lead to imaginative resistance, which is still affectively laden.

The reflective work that art compels us to do solidifies our own concepts, percepts and affects. We might even be able to call this self-knowledge. At the very least, this is the same sort of thing that Nussbaum, Carroll, and Elgin each intended for their own theories, but without demanding a connection to cognitive value elsewhere. Nussbaum's narrative imagination sought to reassess the way we cognize others' experiences; Carroll's virtue wheel tried to stimulate an assessment of moral virtues; Elgin's exemplification sought to emphasize particular features, forcing a more developed view of this feature. My own theory does not deviate from these kinds of cognitive value much. The important distinction is in addressing both requirements for a cognitivist theory of art. I have reconciled uniqueness and clarity, while still dealing with the value which other cognitivist theories were drawn to.

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Figure 1 - Transport for London | Every Journey Matters. "Harry Beck's Tube Map." Transport for London, 2019, tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/culture-and-heritage/art-and-design/harry-becks-tube-map.

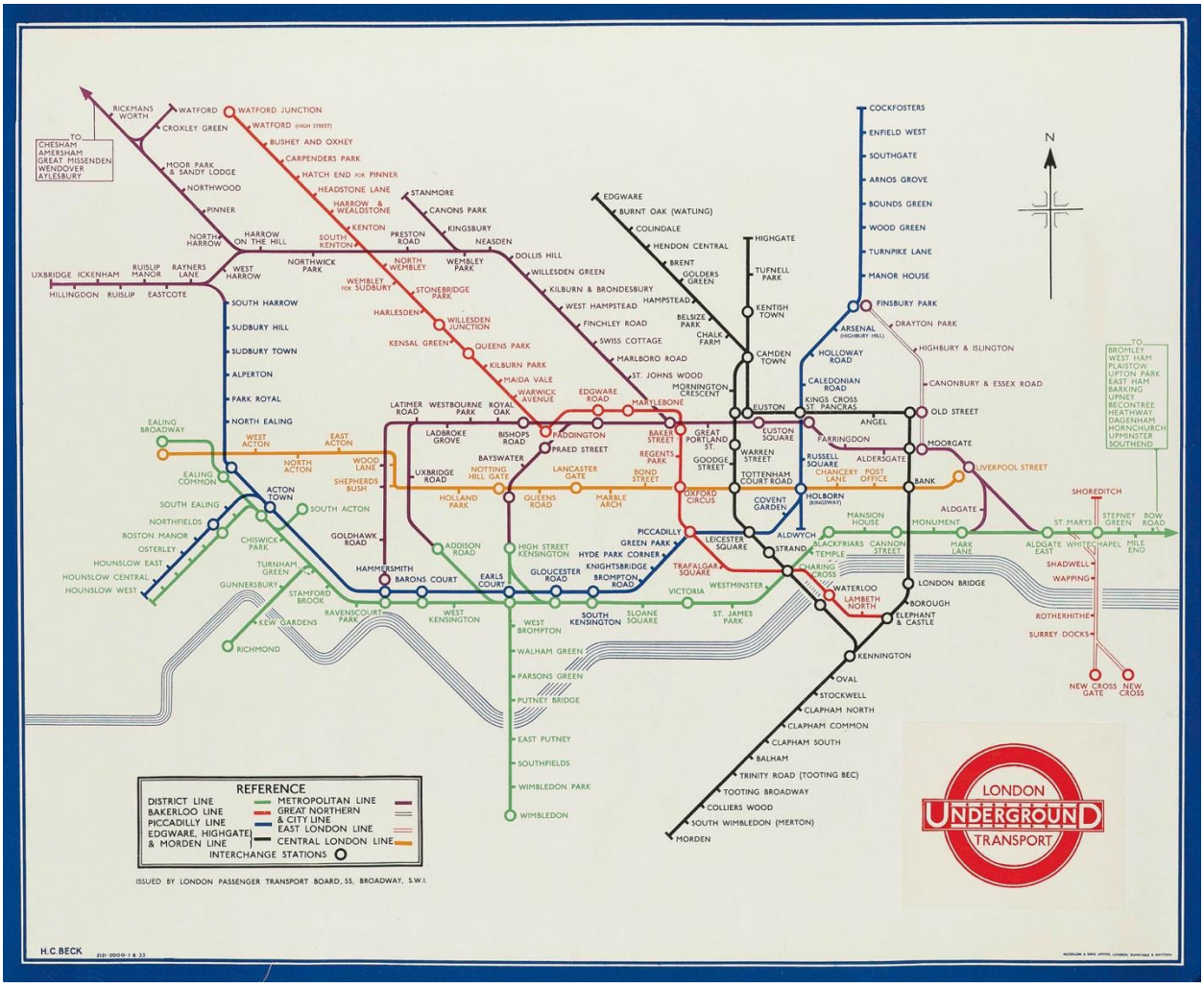

Figure 2 - Helena. "PIAZZA D'ITALIA. Postmodern Party in New Orleans." Architectural Visits, 15 Oct. 2020, architecturalvisits.com/en/piazza-ditalia-charles-moore/.

Figure 3 - ""Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)." The Art Institute of Chicago, www.artic.edu/artworks/152961/untitled-portrait-of-ross-in-l-a.