

## Chapter- VII

### Aesthetic Qualities

I. **Beauty and proportion :** What qualities are characteristics of art ? Beauty is probably the first that comes to mind. What is beauty ? The first thing that may strike us here is the enormous variety of beautiful things .Is it likely that they all share some common element or elements in virtue of which they are all beautiful. The difficulty of finding what they have in common is likely to be as great in the case of beauty as in the case of art itself.

There is an ancient view, and one that has persisted through the ages, that beauty consists essentially of such properties as symmetry and proportion. The chief forms of beauty, wrote Aristotle, are order and symmetry and definiteness. St. Augustine declared that beautiful things please by proportion, with pairs of equivalent members responding to each other.

In the seventeenth century the Earl of Shaftesbury declared that all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face, and true proportions the beauty of architecture; as true measures that of harmony and music. These true proportions, he claimed, have natural beauty, which the eye finds as soon as the object is presented to it.

The perception of beauty is reserved for being endowed with higher, rational faculties of the mind, as implied by Aristotle's reference to the mathematical science. These, he held, demonstrate in a special degree the order and symmetry and definiteness which were the main characteristics of beauty. Animals, according to Aristotle, are insensible to the pleasures of harmony or beauty. Shaftesbury too said that animals are incapable of knowing and enjoying beauty, whereas man enjoys it by the help of what is noblest, his mind and reason.

In the eighteenth century Rousseau reported to the regularity conception of beauty when comparing the feelings of primitive man with those of his civilized descendants. Regularity requires forming abstract ideas of proportion and regularity, in which civilized man had the advantage over his savage ancestors.

Edmund Burke came with the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. This was in effect a challenge. He challenged the place of beauty as the only or most important aesthetic category. Burke contrasted the sublime with beauty in several ways. Sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small. What is important for us is the dethronement of beauty from its prominent position in aesthetics. The assumptions that beauty is a necessary condition of art could now be challenged, and various other qualities put forward by which to judge and appreciate a work of art. By the eighteenth century, it seems, that once the regularity view of beauty is given up, no obvious alternative suggests itself. There was, and perhaps still is, a self-evident quality about the connection of beauty with regularity. The regularity view of survived virtually unquestioned until quite recent times, but once it is surrendered, there is no obvious successor. It now becomes plausible to suppose that beauty exists in an infinite variety of forms and cannot be captured by any overall definition or recipe.

**II. Beauty and feeling :** The analyses of beauty considered so far have been in terms of objective qualities, such as size, proportion, smoothness and hightness. But it may be thought that the place to look for an analysis of beauty is within ourselves rather than in the objects. This was the view of one of the most important philosophers of the time. Hume pointed out that there must be more to the perception of beauty than the perception of particular objective qualities. The regularity view was still prevalent when he began philosophizing over the concept of beauty, however his main concern was to question the objectivity of beauty. In saying that beauty was no quality of the circle, he intended to say, that it is something that exists in the mind of the observer. Hume's account of beauty may be described as 'subjectivist', for according of is beauty is, or is dependent on, a subjective concurrence, a feeling or sentiment within the observer. That there is a *connection* between beauty and feeling, can hardly be disputed. For Hume, beauty & feeling are not merely connected, his view was that beauty is itself feeling. This view has the consequence that beauty can't exist in the absence of a suitable observer, 'an intelligent mind' as Hume put it. We have given a fuller account of Hume's view about beauty in another chapter. But the point that we would like to make here is that a

similar view was expressed by American Philosopher Santayana in *The Sense of Beauty*. According to Santayana, there is a curious but well known psychological phenomenon where by we take an element of sensation to be the quality of a thing. Hence if we say that other men should see the beauties we see, it is because we think those beauties *are in the object*, like its colour, proportion or size. But this notion, he said, is radically absurd and contradictory. Beauty can not be conceived as an independent existence. It exists in perception. A beauty, Santayana remarks, not perceived is a pleasure not felt, and a contradiction. Just as it would be absurd and contradictory to suppose that pleasure can exist independently of anyone feeling pleasure, so it is with beauty, given that beauty is a sensation, a "felt-pleasure", and not "the quality of a thing".

These remarks by Hume and Santayana remind us of the saying that beauty is in the eye of the beholders, which expresses the view that beauty is a subjective quality. There is a further element in the views expressed by Hume and Santayana. According to them, beauty is not merely a subjective quality, but one that consists in a feeling or sensation. Thus Santayana, having said that beauty does not exist independently but only *in perception*, goes on to indicate that beauty is a pleasure that we feel and that it is an element of sensation. Hume speaks similarly of feelings and sensations. The claim that beauty is a feeling seems to be a necessary ingredient of the subjectivist view, for it is hard to conceive what beauty could consist in if it were neither an objective quality nor a feeling. The idea that it is something "in the eye of the beholder" can not be taken literally.

Now the idea that beauty is a feeling may seem plausible because of the undoubted connection between beauty and feeling. It is true that the perception of beauty makes us feel good, that ugliness is depressing and so on. But to speak of beauty itself as a feeling is to go much further, and further away from our normal use of this word. Asked how I feel when in the presence of beautiful or

ugly things or surroundings, I might reply 'happy', 'thrilled', 'delighted', 'sad', 'disappointed', 'disgusted', etc., but it would make no sense to reply that I feel beautiful or ugly.

Again if beauty were a feeling, then it would be absurd and contradictory to suppose that it might exist independently of being perceived. But there is nothing absurd or contradictory in making this supposition. Can we not speak of the beauty of wild places existing today which no one has ever visited ? One might also argue that they should be preserved in spite of this. Now on the Hume-Santayana view such statements and discussions must be non-sensical. They would be like talking about a world in which there is pleasure, but no beings capable of feeling pleasure. Such talk need not be absurd and contradictory in the case of beauty.

**III. Causal theories of beauty :** There is another way, however, of defining beauty by reference to feeling. Beauty, it may be said, is a quality of objects and not itself a feeling. But this quality is identified by the feelings it causes in us. Hume in some of his passages in the *Treatise* seems to have maintained this view; "beauty is nothing but a form, which produces pleasure, as deformity is a structure of parts ..... the power of producing pain and pleasure make ..... the essence of beauty and deformity"(p.299). This view does not entail that beauty can not exist in the absence of suitable spectators, for an object might be fitted to give pleasure, even though it is not actually doing so, because no spectators are present.

This causal approach to aesthetics was rejected by Wittgenstein in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. He distinguished 'discontent' from 'discomfort'. It was, he held, the former which was more characteristic of discourse about the arts. By 'discomfort' he meant, like Read, sensations resulting from suitable causes. 'Discontent' on the otherhand, was not a sensation but an attitude. And in expressing discontent with an aesthetic object one was criticizing the object as being 'not right' , and not

commenting on its power to cause sensations. To make his point he sometimes draw attention to aesthetic situations of a modest, everyday kind. One might, he said, express 'discontent' with the shape of a door, or approval of a suit which is not of 'the right length'. The expression of discontent, he said, is not "an expression of discomfort *plus* knowing the cause. It is not as if there were two things going on in my soul - discomfort and knowing the cause" (pp 13,14)

Now on the view taken by Hume and Read, the description of a thing as beautiful or ugly does amount to a double statement of this kind. In describing a thing as beautiful, one would be saying both that one felt a pleasurable sensation and that this was caused by certain qualities in the object. But according to Wittgenstein, aesthetic descriptions are descriptions of the objects themselves and not of their causal powers with regard to sensations.

Wittgenstein was not denying the importance of feelings when seeing or hearing works of art. Moreover, "you could play a minuet once and get a lot out of it, and play the minuet another time and getting nothing out of it"(Ibid.p.29); and this suggests that hearing the music and responding to it are two separate occurrences, related by way of cause and effect. On this view, our interest in a work of art, and our evaluation of it, would depend on its efficacy in producing certain feelings. There was, Wittgenstein says, 'a tendency to talk about "the effect of a work of art" - feelings, images, etc.', so that if one were asked why one was listening to that minuet, one might be inclined answer : 'To get this and that effect' ; But, he asked, "does not the minuet itself matter ? - hearing this : would another have done as well ?" (Ibid p.29).

If the model of cause and effect were correct, then the answer for this question should be 'Yes'. In that case, the point of listening to a minuet would be to get a certain feeling, and then any other piece that produced the same feeling

would do just well. The same would be true of a picture or poem, so that 'if you gave a person the effects and removed the picture, it will be all right' (Ibid p.29x). But if this were so, would not 'a syringe which produces these effects on you do just as well as the picture' or the minuet ? According to the causal account, the answer should again be 'Yes' . On this view, we might suppose that the shelves of record shops, instead of containing recordings of pieces by Beethoven, Mozart etc. were furnished with a supply of suitable syringes and drugs, classified under composers, names, and equally effective in producing the desired feelings, but at a lower cost.

In some cases, such as that of the door being too low, it is any case implausible to think that the aesthetic response must always involve feelings. But even where aesthetic response does involve feelings, it is still wrong, according to Wittgenstein, to record the production of feelings as accounting for our interest in aesthetic objects, or as being what we mean when we ascribe aesthetic qualities to them.

**IV. The normative force of judgements of beauty :** As we saw, a supposed advantage of subjectivist accounts of beauty was that they would accommodate the widespread disagreement that exist in judgements of beauty. According to these accounts, the disagreements would be no more surprising than the fact that what tastes sweet to one person tastes bitter to another, or the fact that what gives a headache to one person does not do so to another. Hume, having described beauty as a sentiment, i.e. sensation, commented that all sentiment is right, because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself" (Of the Standard of Taste, p.6); and he quoted the saying that 'it is fruitless to dispute concerning tastes'. One might say that it makes *no sense* to describe a sensation as either right or wrong. If I get a certain sensation when climbing a high ladder and you do not, we can not say that one of us must be right and the other wrong.

The fact is, however, that we do 'dispute concerning tastes' and we sometimes claim that others are wrong, or deficient in taste, if their descriptions differ from ours. How could this be so, on Hume's account ? In his essay, 'Of the standard of Taste' he tried to explain how there could be such a standard, and what it means to describe some people's taste as superior to that of others. In spite of the subjectivity of sensation, it can also be observed that people's sensations correspond to a large extent; and here lay the key to the problem, so Hume saw it. On this view, to describe an object as beautiful would be to make a general claim about its ability to please, and in this matter some people might be less skilled, or less well informed, than others. According to Hume, the rules of art are, like laws of nature, to be discovered by scientific observation. Just as scientific observation may lead us to discover a regular connection between, say, a type of diet and a type of disease, so scientific observation can lead us to discover correlations between types of aesthetic objects and 'the common sentiments of human nature.'

Hume seems to think that such discoveries can be made of 'What has been universally found to please in all countries and all ages' and this phrase may strike us immediately as excessive. But let us take his claim to be about rules or laws of a general rather than of a universal kind. On this view, the description of an object as beautiful would be a claim about its ability to please, let us say, most people most of the time. But is this how the 'beauty' is used ? Someone who described an object as beautiful would not thereby be committed to any such generalisation.

In this matter, there is a disagreement between Hume and Kant. What distinguishes attributions of beauty, according to Kant, is their normative force, involving claims about what people *ought* to feel rather than general judgements about what they would feel or have felt. He first contrasted this normative force with expression of mere personal preference, as when we describe something as 'agreeable' . But to describe a thing as 'beautiful' involves a larger and normative claim : larger because it involves other people, and normative because it says that they *ought* to describe it likewise, even if they do not.

Kant's view, like that of Hume, is that ascription of beauty involve other people. But whereas for Hume they are 'general observations' on past experience of what has been 'found to please'. Kant regards them as normative rather experiential. It is not that the speaker counts on the agreement of others on the basis of past experience, but that he *demand*s their agreement and accuses them being at fault if they think otherwise.

The normative account was vehemently rejected by Santayana (though he did not mention Kant by name). "It is unmeaning", he declared, "to say that what is beautiful to one man *ought* to be beautiful to other" (p.27). Whether it is so will depend upon similarity of origin, nature, and circumstances among men. If these are the same, then the same thing will certainly be beautiful to both, but otherwise it will not. In that case "the form which to one will be entrancing" will not be so to another, and he may see no more than, "a shapeless aggregate of things, in what to another is a perfect whole" (Ibid. p.27). But beyond this facts of nature we can't go : "it is absurd to say that what is invisible to a given being *ought* to seem beautiful to him".

Santayana does not seem to recognize that there is such a thing as *teaching* someone to see a perfect whole or some other pattern of aesthetic significance, where previously he saw only a shapeless aggregate, and similarly with other aesthetic qualities in the various arts. A perceptive critic may make the invisible visible to us. This is not to say that having seen the aesthetic significance of a work we are bound to agree about its beauty. Whether we do so may indeed depend on our nature and circumstances, as mentioned by Santayana. However, what is at issue is not the existence of such disagreement, but the normative force of what is said when one describes something as beautiful. According to Kant, such descriptions are not merely reports of personal liking, nor are they, as Hume would have it, statements about the power of an object to please all or most people. What one is saying, according to Kant, is that other *ought* to see this beauty, and that they are deficient in taste, if they do not. It is this kind of normative claim that Santayana rejects as "unmeaning".



In this matter ordinary usage seems to be on Kant's side. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that we would accuse a person of lacking taste merely on the basis of one object, as Kant seems to think (though this may depend on the object in question). But we may well do so if the disagreement is sufficiently extensive. This is especially noticeable in the case of negative judgements. Someone who ascribes beauty to objects that we regard as garish, sentimental or hideous, would be accused of being deficient in taste.

**V. The decline of beauty :** How important is beauty in the conception, practice, and appreciation of art ? That beauty is not a *sufficient* condition for art has always been clear from the recognition of beauty in nature. Here we find many objects of beauty, but they would not be described as art. There are also many artefacts, for example, bridges and buildings, which might be described as beautiful without thereby being regarded as works of art. We may also speak of the beauty of moral qualities and actions, and Shaftesbury and others have done, but again, we would not normally regard these as works of art.

In modern English the word 'beautiful' is used very widely, so that almost any kind of object may be called beautiful by way of praise. At one time it was usual, as Clive Bell reminds us in his *Art* to speak of 'beautiful hunting'. This was one of his reasons for rejecting beauty as the distinguishing feature of art. Collingwood, in his *Principles of Art* drew attention to such expressions as a "beautiful demonstration" in mathematics, " a beautiful stroke" in tennis. Even "a beautiful day", he pointed out, may mean merely one which gives us the kind of weather we need for some purpose or other. He also claimed that if we go back to the Greek, we find that there is no connection at all between beauty and art (p.37). To call a thing beautiful in Greek, he said, is simply to call it admirable or excellent or desirable.

These examples show that beauty can not be regarded as a sufficient condition of art. Can it be regarded as a necessary condition ? Must a work of art have beauty ? This is clearly not so if we allow for the existence of art of poor quality,

where, perhaps, the artist intended to create a beautiful work but produced only an inferior one. So let us put the question differently. Must a work of art be either beautiful, or intended to be so? If we understand 'beautiful' in the broad sense, then the answer may be 'Yes'.

However, 'beautiful' is also used in a narrower, more specific sense, to mean not just good, but good in a particular way. This is borne out by Kant's distinction between 'beautiful' and 'agreeable', between 'beautiful' and 'sublime'. In this sense, the word, it would seem, 'beauty' is *not* a necessary condition of art. Burke held that beauty and sublimity would be *alternative* qualities to which an artist might aspire, and a good work of art might be sublime without being beautiful.

Now it might be said, returning to a broad use of the word 'beautiful' that there are many works of art that could not straightway called 'beautiful' by way of overall praise. This may not seem an appropriate way of describing them. The subject matter and mood of such works as Picasso's *Guernica* would make the description of them as beautiful inappropriate, if not absolutely wrong.

According to Read, there is the tendency to force this one word "beauty" into the service of all the ideals expressed in art. Art is diverse, many of them may be legitimately described as works of art, but there should be no need to stretch the word 'beauty' so as to accommodate them all.

If beauty is not a necessary condition of art, it may still be an important ingredient of art, and the discussion of art. But this too has been disputed. According to Passmore, artists seem to get along quite well without it. It is the metaphysicians who talk of beauty. Wittgenstein claimed that in actual discussions about art the word 'beauty' plays hardly any role at all. The use one tends to use are more akin to

'right' and 'correct' than to 'beautiful'. These remarks have been criticized by Mary Mothersill in her *Beauty Restored*. She concedes, that the term 'beautiful' does not figure in the talk of someone who knows what he is talking about, but claims that when a point about a poem or a musical performance is made, the concept of beauty is in the background. Like knowledge or action, beauty is a standing concept that is taken for granted in critical discussion of the arts, and that it is indispensable.

Now it might be that the concept of beauty is indispensable in this sense. But it would not follow that it is involved in all discussions of the arts, or even that it is the most important ingredient. It might be indispensable in some discussions but not in others. The comparison of the concept of beauty, as Mothersill does, with those of knowledge and action may be questioned. It may be argued that knowledge and action are indispensable to any human language and in this sense, any human society. But is it the same true of the concept of beauty? Could there not be a society with a human language in which there is no such concept? For example, works of art may have been made by prehistoric people even if they had no concept of art.

A number of difficulties await those who try to define beauty, and hence art, in terms of beauty. Does this mean that there is no connection between art and beauty, or that the connection is unimportant? No, people who visit galleries, read poetry and so on, do after all, look for beauty, and may be disappointed if they do not find it, or enough of it. Even if this is not always so, if beauty is a necessary condition of art, the connection may still be important. Again, while it may be true that no satisfactory definition of beauty can be produced, and that people disagree about what things are beautiful, it does not follow that the word is meaningless or that there are no limits to the disagreement. If I am told that a certain object is beautiful, then I shall have a reason for going to see it and will have certain expectations about it.

**VI. The Rise of Formalism :** One reason for challenging the pre-eminent place of beauty in art was the recognition of other qualities such as the sublime. Another quality, which became prominent in more recent times, was that of form. This has been regarded by some as an alternative to beauty, and by others as being what beauty consists in.

The latter view is comparable with ancient ideas about proportion and symmetry. But the modern formalism was based on personal feelings rather than on any particular type of formal properties. The appropriate forms were those, to quote Read again, "result in pleasurable sensation". This, and not any objective definition, was the criterion of good form. According to Clive Bell, a leading proponent of the new formalism, "the starting - point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a particular emotion" and "the objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art" (p.6). The emotion in question is produced, according to Bell, by the perception of a certain kind of form, which he called "Significant form". But this form was itself defined in terms of the relevant emotion. "When I speak of significant form, I mean a combination of lines and colours that moves me aesthetically (Ibid.P.12).

In this respect the new formalism was more akin to the subjectivism of Hume than to older views which were based on objective qualities of form. And as in the case of Hume's subjectivism, questions arise about the status of aesthetic judgement and aesthetic value, about what Hume called "the standard of taste". If the criterion of quality were merely "what moves me aesthetically", then judgements of quality would be purely personal, as when, to take Kant's example again, one person finds canary wine agreeable while another does not.

The main concern of the formalists however, was about the importance of form, in both theory and practice. They insisted on the distinctness and overriding importance of formal qualities and they applied this principle in their critical practice.

The new formalism was connected with a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. Let us take a painting of a beautiful landscape. We may speak of the beauty of the landscape as extrinsic to the painting, contrasting this with the intrinsic beauty or other aesthetic qualities of the painting.

It is indeed, not uncommon to praise a painting for its intrinsic beauty, when the object depicted is not itself particularly beautiful. This contrast can also be made in the case of literary art. The words of a poem refer to events that are distinct from the poem and are in that sense extrinsic to it. But the poem also has intrinsic qualities of form and beauty - its rhythms, choice of words and so on, which belong to the poem and not to anything outside. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic may also be made in connection with certain thoughts and feelings that a work may produce in us. To take an example from architecture. We may find that the Sun Temple at Konarak has a religious or historic atmosphere, and this is part of our experience when we contemplates the building. But it may be argued that these properties of the building are extrinsic in comparison with such intrinsic properties as form and beauty. The latter can be appreciated without any thought or even knowledge of religious or historical associations, while on the other hand, the religious or historical associations that the building conjures up may be had without the building.

Which of the two kinds of qualities is more important, intrinsic or extrinsic ? Which is essential to art ? It may seem as if the answer must be : intrinsic, Here, it may be said, lies the distinctive contribution that art makes to our life. If what we want is to enjoy a beautiful landscape, then the best thing to do is to visit such a landscape, and the enjoyment of a painting of it would be only derivative and secondary. There must be something else, distinct from the beauty of the landscape, for the sake of which we want to see the painting; and this must be its essential quality. Again if we want to reflect on certain thoughts, or hear about certain events, there we can have them told in ordinary language, and there is no need for a work of art to be erected. There must be something special to the work of art, for the sake of which we value it.

The new formalism was expounded mainly in the context of visual art. Music may be regarded from the formalist point of view, as the purest art form, since musical works do not, generally speaking, have any outside reference. A musical work is not 'about' anything, while a poem could be. In the case of literary art there is the problem of meaning. Should the meanings of words be regarded as extrinsic to a work of literary art? It may seem so, for these meanings exist independently of the poem, and it may be thought that the essential qualities of the work are its purely 'musical' ones, the sounds of individual words, and the rhyme, metre, etc. that result from their combination in formal patterns.

Is the distinction between formal and other properties untenable? No, the distinction is not as clear-cut, not as easy to apply, as some advocates of formalism seem to have thought. If some were asked to mention the formal properties of a work, one would give one kind of answer, and asked to mention other properties, a different kind of answer. And the same is true of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic'. The fact that a distinction is not always clear-cut does not entail that it is invalid or unimportant.

A more fundamental accusation that may be made against formalism is to quote Wittgenstein, "The craving for generality," a desire to subsume a large and varied range of things under a single principle. It is a mere prejudice to suppose that aesthetic satisfaction must be attributable to a single kind of quality. While it is true that formal qualities are important, sometimes more important, in the creation and appreciation of a work of art, this does not entail that it must be so in all cases. A rambling, episodic novel may be described correctly as formless, but admired none the less for its other qualities - its beauty or originality of language, insight into human nature, and so on. And a painting, similarly, may be admired for these and other qualities, rather than for any formal merits it may possess.

**VII. Aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities :** So far our discussion of aesthetic qualities has included beauty, form and the sublime. But our aesthetic vocabulary is much richer than this, encompassing, according to Frank Sibley, an almost endless variety. In his two papers "Aesthetic concepts" and "Aesthetic and non-aesthetic" (published in *Philosophical Review*, p.421) Sibley gives a list of aesthetic concepts. He contrasts them with descriptions of art which he called non-aesthetic. The two kinds of language are to be characterized by what is needed in order to perceive the relevant qualities. Qualities of the non-aesthetic kind, he says, can be pointed out, to anyone with normal eyesight, ears and intelligence, whereas those of the aesthetic kind require the exercise of taste, perceptiveness or sensibility, aesthetic discrimination or appreciation.

In speaking of the perception of aesthetic qualities Sibley means those which are perceived in the sense in which one can perceive or see that the characters in a novel never really come to life, or that a certain episode strikes a false note, what would not be included, however are qualities of an historical or circumstantial kind, such as the originality during, cleverness, etc.

Sibley's argument deals with two main topics : the perception of aesthetic qualities, and the relation between aesthetic and non - aesthetic. Unlike those who regard aesthetic as being mainly about the production of feelings, he holds that aesthetics deals with a kind of perception. People have to see the grace or unity of a work, hear the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, notice the gaudiness of a colour scheme. Now in order to see and hear these aesthetic qualities, we must be in possession of good eyesight, hearing and so on, just as we must in order to perceive non - aesthetic qualities. But the possession of these faculties is not enough in the case of aesthetic perception. People, normally endowed with senses and understanding may fail to discern the relevant qualities. What they need, in addition, is to exercise taste, sensitivity etc. In this matter critics have a role to play. A major occupation of critics is the task of bringing people to see things for what, aesthetically, they are.

There are, however, relations of dependance between aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities. Any aesthetic character a thing has depended upon the character of its non-aesthetic qualities, and changes in its aesthetic character result from changes in its non-aesthetic qualities.

The dependance of aesthetic on non-aesthetic is not, however, one that can be stated in the form of sufficient conditions. There are no sufficient conditions, no non-aesthetic features such that the presence of some set of them will beyond question justify or warrant the application of an aesthetic term. We cannot, for example, make any general statement of the form "If the vase is pale pink, somewhat curving, highly mottled, and so forth, it will be delicate". Although these features might be mentioned in support of the statement that the vase is delicate, they would not amount to a proof of it; and neither could they serve as a set of sufficient conditions for the delicacy of vases in general.

A given non-aesthetic description may serve two different aesthetic descriptions, one favourable and other non-favourable. A work may be described as general or delicate, because of its 'pale colour, slimness, lightness, lack of angularity', but the same reasons might be given for describing it as 'flaccid', 'washed out', 'lanky' or 'insipid'.

Following Sibley, we may distinguish two senses of 'reason', inferential and explanatory. A reason in the inferential sense is roughly a statement or fact such that, on the basis of knowing *it*, it would be reasonable, right or plausible to infer, suppose or judge that something is the case. But another kind of question would be: Why something is the case? What is wanted this time is an *explanation* of something's being so, and this might require knowledge about the facts behind the object concerned. Reasons in the inferential sense are essentially reasons that the speaker knows. They are used by the speaker to defend or justify what was said, to show that



the belief is reasonable. But this is not true of reasons in the explanatory sense. Such reasons might be put forward by way of hypothesis or speculation, but one is not obliged to do so, or to have any knowledge of them at all.

Sibley appears to suggest that in the case of aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities the relationship is explanatory and not inferential. The non-aesthetic quality or qualities may serve to *explain* the presence of a perceived aesthetic quality, but we can not *infer* that the latter must be present from the fact the former are. And as with other cases of explanation who perceives an aesthetic quality may or may not know an explanation for its presence, in terms of non-aesthetic qualities. Thus a person might notice that something is graceful without yet knowing or being able to specify exactly the reason why. According to Sibley, the discovery of such reasons is one of the central activities of critics : *explanation*. This explanation may be interesting in itself, but it may also bring it about that our appreciation is deepened and enriched and becomes more intelligent in being articulate.

The inferential kind of reason, on the other hand, is not appropriate for aesthetic statements. It is absurd to ask, says Sibley, that such a statement, (involving, as it does, perception) be based upon reasons in the inferential sense. The reason the music is sad at a certain point may truly be that just there it shows and drops into a minor key. But these non-aesthetic facts would be very poor reasons for believing or inferring that the music must be, or even probably is sad. The music might instead be solemn or peaceful, sentimental, or even characterless.

The two aspects of Sibley's argument, concerning the perceptual nature of aesthetic qualities, and the manner of their dependance on non-aesthetic qualities, are connected. It is because we have to see the grace or unity of a work that the existence of such qualities is not to be established by inference. Notwithstanding the dependance of aesthetic or non-aesthetic, the gracefulness

of a vase or the sadness of a piece of music cannot be inferred from their non-aesthetic qualities, but must be perceived directly.

Sibley's insistence on the perception of aesthetic qualities may be contrasted with the theories whereby the presence of such qualities, or our knowledge of them, would depend on feeling. It may seem plausible to regard beauty in this way, because it is readily associated with feelings such as love and delight. But the situation is different when we turn to such qualities as 'vivid', 'delicate', 'dynamic' and so on, for there is little temptation to think that these qualities are to be identified by corresponding feelings, one for each quality. It is, however, largely in terms of such qualities that aesthetic discourse is conducted. Moreover, the description of a thing as beautiful is itself often supported by reference to qualities of this kind.

**VIII. Expressive qualities :** On the otherhand, there is a type of aesthetic quality where the connection with feelings seems especially strong and direct. A piece of music may be described as sad or cheerful. Is this because it expresses the composer's feelings ? Is it due to feelings produced in the audience ? Again, what if someone speaks of a 'plaintive melody'? This example was introduced by Wittgenstein. Such qualities as 'sad' and 'plaintive', when ascribed to music, such qualities are known as 'expressive', and this reflects a widespread view that music, but also, art in general, serves to express an artist's feelings (the 'expression' theory). But this view is open to serious objections ; and the description of such qualities as 'expressive'.

This implication is challenged by J.O.Urmson in his paper "Representation in Music". Urmson does not deny that some composers have from time to time expressed their sadness in their music, but he questions whether this is what is meant in describing a piece of music as sad. This cannot be so, he argues, for he could himself easily write a piece of music that would recognizably sad without thereby expressing sadness or anything else. Again, sad music is pleasant to listen to, and listening to it may make us happy, but this is not so with normal expressions of sadness.

It is true that music evokes feelings in us, but can it make us feel sad ? Listening to music, sad or otherwise, is something that gives us pleasure, but feeling sad does not normally give us pleasure. Again, if I feel I should be able to say what I feel sad about, but what would this be in the case of music ? Finally this attempt to deal with sad music would not be applicable to plaintive music, for there is no such feeling as 'plaintive'.

These uses of language, both inside and outside aesthetics, are sometimes called 'metaphorical'. But they are not metaphors in the same way that 'the head of the company' is. In such cases we can explain how the metaphor works, by drawing attention to the relevant analogies. We also have the option of saying the same thing non-metaphorically. But this is not so in the other cases. Thus it appears that the problem of 'expressive' qualities is part of a much longer issue in the philosophy of language : whether, or to what extent, our cases of words are applicable. To say this is not, of course, to solve the problem.

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