

# Reasoned and Unreasoned Judgment: On Inference, Acquaintance and Aesthetic Normativity

Dan Cavedon-Taylor

Brasenose College, University of Oxford

Forthcoming in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*

*Aesthetic non-inferentialism is the widely-held thesis that aesthetic judgments either are identical to, or are made on the basis of, sensory states like perceptual experience and emotion. It is sometimes objected to on the basis that testimony is a legitimate source of such judgments. Less often is the view challenged on the grounds that one's inferences can be a source of aesthetic judgments. This paper aims to do precisely that. According to the theory defended here, aesthetic judgments may be unreasoned, insofar as they are immediate judgments made on the basis of, and acquiring their justification from, causally prior sensory states. Yet they may also be reasoned, insofar as they may be the outputs of certain inferences. Crucially, a token aesthetic judgment may be unreasoned and reasoned, simultaneously. A key reason for allowing inference to constitute a legitimate ground for aesthetic judgment emerges from reflection upon the nature of aesthetic expertise.*

## I - Introduction

From Hume to Kant, through to numerous contemporary aestheticians, there exists near univocal support for the idea that aesthetic judgments either are identical to, or are formed on the basis of, one or another type of sensory state, such as emotion or perception, perhaps in combination. As Frank Sibley put it in a celebrated and oft-quoted passage:

[B]roadly speaking, 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 color scheme, feel the power of a novel, its mood, or its uncertainty of tone. They

may be struck by these qualities at once, or they may come to perceive them only after repeated viewings, hearings, or readings, and with the help of critics. But unless they do perceive them for themselves, aesthetic enjoyment, appreciation, and judgment are beyond them. Merely to learn from others, on good authority, that the music is serene, the play moving, or the picture unbalanced is of little aesthetic value; the crucial thing is to see, hear, or feel. To suppose indeed that one can make aesthetic judgments without aesthetic perception, say, by following rules of some kind, is to misunderstand aesthetic judgement.<sup>1</sup>

Sibley is telling us that there is a right and a wrong way to form aesthetic judgment. The right way is via first-hand perceptual-cum-emotional experience, a thesis standardly referred to as ‘the acquaintance principle.’<sup>2</sup> The wrong ways include testimony and inference.

Call this view, which concerns the legitimate epistemic bases of aesthetic judgment, ‘aesthetic non-inferentialism.’ Although this thesis is normative in character, one might see it as demanded by descriptive features of aesthetic judgment. For instance, Jerrold Levinson claims that such judgments “report, albeit obliquely, certain looks/feels/appearances that emerge out of lower order perceptual properties.”<sup>3</sup> But it is worth being clear that this does not mean that aesthetic non-inferentialism depends upon the truth of aesthetic formalism. Kendall Walton affirms that aesthetic judgments, at least those made of artworks, are based upon historical information. Yet Walton denies that the possession of such information is the epistemic ground of the ensuing aesthetic judgment; what matters is the perceptual experience that such information affords.<sup>4</sup>

Why think that aesthetic non-inferentialism is true? Jesse Prinz motivates his version of the view on both epistemic and common sense grounds, writing:

---

<sup>1</sup> F. Sibley, ‘Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic’, *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (1965), p.137

<sup>2</sup> See R. Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.233.

<sup>3</sup> J. Levinson, ‘Being Realistic about Aesthetic Properties’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52 (1994), p.151.

<sup>4</sup> K. Walton, ‘Categories of Art’, *The Philosophical Review* 79 (1970), p.365. Plausibly, Walton’s thesis is interpreted as affirming that the perception of art is cognitively penetrated by such information; for discussion, see D. Stokes, ‘Cognitive Penetration and the Perception of Art’, *Dialectica* 68 (2014), pp.1-34.

[W]e often take our emotional reactions to be adequate evidence for the attribution of aesthetic properties. When we are stunned by a person's appearance, we are *justified* in saying that the person is stunning.<sup>5</sup>

A number of further considerations lurk in background of discussions of non-inferentialism. For one, it is commonly held that aesthetic properties are response-dependent. For another, it seems that we are motivated to seek out, or avoid, the works that we do because of the anticipation of positively, or negatively, valenced perceptual-cum-emotional responses. Moreover, introspective evidence suggests that aesthetic judgments are formed in a psychologically immediate way. In all these respects, and more, aesthetics seems a matter of looks and feels rather than reasoning and inference.

Now, aesthetic non-inferentialism, and the acquaintance principle it endorses, are sometimes challenged on the basis that testimonially-based belief can ground aesthetic judgments.<sup>6</sup> Less often is the view challenged on the basis that one's inferences can justify such judgments.<sup>7</sup> A central aim of this paper is to supply new arguments that aim to show precisely that. Aesthetic judgments may be unreasoned, insofar as they are psychologically immediate judgments made on the basis of, and acquiring their justification from, causally prior sensory states. Yet they may also be reasoned, insofar as they are sometimes the outputs of certain inferences. Crucially, a

---

<sup>5</sup> J. Prinz, 'Can Critics be Dispassionate? The Role of Emotion in Aesthetic Judgment', Presented at the American Society for Aesthetics, Houston, October 2004, pp.2-3. Quoted by permission. Emphasis my own.

<sup>6</sup> See B. Laetz, 'A Modest Defense of Aesthetic Testimony', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 66 (2008), pp. 355-363 and A. Meskin, 'Aesthetic Testimony: What Can We Learn From Others About Beauty and Art?' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 69 (2004), pp. 65-91. For a particularly trenchant attack on aesthetic testimony, see R. Hopkins, 'How to Be a Pessimist About Aesthetic Testimony', *Journal of Philosophy* 108 (2011), pp.138-157. For a useful overview on aesthetic testimony, see J. Robson, 'Aesthetic Testimony', *Philosophy Compass* 7 (2012), pp.1-10. An exceptionally illuminating debate about testimony's relation to the acquaintance principle was recently had in this journal; see A. Konigsberg, 'The Acquaintance Principle, Aesthetic Autonomy, and Aesthetic Appreciation', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 52, (2012) pp.153-168 and J. Robson, 'Appreciating the Acquaintance Principle: A Reply to Konigsberg', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 53 (2013), pp. 237-245. For a related debate in this journal, see D. Whiting, 'The Glass is Half Empty: A New Argument for Pessimism About Aesthetic Testimony', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 55, (2015), pp.91-107 and E. Lord, 'On the Rational Power of Aesthetic Testimony', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 56, (2016), pp.1-13.

<sup>7</sup> Along the way, I will mention some who take up this challenge. See also M. J. Alcaraz León, 'The Rational Justification of Aesthetic Judgments', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66, (2008) pp.291-300; R. Hopkins, 'Critical Reasoning and Critical Perception', in D. Lopes and M. Kieran (eds.), *Knowing Art* (Springer, 2006), p.133-157; and J. Bender, 'Realism, Supervenience, and Irresolvable Aesthetic Disputes', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, (1996) pp.371-381.

token aesthetic judgment may be unreasoned and reasoned, simultaneously. On this view, the epistemic grounds of aesthetic judgment are not only disjoint, but they fail to compete with one another for the ‘exclusive epistemic rights’ to such judgment. I see this position as antidote to those non-inferentialists who, following Hume, Kant, Sibley, etc. are unwilling to acknowledge that inferences can justify aesthetic judgments, as well as those who ignore important facts about the structure of justification, *viz.* that it allows for overdetermination by distinct epistemic sources. The position might be called ‘aesthetic judgment disjunctivism’, but that is not the term I will use, since the position is structurally dissimilar to disjunctive accounts of action, perception and knowledge.

I proceed as follows: In section II, I give an indirect argument in favour of the claim that aesthetic judgments can be inferentially justified. In section III, I motivate a version of aesthetic non-inferentialism that allows for such justification. In sections IV and V, I respond to potential objections. In sections VI and VII, I give direct support for the theory by outlining examples of aesthetic judgments formed inferentially, linking the disposition to draw such inferences to aesthetic expertise. Section VIII concludes by arguing that there are extant theories of aesthetic properties, judgment and value that are only intelligible on the assumption that aesthetic properties can be attributed by inferences.

Aesthetic non-inferentialism comes in many forms. In what follows, I will take Frank Sibley as my chief target, since his version of the thesis commands widespread interest and assent. My hope is that what I say challenges most, if not all, existent forms the theory.

## II - The Challenge from Critical-Ostention

In a recent article on aesthetic judgment, Dominic Lopes writes:

It is a platitude that engaging with works of art and bits of nature is in part a rational activity. When we respond aesthetically, we respond for reasons, at least in the sense that our responses are open to be challenged by ourselves or by others and we take ourselves to be obliged to answer these challenges by stating our reasons.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> D. Lopes, ‘Feckless Reason’, in G. Currie, M. Kieran, A. Meskin and J. Robson (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Sciences of the Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p.21.

Lopes is surely right. Aesthetics is a rational activity and aesthetic judgments are made for reasons. So what are our aesthetic reasons, in the sense of our aesthetic *justifying* reasons? A useful approach to this question is suggested by Lopes's remarks: we should reflect upon what we are inclined to say to others in support, and sometimes in defence, of our aesthetic judgments.

The sorts of remarks we make about objects of aesthetic interest are various. But, one thing we frequently do, in the context of justifying aesthetic judgments, is ostend the non-aesthetic properties upon which the attributed aesthetic property is believed to depend. In justifying one's aesthetic judgment one may point out, e.g., the combination of *those* colours and lines, *that* motion and movement, *these* notes and rhythms, etc. In doing so, one may not only convince one's interlocutor that one's initial aesthetic judgment is justified, one may also cause them to revise their own aesthetic assessment.

Let us call this act one of 'critical-ostention.'<sup>9</sup> Acts of critical-ostention, so described, present a particularly acute challenge for aesthetic non-inferentialism. For if aesthetic non-inferentialism were true, then acts of ostention like those mentioned above would be rare, since:

- (i) that would be the wrong method for demonstrating that one's aesthetic judgment is justified;
- (ii) such an act would rarely, if ever, convince one's interlocutor that one's aesthetic judgment is justified;
- (iii) such an act would rarely, if ever, move one's interlocutor to revise their own judgment; and, perhaps most importantly,
- (iv) such an act would be unintelligible, as a method for demonstrating the well-foundedness of one's aesthetic judgment.

Yet acts of critical-ostention are neither rare nor unintelligible. What is rare is to encounter the method that the non-inferentialist should think is the correct one for demonstrating that one's aesthetic judgment is justified. If aesthetic judgments are justified by first-hand perceptual-cum-emotional encounters with objects, then that ought to amount to the following: first, one asserts

---

<sup>9</sup> This act of ostention bears close resemblance to, but is distinct from, those that aim to support overall appreciative or evaluative verdicts, e.g., whether the object is aesthetically good or not (and why). Indeed, Sibley distinguishes the two in 'Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic', pp.148-9. On the variety of critical judgments and verdicts, see J. Grant, *The Critical Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

the attitude and content of such states (e.g., ‘it looks elegant’); second, one supplies reason for thinking that there is no introspective error or deception. Yet that this is rarely how discussions of aesthetic matters proceed and this is a poor method for demonstrating the reasonableness of one’s judgment.<sup>10</sup>

But if acts of critical-ostention challenge aesthetic non-inferentialism, how, precisely, do they favour inferentialism?<sup>9</sup> The idea is as follows: if demonstrating an awareness that an object has such-and-such non-aesthetic properties suffices to demonstrate that one is justified in judging that it has such-and-such an aesthetic property (or properties), then awareness of those non-aesthetic properties must epistemically support an attribution of that aesthetic property (or properties), in the sense that it makes such an attribution reasonable or rational. Seemingly, this can only be the case if awareness of those properties provides, for suitably informed critics, inferential support, of some kind, for believing in the instantiation of the aesthetic property (or properties).

This challenge from critical-ostention can be posed in various forms and in varying strengths. Fabian Dorsch, who has recently argued in favour of an inferential account of aesthetic judgment, exploits similar considerations when he argues that we have a “practice of providing further support for our [aesthetic] opinions” and which, he says, “applies to all instances of aesthetic judgment.”<sup>11</sup>

But one can reasonably doubt that Dorsch is right that it does apply to all instances of aesthetic judgment that one is in a position to ostend the non-aesthetic properties upon which one takes the relevant aesthetic property to supervene. Perhaps we are laxer on this matter in some aesthetic domains than in others, showing that the question of inferentialism vs non-inferentialism may be sensitive to what type of object is being discussed.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps some of us are not always particularly good at ostending the relevant non-aesthetic properties or articulate enough to do so. Sometimes all we can do is direct our interlocutor to take a second look, or to look harder. Are the resulting

---

<sup>10</sup> A similar point is made by E. Schellekens, ‘Towards a Reasonable Objectivism for Aesthetic Judgments’, *British Journal of Aesthetics* 46, (2006) p.170. An anonymous referee asks why mention of the content and attitude alone should not suffice. This matter turns upon wider, and very thorny, issues of justification. But sufficient or not, my concern is that discussions of aesthetic matters do not proceed on such a flimsy basis.

<sup>11</sup> F. Dorsch, ‘Non-Inferentialism about Justification – The Case of Aesthetic Judgements’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 63 (2013) p.669.

<sup>12</sup> The variable nature of epistemic standards for judgments across aesthetic domains is a point sometimes made by defenders of aesthetic testimony. See Meskin, ‘Aesthetic Testimony: What can we Learn from others about Beauty?’ and Konigsberg, ‘The Acquaintance Principle, Aesthetic Autonomy, and Aesthetic Appreciation.’

judgments unjustified? This seems unduly restrictive insofar as we sometimes find ourselves in a position of not possessing a rich enough vocabulary to explain for others what we take to be the, e.g., the elegance-, beauty-, or ugly-making features of an object. What I have argued above is simply that the method one typically employs when demonstrating to another that one's aesthetic judgment is justified is not the method that most naturally follows by the non-inferentialist's lights, and is, instead, one that points to our aesthetic judgments as having inferential justification. Granted, this is something of an indirect argument for the claim that our aesthetic judgments have inferential justification, one that leaves many details unspecified. Later, in sections VI and VII, I will offer a more direct argument.

What can an aesthetic non-inferentialist say in reply to the challenge, as I have posed it? At least two lines of response can be found in Sibley's work.<sup>13</sup>

On the one hand, Sibley claims that ostending an object's non-aesthetic properties is sometimes an explanatory practice that aims to account for why some object instantiates an aesthetic property (or properties). When carried out in such a manner, the relevant act has a non-normative function of explaining, rather than justifying. Crucially, *what* is explained is not one's aesthetic judgment, but the aesthetic properties by the object judged. For example, in pointing out the colour scheme of the décor, one explains what it is about the décor that realises an instance of garishness; one does nothing to support one's judgment that the décor is garish.

Sibley distinguished another critical activity in which ostending an object's non-aesthetic properties serves to ground what he calls a 'perceptual proof' of one's aesthetic judgement. This activity is more closely linked with aesthetic judgments and the practice of defending such judgments. Insofar as it aims to bring one's interlocutor to agree with one's judgement, it is perhaps here that Sibley has a clearer response to the problem of critical-ostention.

Sibley makes many insightful remarks about aesthetic criticism. But none of the above amounts to a refutation of the claim that critical-ostention may, on occasion, imply an inferential component that epistemically supports one's aesthetic judgments. Sibley puts many different 'spins' on what ostending a work's non-aesthetic properties aims to achieve. But no matter what else it achieves, such an act seems to rationalise an attribution of the relevant aesthetic property or properties. For in very many contexts, pointing out a work's non-aesthetic properties does not simply causally explain or excuse one's aesthetic judgement. Nor does it always function to effect

---

<sup>13</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic', Section III.

an explanation of the aesthetic properties of the object judged. Rather, ostending an object's non-aesthetic properties can show one's judgement to be reasonable, insofar as one may successfully point out properties that *favour* an attribution of the relevant aesthetic properties or properties. Sibley's remarks about perceptual proofs may seem to offer an escape from this claim. However, supplying proof of the truth of one's judgement (in Sibley's sense) is not the same as demonstrating that one's judgement is justified or reasonable, though Sibley was tempted to run the two together.<sup>14</sup> But even if Sibley's perceptual proofs are understood as supporting one's judgments, Sibley is very clear that this is not a kind of rational support and that, strictly speaking, aesthetic judgments neither have nor lack a rational basis.<sup>15</sup> Following aesthetic non-inferentialism to the letter, this is precisely the claim that one should expect. Yet it is plain that it ignores a substantial amount of our interest in discussing art with others to claim that aesthetic judgments are not had for reasons which we can sensibly debate with one another.<sup>16</sup>

One could say much more about the various non-epistemic uses of ostending an object's non-aesthetic properties, but insofar as we seem able to justify our aesthetic judgments by reference to the instantiation of such properties, we have *prima facie* grounds for thinking that some acts of critical-ostention imply inference and reasoning on behalf of the judging subject. While this is not incompatible with such acts also serving non-normative ends in the way that Sibley describes, it does seem incompatible with aesthetic non-inferentialism.

### III - Towards Moderate Non-Inferentialism

There is the potential for a false dilemma to emerge at this point in the dialectic between aesthetic non-inferentialists and those who think that aesthetic judgments can be the outputs of reasoning. I hope to expose it over the course of this section and the next.

As mentioned above, Dorsch argues for an inferential account of aesthetic judgements on grounds similar to those discussed in relation to acts of critical-ostention. In light of such an account, he concludes that we may have to give up the idea that we perceptually experience or

---

<sup>14</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic', p.142-3.

<sup>15</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic', p.144.

<sup>16</sup> On this point, see also Schellekens, 'Towards a Reasonable Objectivism for Aesthetic Judgments', pp.173-5.

emotionally feel aesthetic properties.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Dorsch remains worried by the idea that “many of our aesthetic judgments are actually formed in an immediate manner.”<sup>18</sup>

This problem for the inferentialist may seem especially pressing, if not downright devastating. But it is easily solved. For nothing follows in terms of the truth or falsity of the claim that aesthetic judgments have non-inferential justification, or are perceived, from the putative truth of aesthetic judgments having inferential justification. One does not show it to be false that aesthetic properties are perceived by pointing out that aesthetic judgments are (always? sometimes? often?) the outputs of reasoning. For, accepting that critical-ostention signals the presence of inferential justification, it remains open that our aesthetic judgments have more than one grounding: they may have an inferential ground on the one hand and a non-inferential ground on the other. Indeed, as I argued above, one does not show that acts of critical-ostention fail to signal the presence of inferential justification by pointing out their non-normative uses. That was Sibley’s mistake. But it is a consideration that cuts both ways. Dorsch’s mistake, therefore, is in thinking that because acts of critical-ostention signal the presence of inferential justification, that it must follow that aesthetic judgments cannot be justified non-inferentially, cannot be formed in a psychologically spontaneous manner and that aesthetic properties cannot be perceived. These claims do not follow. Our aesthetic judgments may be epistemically overdetermined; that is, they may be justified inferentially and non-inferentially simultaneously. I will be making this idea more concrete as I proceed.

The typical aesthetic non-inferentialist may balk at this suggestion. For when arguing that aesthetic judgments are justified non-inferentially, they have a tendency to simultaneously deny that aesthetic judgments can have inferential justification. We see precisely this in the quote at the beginning of this paper from Sibley. There, Sibley did not simply affirm that perception and emotion *can* ground aesthetic judgement, but that they are the *only* justifiers of such judgments; testimony and inference fall short. These positive and negative claims are neatly combined in a likewise oft-quoted passage of Alan Tormey’s:

[W]e require critical judgments to be rooted in “eye-witness” encounters, and the epistemically indirect avenues of evidence, inference, and authority that are permissible elsewhere are anathema here.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Dorsch, ‘Non-Inferentialism about Justification – The Case of Aesthetic Judgements’, p.682.

<sup>18</sup> Dorsch, ‘Non-Inferentialism about Justification – The Case of Aesthetic Judgements’, p.682.

<sup>19</sup> A. Tormey, ‘Critical Judgments’, *Theoria*, 39 (1973), p.39.

So acts of critical-ostention do not show it to be false that aesthetic judgments are ever justified non-inferentially, granted that they show our aesthetic judgments have some sort of inferential justification. And yet, by endorsing the negative claim that inference cannot justify aesthetic judgement, aesthetic non-inferentialists like Sibley and Tormey do leave themselves vulnerable to the challenge from critical-ostention. What are aesthetic non-inferentialists to make of this problem?

Let us call the non-inferentialism endorsed by Sibley and Tormey **Strong Non-Inferentialism**, since it is a thesis that offers not only a positive account of the states that justify aesthetic judgement, but also a negative account of which states cannot justify aesthetic judgement. Traditionally, non-inferentialists have been **Strong Non-Inferentialists**. However, this can only be a contingent fact about how the view is typically formulated. For consider both the positive and negative components of **Strong Non-Inferentialism**. Clearly, it is the positive one, i.e. that aesthetic judgments have non-inferential justification, that is key for characterising aesthetic non-inferentialism. In that respect, the negative claim, i.e. that testimony and inference fail to justify aesthetic judgements, can be regarded as optional. It is entirely open for one to endorse the positive claim alone, remain silent on which states do not justify aesthetic judgement, and still be an aesthetic non-inferentialist. For it is certainly not entailed by the claim that aesthetic judgments are ever, or indeed always, justified non-inferentially that they are not justified in some other ways. Let us call a position that endorses the positive claim of Sibley and Tormey while failing to endorse any corresponding negative claim '**Moderate Non-Inferentialism**.'

Why should the resulting view be of interest to anyone? One reason is clear: **Moderate Non-Inferentialism**, unlike **Strong Non-Inferentialism**, evades the challenge from critical-ostention. For **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** says only that aesthetic judgments have non-inferential justification. The falsification conditions for this claim do not include proof that such judgments are ever justified inferentially, in the way that critical-ostentive practice suggests that they are.

#### **IV – Moderate Non-Inferentialism Defended, part I**

One obvious worry about **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** is that because it is silent on which states fail to justify aesthetic judgement, the thesis lacks significant content. This objection says that the

only form of aesthetic non-inferentialism worthy of the title is **Strong Non-Inferentialism**, since only that view rules out competing theses about which states justify aesthetic judgements.

This worry rests upon another mistake, one that is thrown into sharp relief by appreciating the existence of similarly ‘weakened’ non-inferential theses outside of aesthetics. For instance, non-inferentialism about moral judgement may take the form of intuitionism, but it may also take a perceptual, emotional or perceptual-cum-emotional form. However, those who defend such a view do not claim that perception is the only source of justified moral judgments. Rather, they allow that moral judgments are formed via inferences, and in that respect their position is akin to **Moderate Non-Inferentialism**.<sup>20</sup> The same is true of those who defend the claim that we can know another’s mental states by perception. Quassim Cassam, for instance, is very clear that he endorses a moderate thesis along similar lines:<sup>21</sup>

I don’t propose to argue for the perceptual model on the basis that inference couldn’t be a source of knowledge of the existence of other minds... Instead, I’m going to be defending the perceptual model on the basis that perception is a source of our knowledge of other minds... The perceptual model clearly shouldn’t say that none of our knowledge of other minds is inferential since it’s obvious that we sometimes have to rely on inference to figure out what others are thinking or feeling. But it’s equally obvious from the standpoint of the perceptual model that we also sometimes see what others are thinking and feeling.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, consider the debate between reductionists and non-reductionists about testimonial justification.<sup>23</sup> Reductionists typically affirm an inferential account of one’s justification for believing the assertions of others, recognised as such. Non-reductionists affirm a non-inferential account of such justification. Testimony, on the latter account, is a *sui generis* source of

---

<sup>20</sup> This point is made explicitly by R. Audi, *Moral Perception*, (Harvard University Press, 2013), p.52; P. Väyrynen, ‘Some Good and Bad News for Ethical Intuitionism’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 58 (2008), p.490; and P. Werner, ‘Moral Perception and the Contents of Experience’, *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 13 (2016), footnote 49.

<sup>21</sup> Although couched in terms of knowledge, I take it that Cassam’s points can easily be recast in terms of justification.

<sup>22</sup> Q. Cassam, *The Possibility of Knowledge* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 159-160.

<sup>23</sup> The locus classici papers arguing for reductionism and non-reductionism, respectively, are E. Fricker, ‘Against Gullibility’, in A. Chakrabarti & B. K. Matilal (eds.), *Knowing from Words* (Kluwer, 1994), pp.125-161 and T. Burge, ‘Content Preservation’, *The Philosophical Review* 102 (1993), pp. 457-488.

justification, like perception and memory. Yet testimonial non-reductionists do not deny we are sometimes justified in believing the assertions of others, recognised as such, via inference. As Peter Graham puts it: “Testimonial justification: inferential or non-inferential? Both.”<sup>24</sup>

Perceptual theories of moral knowledge and others minds, along with testimonial non-reductionism, are all substantial epistemic theses. All three have significant content. So whatever might be wrong about **Moderate Non-Inferentialism**, it cannot be accused of being theoretically empty or insignificant.

Moreover, all three of the above theories, in allowing for inferential justification, admit of the possibility of epistemic overdetermination, i.e. that a single judgement can receive epistemic support from multiple sources simultaneously. By way of illustration: suppose that a student knocks on your door and asks whether your colleague down the hall is currently in. The student tells you that they can see through the window that there’s no light on in the office (from which they presumably infer that your colleague is absent), and so believe that your colleague is out. But they need to contact the colleague urgently. Hence, why they check with you. You know your colleague to be on leave, visiting another university, and so tell the student that your colleague is indeed not around and is unlikely to be back for some weeks. As the student exits your room, they notice that the door to your colleague’s office is now open. They peer inside, only to see facilities staff fixing the ceiling light. The student has justification for believing that your colleague is absent via perception, testimony and inference. Their belief that your colleague is absent is epistemically overdetermined. This example is mundane. But the point is that **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** respects an ordinary and mundane fact about the structure of justification, i.e. that there is epistemic overdetermination. **Strong Non-Inferentialism** either flouts it outright, or flouts it in the case of aesthetic judgement.<sup>25</sup> (I come back to this last point in the following section.)

The false dilemma that has been exposed in this section and the previous one is thinking that if aesthetic judgments have non-inferential justification that they therefore cannot have inferential justification, and *vice versa*. This is a mistake seemingly made by both sides of the aesthetic non-inferentialism/inferentialism divide. Yet putatively competing epistemic grounds do not compete in this manner. **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** recognises this fact, evades the challenge from

---

<sup>24</sup> P. Graham, ‘Testimonial Justification: Inferential or Non-Inferential?’ *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56 (2006), p.95. See also Burge, *Ibid.*, p.477.

<sup>25</sup> The same may be said about any purely inferentialist account of aesthetic judgment.

critical-ostention, while still allowing that aesthetic judgments may be immediately formed and that aesthetic properties can be perceived or felt.

## V - Moderate Non-Inferentialism Defended, part II

Sibley claims that to make an aesthetic judgement on the basis of inference “is to misunderstand aesthetic judgement.”<sup>26</sup> On this view, there may well be epistemic overdetermination, but not for aesthetic judgments. There is a well-entrenched tradition in aesthetics of thinking that aesthetic judgments are autonomous, in various senses, from other judgement types. Those who hold this view are likely to protest that epistemic overdetermination is fine for other judgments, but at odds with distinctly *aesthetic* ones.

Those who think of aesthetic judgment as autonomous in this respect should pause more frequently to note just how peculiar their thesis renders such judgments. For if that view, which **Strong Non-Inferentialism** seems a particular instance of,<sup>27</sup> entails that aesthetic judgments do not admit of epistemic overdetermination, then that makes aesthetic judgments exceptionally unique among judgement types. Can we really believe that aesthetic judgments are so *sui generis*, so completely of their own kind, that they are the sole exception to the thesis of epistemic overdetermination? This is precisely what the **Strong Non-Inferentialist** must insist on being the case. But insofar as epistemic overdetermination is an unassailable fact about seemingly all other relevant judgement types, why one should not consider this a reductio of the view is unclear. For it renders aesthetic judgments like no other judgement that we know of.

A more straightforward problem with Sibley’s claim that to make an aesthetic judgement from inference is to “misunderstand aesthetic judgement” is that it is simply question-begging. Indeed, Sibley secures his conclusion that aesthetic judgments require first-hand, perceptual-cum-emotional acquaintance with objects through a kind of sleight of hand (at least in part). For, although he writes at length about the necessity of perception and emotion for such judgments, he then makes the following claim:

---

<sup>26</sup> Sibley, ‘Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic’, p.137. An exception for Sibley is judging what aesthetic properties an object *lacks*, since Sibley thinks there are entailments from the presence of certain non-aesthetic properties to the absence of certain aesthetic ones. See Sibley, ‘Aesthetic Concepts’, pp.426-7. Thanks to Marcello Ruta for reminding me of this.

<sup>27</sup> This observation is well-made by P. Kivy, *Speaking of Art* (Nijhoff, 1973), p.37.

This therefore is how I shall use “aesthetic judgment” throughout. Where there is no question of aesthetic perception, I shall use some other expression like “attribution of aesthetic quality” or “aesthetic statement.” Thus, rather as a color-blind man may infer that something is green without seeing that it is, and rather as a man, without seeing a joke himself, may say that something is funny because others laugh, so someone may attribute balance or gaudiness to a painting, or say that it is too pale, without himself having judged it so.<sup>28</sup>

If what I have said above is right, then Sibley is correct to distinguish different grounds on which one may *ascribe*, to put it neutrally, an aesthetic property to an object. And if he professes to label one of these, that which has a perceptual-cum-emotional grounding, ‘aesthetic judgement’, then he is of course free to do so. This use of ‘aesthetic judgement’ is stipulative and entirely innocent. Indeed, everyone should agree that there is such a thing as that kind of ascription of an aesthetic property, i.e. done in the presence of the object.

The sleight of hand occurs when this stipulative use of the term ‘aesthetic judgement’ is then claimed to be its sole legitimate use. For then, while Sibley successfully shows that aesthetic judgments cannot be made via inference and testimony, this is achieved only by that stipulation. It follows that to say that aesthetic judgments necessitate perceptual-cum-emotional acquaintance is really to say no more than that ascriptions of aesthetic properties made on the basis of perception are just that: made on the basis of perception, rather than inference or testimony. This makes it true that aesthetic judgments necessitate a perceptual-cum-emotional grounding and are not transmissible between persons, but in a trivial and uninteresting sense. Of course, this is not the way that Sibley, along with other defenders of the acquaintance principle, would wish us to read their claims regarding the necessity of perception for aesthetic judgement. But as a substantive thesis, the claim that inference is opposed to aesthetic judgments is no longer uninteresting or trivial, but question-begging.<sup>29 30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Sibley, ‘Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic’, p.137.

<sup>29</sup> On a similar point regarding the triviality of the acquaintance principle, see Robson, ‘Appreciating the Acquaintance Principle’, p.244 and P. Livingston, ‘On an Apparent Truism in Aesthetics’, *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43 (2003), p.276.

<sup>30</sup> Thanks to James Grant for discussion.

## VI – Aesthetic Judgments via Inference

So far I have offered an indirect argument for the claim that aesthetic judgments have inferential justification in the form of the challenge from critical-ostention. Moreover, I have motivated a permissive form of aesthetic non-inferentialism that I call **Moderate Non-Inferentialism**, a position which leaves open that aesthetic judgments have inferential justification and so allows a role for reasoning, no less than acquaintance, in aesthetic judgments. I have also made a number of negative remarks about **Strong Non-Inferentialism**. In this section, I want to give a more direct argument for the role of inference in aesthetic judgement.

Ella is an accomplished cellist. She sits down before a score that indicates it is in a minor key and should be played at *larghissimo* tempo. She has not previously played the piece nor heard it performed. But she is very familiar with pieces that instantiate these non-aesthetic properties; indeed, they are her favourite pieces to perform. She has always thought them to be sombre.<sup>31</sup> Looking at the score, and based on her past experience, Ella thinks to herself “another sombre piece.” Compare Ella with her friend Noah, who is learning to play the trumpet. He is presented with a complex score which he can’t make much sense of. All he can tell is that it is a piece for a brass quintet in a major key to be played at *allegretto* tempo. Completely out of the blue, he thinks “this piece is sombre.”

If **Strong Non-Inferentialism** is true, then Ella’s and Noah’s judgments are epistemically on a par. In particular, they are both devoid of any epistemic value insofar as neither is based on a non-inferential state like perception or emotion. Ella’s judgement is a conclusion based on inference from memorial beliefs.<sup>32</sup> According to the **Strong Non-Inferentialist**, nothing could be more illicit. Noah’s judgement in has no basis at all. But in claiming all this, **Strong Non-Inferentialism** yields the wrong verdict twice over. The two judgments are not epistemically on a par and neither are both epistemically worthless. Ella has a reason to judge the piece to be sombre, while Noah does not. Ella’s past experience does not merely explain or excuse her judgement. Her judgement is reasonable in light of it. Yet **Strong Non-Inferentialism** must deny this and say that her judgement is no more reasonable than Noah’s. In claiming this, **Strong Non-Inferentialism** clashes with our intuitions about the divergence in epistemic status between Ella’s and Noah’s judgments.

---

<sup>31</sup> Sibley lists ‘sombre’ as an aesthetic property in his ‘Aesthetic Concepts’, *The Philosophical Review* 68 (1959), p.421.

<sup>32</sup> Assume that Ella does not auditorily imagine how the piece sounds.

A line of protest against this conclusion can be teased out of Sibley's work:

[K]nowledge that a piece of music slows and drops into a minor key at a certain point or that a man screws up his eyes in an odd way would be very poor reasons for believing or inferring that the music must be, or even probably is, sad, or that the face looks funny. The music might instead be solemn or peaceful, sentimental or even characterless; the face might look pained or angry or demonic.<sup>33</sup>

Compare Mary Mothersill:

[I]f my encounters with kittens, daffodils, and sonatinas have been consistently rewarding, I may conclude that there is some inherent beauty in kittens, daffodils, and sonatinas and so extend my claims to hitherto unexamined cases. A risky business! The next certifiable kitten I see may be diseased and mangy or have been recently squashed by a car. Predictions about daffodils and sonatinas are open to analogous risks.<sup>34</sup>

Sibley is right: the work might not turn out to be sad. Mothersill is likewise right: the next kitten you see might be squashed flat and look non-too-appealing. Similarly, Ella's judgement may turn out to be false. But so what? The question is whether Ella's judgement is justified, reasonable, rational, etc. Justification does not entail truth and can come in degrees. Ella's justification for believing that the work is sombre need only be *pro tanto* in order to cast doubt on **Strong Non-Inferentialism**. And this is a very natural way to picture the strength of Ella's epistemic position with respect to that proposition. No one should think that Ella's judgement is infallible or immune to revision. Few judgments (if any) are. But likewise, no one should think that her judgement is epistemically bankrupt in the way that Noah's is. (For one, Noah's even forming his judgement is something one may have difficulty conceiving of.) The solution is to affirm that Ella has *pro tanto* justification for her judgement in the form of an inductively-based inference. In claiming this, one acknowledges that her judgement may turn out to be false, but that it is reasonable and rational nonetheless. If, when she performs the work, she experiences it as lacking the aesthetic quality in question, then (in many cases) she should alter her judgement

---

<sup>33</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic', p.148.

<sup>34</sup> M. Mothersill, 'Beauty and the Critic's Judgment: Remapping Aesthetics', In P. Kivy (ed.) *Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics* (Blackwell, 2004), p.161.

accordingly.<sup>35</sup> Yet this can in no way show that her initial judgement was unjustified. By contrast, say that she does indeed experience the work to be sombre. In that case, her aesthetic judgement is epistemically overdetermined in the manner discussed above.

The example of Ella and Noah is extremely artificial. Nonetheless, it helps dramatise the shortfalls of **Strong Non-Inferentialism** and why we should think that aesthetic judgments may have inferential justification. Moreover, one thing I want to insist upon is that forming inductively-based expectations about the aesthetic character of as yet unseen works, in the way Ella does, is entirely commonplace, *contra* Sibley and Mothersill.

For one, were we to follow Sibley and others in denying the existence or relevance of inductively-based aesthetic judgments, we would thereby rob ourselves of a very natural explanation of human aesthetic-directed intentions and behaviour. For instance, “She thinks they will be charming/trite,” is a good answer to the question “Why does she want to attend/avoid tonight’s sonatina performances?” But it would not be available to us, were we to follow Sibley, Mothersill and other defenders of **Strong Non-Inferentialism**.

Secondly, artists have inductively-based grounds for their beliefs about how to achieve certain aesthetic ends. That is, they possess background beliefs about which techniques and media produce which aesthetic effects. Not all art-making is pure experiment. If it were, then artists could only guess at the aesthetic properties of the end results of their labour and would be in no better epistemic position to predict the aesthetic effects of their labour than non-artists. Yet we know that artist may instruct others, e.g., their students, on such matters: how to successfully manipulate media, hone certain techniques, etc. in order to produce some specific aesthetic result. Aesthetic judgments can be predictions in precisely the way that Sibley and Mothersill reject. If we follow **Strong Non-Inferentialism** and deny an important role for inference in the making of aesthetic judgments, then we risk turning artists into aesthetic know-nothings whose accomplishments end up having an aesthetic character largely unforeseen by them. Granted, it is reasonable to think that there are occasions when artists will have no idea what aesthetic effect will be achieved by a certain technique, a combination of techniques or mixing of media. But it is likewise reasonable to think that there are many occasions on which they have foresight.

---

<sup>35</sup> It may be that there are circumstances in which it would not be rational for Ella to revise her judgment on the basis of her experience. I leave discussion of these matters for another time, but the seeds for such an idea are present in Alcaraz León, ‘The Rational Justification of Aesthetic Judgments’, pp.297-99.

In closing this section, one issue that is important to stress is that one should distinguish two ways in which a judgement may be inferentially justified. A judgement may be inferentially justified by virtue of being the output of explicit reasoning. That is, an inferentially justified judgement may be so justified by being inferentially formed. Nevertheless, a judgement that is not the output of inferential reasoning, and which is formed in a psychologically immediate manner, may still be inferentially justified by virtue of the availability to the subject of explicit inferential reasoning. That is, an inferentially justified judgement may be so justified by a background inferential ‘structure’ that the agent can access, even if they do not and the judgement is formed spontaneously.<sup>36</sup> Thus, it is a mistake to think that audiences and artists must rehearse laborious arguments to themselves in order that their judgments be inferentially justified.<sup>37</sup> It is a virtue of **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** that it allows for explicitly reasoned aesthetic judgments, but aesthetic judgments do not need to be reasoned-out in this manner in order that they have this kind of justification.

## VII – Aesthetic Normativity?

Questions remain. What, precisely, is Ella’s reason for judging the work sombre? Where does her inferential justification spring from? I have hinted in the previous section at my answer to this question, but much more needs to be said. Here I can only gesture in the direction of a comprehensive reply. I give a two-step answer.

The first step is to note that through past experience and repeated exposure to musical works, Ella’s inference that the work is sombre will come very naturally. She is unlikely to have reached her judgement by a process that begins with her considering the non-aesthetic properties of the work, moves to her reflecting on her memorial beliefs and then culminates in a reasoned-out conclusion. Psychologically, it may well be irresistible for her to think that the piece she has been asked to perform is a sombre one. Her judgement is likely to be one that is formed in an immediate manner and which is inferentially justified by a background argument-structure that she can access and, if pressed, articulate. For instance, she can reflect on the fact that the non-

---

<sup>36</sup> For helpful discussions of this matter, see L. Bonjour, ‘Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?’ *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, (1978) p.2; A. Miller, ‘Concepts, Experience, and Inference’, *Mind* 100 (1991), pp.502-503; and W. McNeill, ‘On Seeing That Someone is Angry’, *European Journal of Philosophy* 20 (2011), pp.582-584.

<sup>37</sup> This is another way of quelling Dorsch’s inferentialist worry that aesthetic judgments are formed in a psychologically immediate manner.

aesthetic properties of the work are ones which she has previously experienced as being correlated with sombreness and so give reasons for her judgement.

But the question is why it is reasonable, rational, *justifiable*, etc. for Ella to draw the inference that she does. This is a normative matter and it is of course notoriously difficult to extract normative conclusions from naturalistic considerations, such as, e.g., what judgments a subject is disposed to make on certain occasions, given repeated exposure to a type of stimulus condition, etc.

The second step attempts to inject some normativity into this matter. Ella is someone who possesses musical expertise. Expertise in a given domain is often thought to manifest itself by enlarging the number of facts that the expert can perceive in that domain. For instance, the chess expert is said to ‘just see’ what is the right move they ought to make; they don’t need to run through the various inferences they performed as a novice in order to reach a decision. Another example: expertise in a language is sometimes said to allow one to hear the semantic properties of speech in that language or to see the semantic properties of written words in that language.<sup>38</sup> Someone who understands French may be able to visually experience the meaning of “Une seule langue n’est jamais suffisante.” Another example from recent philosophy of perception:<sup>39</sup> horticultural expertise seems to be accompanied by a recognitional disposition for certain types of trees. When one looks at a pine tree absent any such recognitional disposition, one perceptually experiences the pine to be a variously green and brown object. If so, one will need to undertake some reasoning to work out that it is a pine. But the expert who possess a recognitional disposition for pines perceptually experiences pines to be just that: pine trees. They can identify pines by sight, absent any reasoning.

Claims such as the above encourage us to think of the development of expertise as at once enlarging the scope of the subject’s perceptual content and simultaneously suppressing or attenuating their inferences. This first part of the claim may be right, but the second overlooks the fact that experts are disposed, via habit and training, to engage in certain inference-patterns that are unavailable to the novice. For instance, the chess expert may or may not be able to ‘just

---

<sup>38</sup> See J. McDowell, ‘In Defence of Modesty’, in his *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality* (Harvard University Press, 1998); T. Bayne, ‘Perception and the Reach of Phenomenal Content,’ *Philosophical Quarterly* 59, (2009), pp.385-404; C. Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts* (MIT Press, 1992), Chapter 3; and S. Siegel, ‘Which Properties are Represented in Perception?’ In T. Gendler & J. Hawthorne (eds.), *Perceptual Experience* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.481-503.

<sup>39</sup> Siegel, ‘Which Properties are Represented in Perception?’

see' what is the right move to make, but *qua* expert they will likely engage in inferences, e.g., about what move their opponent will make and what move their opponent believes they, in turn, will make afterwards. In some situations, a sufficiently competent player won't need to see their opponent's next move in order to have justification for believing what this move will be. Again, the expert may get things wrong. But it seems that part of what it is to be an expert in a given domain is to be someone who does not need to rely upon perceiving some facts first-hand to have justification for believing that those facts obtain (or will obtain). After all, in some respects, direct acquaintance with the fact that *p* is an exceptionally crude way to form a justified belief that *p*. Rather, it appears partly constitutive of an expert's mastery of a domain is that, given awareness of certain conditions, *c*, they can reason as to what further fact or facts, *p*, are likely to obtain (or will obtain), consequent upon *c*, and so prior to being perceptually acquainted with *p*.

Thus, if expertise does suppress some inferences, we must not overlook the fact that it makes available others and which it is entirely right and proper that the expert rely upon. From this perspective, someone who through habit and training is disposed to make certain aesthetic judgments, absent first-hand acquaintance, is not necessarily one who 'misunderstands aesthetic judgments.' Instead, they may be manifesting their aesthetic expertise (or, more narrowly, their musical expertise, in the case of Ella). Many details of this claim require further elaboration. But the general shape of the proposal is a plausible one. For instance, consider an artist who suggests to their student how to construct more unified or dynamic visual compositions, e.g., by changing the placement of certain figures. They are similarly acting from a disposition to form aesthetic judgments prior to acquaintance.<sup>40</sup> In doing so, they are naturally pictured as exercising or manifesting their aesthetic expertise.<sup>41</sup>

## VIII – Conclusion

---

<sup>40</sup> It might be objected that this is a case in which the teacher visualises the work. On sufficiently weakened conceptions of acquaintance, visual imagination is placed on a par with first-hand experience. I am tempted to think that the teacher need not visually imagine the work, but that, if they do, inductive inferences will still need to play a significant part here.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of some of the empirical literature on artistic expertise, see C. Mag Uidhir and C. Buckner, 'Portrait of the Artist as an Aesthetic Expert', in G. Currie, M. Kieran, A. Meskin and J. Robson (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Sciences of the Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.121-140. For other discussions of expertise and aesthetic judgment, see R. Hopkins, 'How to Be a Pessimist About Aesthetic Testimony', *Journal of Philosophy* 108 (2011), pp.138-157 and J. Robson, 'Aesthetic Testimony and the Norms of Belief Formation', *European Journal of Philosophy* 23 (2015), pp.750-763.

I hope to have made plausible here the thesis that inference can be a source of justified aesthetic judgement. On the assumption that perception can be such a source as well, we ought to be **Moderate Non-Inferentialists**.

Strikingly, this amounts to another nail in the acquaintance principle's coffin, but it is a relatively unique one at that, insofar as it is not hammered-in from dissatisfaction at the principle's lack of consideration for deference to the assertions of others. Crucially, I have not argued that we can form aesthetic judgments deductively, and so none of my arguments in favour of inferentially-grounded aesthetic judgements are founded upon accepting that there are entailments between non-aesthetic and aesthetic properties or that there are aesthetic principles more generally.

Perhaps surprisingly then, the view argued for here is consistent with Sibley's thesis that aesthetic properties fail to be positively condition-governed by the non-aesthetic properties upon which they depend.<sup>42</sup> This thesis shows much less than Sibley believes it to. He misses that it is consistent with (i) attributions of aesthetic properties via inductive inferences and (ii) non-acquaintance-based epistemologies.<sup>43</sup> Compare: there is no entailment from your assertion that *p* to the fact that *p* insofar as the one does not positively condition-govern the other. (Your telling me that there is a grey heron in the garden does not positively condition govern the fact of its being there.) But that does not mean that I cannot be inferentially justified in believing that *p* via an inductive inference from past experience of your competency, sincerity, etc. on such matters. Or so say testimonial reductionists. Similarly, there may be no entailment from any non-aesthetic features of a work to its being sombre, as Sibley's thesis that aesthetic properties lack positive condition-governing states. But Ella is justified in believing the work to have that aesthetic property through past experience of some cluster of non-aesthetic properties correlating with it. Similarly, artists are justified in their believing that a particular aesthetic effect will occur if a work's non-aesthetic properties are changed in such-and-such a way. Or so **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** allows.

It seems to me that **Moderate Non-Inferentialism** is required to make sense of some extant theories of aesthetic properties, judgement and value. Consider some canonical aesthetic properties. Alan Goldman claims they include being, e.g., beautiful, ugly, sublime, dreary, loosely woven, stirring, derivative, original, daring, bold, conservative, etc.<sup>44</sup> Noël Carroll claims they

---

<sup>42</sup> This thesis may not be entirely beyond reproach; see Kivy *Speaking of Art*.

<sup>43</sup> Many of Sibley's comments on this thesis show only that it is incompatible with deducing the aesthetic properties of an object from awareness of its non-aesthetic properties; see his 'Aesthetic Concepts', pp.426-7.

<sup>44</sup> A. Goldman, *Aesthetic Value* (Westview Press, 1995).

include being, e.g., graceful, dark, brooding, sombre, melancholic, pompous, unified, tightly knit, chaotic, gaudy, kitschy, beautiful, suspenseful, etc.<sup>45</sup> Sibley, of course, had his own list.<sup>46</sup>

Some of these properties look prime candidates for being attributed by inductive inferences, on the basis that they could not possibly be attributed by perception. For instance, whether or not a work is original, daring, tightly-knit or pompous is not something one can readily tell just by looking at the work. There is a limit to how much the scope of perceptual content can be enlarged by background knowledge and some of these properties obviously surpass it. Similar remarks hold for other aesthetic properties, e.g., ‘being derivative’ or ‘being insightful’, etc. Relatedly, Walton claims that representational/resemblance properties are aesthetic properties.<sup>47</sup> Serious reasoning must sometimes be undertaken in order to grasp such properties, despite Walton’s claim that his view is that aesthetic properties are perceived rather than inferred.

In sum, I suspect that **Moderate Non-Inferentialism**, at least the inferentialist component it leaves open, is not only the right view of aesthetic judgement, but simply articulates what many have believed all along.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> N. Carroll, *Philosophy of Art* (Routledge, 1999).

<sup>46</sup> Sibley, ‘Aesthetic Concepts’, pp.421-2.

<sup>47</sup> Walton, ‘Categories of Art’, p.33.

<sup>48</sup> A previous version was presented at the University of Kent conference “Aesthetics, Normativity and Reasons.” Thanks Paloma Atencia-Linares, Sophie Grace Chappell, Maria Jose Alcaraz Leon, Michael Smith and Daniel Whiting for their questions and discussion. Thanks also to James Grant, Jon Robson, Bence Nanay, Marcello Ruta for comments on earlier drafts. For several discussions on this material I am especially grateful to Elisabeth Schellekens Dammann. This final version was much improved by sets of comments provided by two of this journal’s anonymous referees.