

Artistic Style as the Expression of Ideals

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1. Personality and Ideals¹

What is style in art? A common distinction is between general style and individual style. General style is a feature of artworks, and a given general style is associated with a set of distinctive properties that distinguish works in that style from works not in it. Impressionism, minimalism, abstract expressionism, and graffiti wildstyle are familiar general styles. It's enough for a work to be in a general style that it exhibit some suitable collection of artistic properties. Certain general styles are of art historical interest due to how they arose in and influenced the history of art: neoclassical, rococo, cubism, and so on.

Our question is not about general style; it's about *individual* style. Individual artistic style is the style of the artist. It is a feature of the artist that is manifested in certain aspects of her artistic output. It is sought out by artists, imitated and admired. It is something we, as appreciators, notice and care about — it's a large part of what excites, interests, and inspires us about artists and what we think about when we contemplate their work. It's often what we are responding to when we connect with a certain artist and value their work. Consider the impression we get when we think of El Greco's individual style, Alice Neel's, David Bowie's, Schubert's, Proust's, Maggie Nelson's, or Elisabeth Bishop's. What is individual artistic style?²

An influential proposal on this score is Jenefer Robinson's in "Style and Personality in the Literary Work".³ Robinson follows Richard Wollheim in thinking that individual style has some kind of "psychological

1. This paper develops the proposal at the end of Riggle (2015). The authors thought it would be fun to work out the details of the proposal together. They were right, and many colleagues aided the work. These include Caitlin Dolan, Lydia Goehr, Ira Newman, members of the 2014 American Society for Aesthetics Annual Meeting, Understanding Value VIII, the Aesthetics Reading Group at Columbia University, the London Aesthetics Forum, the Oxford Aesthetics Seminar, the Harvard Aesthetic Normativity Conference, and the Aresmur group.
2. For a detailed discussion and defense of the distinction between general and individual style, see Robinson (1984).
3. Robinson (1985).

reality".⁴ As a first stab, she claims that individual style is the expression of "personality". She writes that "... style is essentially an expression of qualities of mind, attitudes, interests, and personality traits which appear to be the author's own".⁵ The mental states that are the artist's "own" are specifically "standing" or "long term" dispositions to act in certain ways, e.g., to be open, generous, kind, easygoing, and so on. This yields:

Personality (P) For a work to be in an artist A's individual artistic style is for it to be an expression of A's personality.

However, P is widely rejected on the grounds that artists' personalities and the style of their work can come apart. Robinson offers a counterexample to P: Tolstoy arguably had a "querulous and intolerant" personality, yet the personality expressed in *Anna Karenina* is understanding and compassionate.⁶ Many artists seem to have personalities that differ from what is expressed in their work.

4. Ibid., p. 228, fn. 2. Robinson is following Wollheim (1979). In developing our own account, we too will accept Wollheim's thought. While the argument for doing so lies largely in the work the account is able to do, it may help to say a little now about the alternatives and why we overlook them. There are certainly accounts of style that forego appeal to the artist's psychology (e.g., Goodman (1975) and Chatman (1979)). And (as a referee helpfully spelled out) there is something to be said in favor of these positions. Couldn't a computer produce work in a distinctive style? And what of paintings by cats and elephants? Even artists with rich psychologies sometimes claim to experience their work as originating beyond themselves. In these cases, if there is style, either there is no suitable psychology to lie behind it, or there is but it fails to connect to the work in the right way. Of course, it is an open question whether work by computers and cats really can exhibit style, and, if artists feel inspired by outside forces, whether they experience that inspiration as responsible specifically for the style of their work. But even if the answer to these questions is "yes", the bearing of these cases on Wollheim's assumption repays further investigation. Perhaps our finding style in the output of non-humans is parasitic on cases in which we find it in work that does involve human agency. And perhaps an artist's sense that her style originates beyond herself is a partial misapprehension of the fact that she is able to articulate the aspects of her psychology it expresses only once they have been embodied in her work — something we say more about below.

5. Robinson (1985, p. 228).

6. Ibid., p. 234.

There are two types of response to this problem. One tries to retain a role for personality and another looks elsewhere. There are two ways to pursue the former. The first, which Robinson develops, is to move away from the *actual* personality of the artist and substitute the personality *implied* by her work. The implied personality is the personality that appears to lie behind the making of the work:

Implied Personality (IP) For a work to be in A's individual artistic style is for it to imply a certain personality of which it is the expression.⁷

How much is implied here? Just the personality, or also the subject to whom it is ascribed? Though Robinson's talk of "the implied author" perhaps suggests this last, the move is optional: we solve the Tolstoy problem just as well if we treat *Anna Karenina* as implying of Tolstoy that he had a compassionate personality. But what of the expression of that personality? Is that also merely implied, or should the view claim that an implied personality finds actual expression in the work? In part, this turns on what is meant by expression — a matter we turn to below. Note now, however, that, if the notion is in any way causal, a merely implied personality could not *actually* be expressed by anything. Treating the expression as merely implied frees this hostage to fortune. Indeed, it enables IP to appeal to any available notion of expression. Since keeping options open can only benefit the view, this is how we'll interpret it.

Details aside, the move from P to IP is significant. Though Robinson seems not to notice this, it means abandoning her goal of treating individual style as psychologically real. For what is psychologically real about a personality that is merely implied? The other way to retain the notion of personality in a theory of style does better in this respect.

7. Kendall Walton makes a similar move in "Style and the Products and Processes of Art". Walton speaks of the "apparent artist" and characterizes style in terms of how the work appears to have been made. The qualities of the "apparent artist" mirror Robinson's "implied personality". Walton writes, "... to be in a flamboyant, sentimental, or timid style is to appear to have been created in a flamboyant or sentimental or timid manner" (2008, p. 233).

It is to refine or weaken the notion of personality in operation, making the mental states that constitute it less global or robust:

Artistic Personality (AP) For a work to be in A's individual artistic style is for it to express A's *artistic* personality.⁸

AP can be understood in two ways, depending on how we specify the personality-constituting mental states. Tolstoy might not be compassionate-full-stop, but what trait does he possess? Is it the trait of being compassionate-while-making-art or that of being compassionate-in-making-art? According to the former view, what Tolstoy's work expresses is not his global states, but the shorter-term personality-constituting states he is in while making it. On the latter, it expresses his personality strictly *as an artist*: those states that are to be defined by their role in his art-making. This is a somewhat subtle difference, but, to illustrate, consider a silly example: an artist whose artistic personality is *kindly* but whose personality full stop is *mean*. Now suppose you interact with this artist while she is working (where that interaction is not part of the process of making the art). How will she act towards you? The *in* view suggests that she will be mean, the *while* view suggests she will be kind.

While either version of AP promises to avoid the Tolstoy problem, in other respects they share many of the original personality view's strengths and weaknesses, given the challenges presented below. To arrive at a view different enough from P to merit separate treatment, we'll concentrate on the "in" variant of AP. And we'll maximize the difference by assuming that it operates with a distinct notion of personality. P, like IP, means by 'personality' what we ordinarily mean. Only those psychological tendencies and traits count that we'd ordinarily mention in describing someone's personality. AP, in contrast, at least in the form we'll discuss, deploys a more capacious notion: one

8. Aaron Meskin suggests this in his entry on style in the *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics, Third Edition* (2013, p. 449); see also Meskin's entry on authorship in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2011, pp. 24–25).

including *any* psychological disposition prominently manifested in the artist's work.

Another response to the problems facing P — the one we are interested in developing — begins with the thought that the relevant aspect of the artist's psychology is something *other* than her personality. Instead, we focus on the ideals the artist has for her work:

Artistic Ideals (AI) For a work to be in A's individual artistic style is for it to express the ideals A has for her work.

We think of the ideals the artist has for her work as her artistic aspirations. The artist aspires, for instance, to make work that is bold, wild, monumental, calming, clean, or luscious. In producing her work, the artist enacts her artistic ideals and, if successful, expresses them. In expressing them, she imbues her work with her individual style. We think of artistic ideals, then, as action-guiding conceptions of artistic excellence that the artist identifies with in making her art.

Must these ideals be fully formed before the artist sets to work? Perhaps sometimes they are, but it is important to acknowledge that often the opposite will hold: the ideals are not complete until the work itself is. As with many other pro-attitudes that motivate behavior, ideals may be more or less determinate, and more or less explicitly grasped by the subject herself. Finding herself drawn to the minimal, for instance, only as the artist works does she refine that urge into prizing economy in the use of resources. Perhaps only when that urge is satisfied is she able to step back and understand what drove her choices between which alterations she adopted as right and which she rejected as wrong. In such cases, only in making the work does she come to have determinate ideals and understand what they are. And perhaps only when the work is finished will the ideals, or her grasp of them, be complete.

Are an artist's ideals a part of her personality? In general, personality traits are dispositions to act that need have little to do with any sense of how it would be good for things to be (e.g., irritability, cheerfulness, or ponderousness). Ideals, in contrast, are normative in two

respects. They prize certain ways things might be, but also set a standard for ourselves. When (given appropriate circumstances) we do not act as our ideals dictate, we fail to live up to them. In their light, we are found wanting. Personality traits lack this double normativity. Perhaps some do involve something like a take on how things should be. Perhaps patience, for instance, involves not merely tolerating the shortcomings of others, but taking such tolerance to be a good thing. But does any personality trait also set a standard for ourselves? Is any trait such that a failure to behave in accordance with it is per se a *failing*? We doubt it. Such failures reveal not that we are wanting, but only descriptive facts, such as that we don't possess the trait after all, or that if we do, its manifestation is blocked by other aspects of our psychology. This double normativity marks out ideals from all the phenomena that are clearly nothing more than personality traits. (Some say patience is a virtue, and perhaps virtues involve a similar normative complexity. But if so, virtues are more than traits.) In our view, this is reason enough not to treat ideals as more personality. Even if it is not, it is certainly sufficient to show that ideals belong to a distinctive subset of personality traits. Either way, AI is sufficiently distinct from P, IP, and AP to merit separate treatment.⁹

9. For a view with a somewhat similar flavor to ours, though very different in its specific claims, see Hofstadter (1979). Our view also has affinities with Arthur Danto's (1981), who takes up Buffon's thought that style "is the man himself" (p. 201). Danto claims that "style at least comprises those of his qualities that are essentially his" (p. 204). This might seem like Danto defends a version of P or AP, but he claims that the qualities that are essential to a person are "ways of seeing" (pp. 205–206). Danto emphasizes that the artist experiences the world *through* these ways of seeing, which are spontaneously externalized in their actions (p. 207). An artist's style, then, consists of "those qualities of representations which are the man himself, seen from the outside" (p. 207), an "external physiognomy of an inner system of representation" (p. 205). Appreciating style requires attending to features of the work that seem to "fit" with the artist's way of seeing (pp. 207–208), and this is not simply a matter of detecting manifest dispositions or regularities in output. It is an activity that "is governed by reason" and requires "taste" (p. 208). A closer antecedent still is Jonathan Gilmore (2000), who places something like artistic ideals at the center of his theory. He defines style in terms of a "brief", a "set of mental representations an artist has about the means and ends of his or her practice" (p. 11). However, Gilmore mostly conceives a brief (a notion he takes from

The notion of expression features in these theories. The principle behind them all is that style is a form of self-expression. But in what sense is a self expressed in style? The views introduced above have different conceptions of the "self" expressed: artistic ideals or personality, with different proposals about how to conceive of the latter. But the notions of expression available to each of them are mostly the same. If we first assume as a minimum condition that whatever a work expresses must somehow have been involved in causing it to be as it is, we can sketch three notions that elaborate this in various ways. The first understands 'express' forensically: by examining the work, someone can discover what the ideals or personality traits are that shaped it. The second adds to this by treating expression as a matter of communication: not only can someone discover this, but in doing so they are getting a message the artist intended them to get. The third elaborates the first in a rather different way. This is the idea of expression as articulation: the relevant features of the artist shape the work in such a way as to articulate — that is, to make clear to her — what they are. The finished work helps her understand what her ideals (or personality traits) are, and thereby also makes that clear to others.¹⁰ Perhaps it is too much to say that all these options are common property. Since AI, for instance, wants to allow that the ideals the work expresses may not be fully formed prior to creating it, it is hard to see how AI can tap the idea of expression as communication. But in general, the options are widely available and independent of the core disagreement between the positions. For that reason, we try to minimize their role in what follows.

The issue of expression aside, there are four theories now before us. Let us spend a moment clarifying what is at the heart of the debate between them. We have framed them as answers to this question:

Michael Baxandall) as a problem the work is intended to solve, rather than a set of values with which to imbue the work. And he allows that individual style is also a matter of expressing "the artist's character or subjectivity" (p. 96. Cf. pp. 91–92).

10. For this notion of expression, though not applied directly to style, see Collingwood (1938).

Q.1 What is it for a work *W* to be in the style of some artist *A*?

However, Q.1 collects two issues. One is the question of

Belonging: What is it for a work *W* to be in some individual style *S*?

The other is the question of

Ownership: What is it for an individual style *S* to be artist *A*'s?

It seems likely that the answer to Ownership lies in history: styles are usually assigned to the artists who created or developed them. Belonging, in contrast, will be in key part a matter of the qualitative character of the work. To be in the relevant style, the work must have the right features. The dispute between the four views above is at heart over how to think of that character: is what matters that the work has features that express personality (on some or other conception of it), or that its features express ideals? These issues are not independent of history: a work can express only characteristics that shaped its making. However, the historical conditions on Belonging and those on Ownership seem likely to diverge. (Only if they do will it be possible for work by someone other than *A* to be in *A*'s style.) Moreover, whatever its details, the correct answer to Ownership is likely to be available to all the views we consider. In what follows, therefore, it is Belonging on which we focus.

Distinguishing these questions helps in two further respects. First, while Q.1 suggests that each artist will have just one style, Belonging and Ownership do not. Since some artists do change style radically (think Schoenberg or Picasso), shedding the suggestion is welcome. Second, a focus on Belonging allows us to foreground what distinguishes individual from general style. The difference is not a matter of numbers: a group or movement of artists could share ideals or even perhaps a personality. If their collective output has style in virtue of

expressing those ideals or personality, that style will nonetheless be "individual". Rather, what marks out general styles is that a work's being in them is a purely qualitative matter. Only individual style involves conditions on Belonging that are in part historical.¹¹

Assuming the four views are internally coherent and face no obvious or serious objections, how do we adjudicate between them? Our strategy is to consider how each view would address a range of questions. These concern the metaphysics and axiology of style: What *range* of features can express an artist's style? Can *flaws* feature in an artist's style? Are there limits to the range of art forms that can manifest an artist's style? If so, what explains those limits? Why is artistic style an artistic achievement (if and when it is)? What is the nature of stylistic unity? And what is the normative pull of an artist's style, both for other artists and for her wider audience?

In our view, the existing literature does not sufficiently address these basic questions,¹² but, as our discussion illustrates, they serve as illuminating focal points for contrasting the competing views. Our hope is also to establish some ground rules for adjudicating between theories of artistic style, thereby spurring further work on these issues.

11. All this has especially interesting consequences for IP. On the one hand, distinguishing the questions allows it to address an apparent problem. IP may seem to fail to make the connection to *A* at all. How does the fact that *W* seems to express some personality determine that it is in *A*'s style, if the personality in question is not *A*'s? We can now see this worry to be misplaced. IP's claim is that *W* will belong to a style provided it implies a personality of which it is the expression (Belonging). And that style will be *A*'s provided *A* stands in the right relation to the style (Ownership). On the other hand, if we are right about the fundamental difference between general and individual style, IP looks ill-placed to capture it. Its answer to Belonging makes no mention of history: to imply expression is not to be causally related to anything. So IP cannot draw the distinction between individual and general style in the way we think it should be drawn. For us, at least, that's a reason to reject IP. (Thanks to a referee for helping us think through these matters.)

12. Compare the list of issues in the appendix to Lang (1987).

2. Range

What range of features can figure in an artist's style and why? Expressive properties (melancholy, warmth) certainly can, as can configurational properties (thick and squiggly lines, bright primary colors). Only slightly more controversial are representational properties or subject matter (death, sexualized violence, claw-like hands). But what about others? What about, for instance, the average size of the artist's works or the brand of paint they tend to use? These questions provide a way both to clarify and to test the positions above.

Consider first an artist's choice of paint brand. Can this be stylistic, i.e., be a feature of individual style? The issue is somewhat unclear. In general, paint brand does not figure in style. (It may sometimes play a role in our identifying who a work is by, but not everything that does that is stylistic — consider, e.g., the way a painter signs her canvases.)¹³ On the other hand, it is easy enough to imagine an artist's choice of brand being important. Perhaps she uses industrial decorator's paint to show her disdain for art's conception of itself as loftier than mere manufacture.

The issue offers an opportunity to clarify the claims of the different positions. AP will have to accept that paint choice is sometimes stylistic. The view conceives of A's artistic personality as merely the sum of dispositions reliably manifested in the making of her art. If she regularly chooses a given brand of paint, that would seem to fit the bill.¹⁴ For sure, expressing artistic personality requires more: at a mini-

13. See Goodman (1975) and Wollheim (1987, p. 36).

14. Individual style is typically expressed across a range of works. Can a single work have individual style? One-hit wonders in literature and music suggest perhaps they can, but can the views under consideration here make sense of this? There is no obvious reason why a single work cannot express some artistic ideals. An artist can, through her one-hit wonder, realize what she is up to in her work and then spend the rest of her career failing to live up to that. In contrast, here AP appears to face a problem. Does it make sense to suppose a personality trait can be expressed just once, given appropriate opportunities to manifest itself? Not obviously. Similarly, then, for the sets of traits style supposedly expresses. Of course, if our artist only makes one work, no further opportunities arise. But what if she makes several, but only the first

one, that the disposition be discoverable on examining the artist's work. But surely this condition, too, will be met at least sometimes, perhaps often.

IP, in contrast, will consider paint brand stylistic rarely, if at all. It works with the ordinary notion of personality — the characteristics implied as behind the work are limited to traits that figure in personality as we ordinarily conceive it. It's possible for choice of paint brand to express personality in this sense — for example, if it is cheap and A's a miser — but it's hard. If interpreters cannot make the connection, paint brand is excluded. (This will be true not only on the forensic notion of expression, but also on the more elaborate alternatives.)

What of AI? It claims that choice of paint brand is stylistic only if it expresses the ideals the artist has for her work. Normally, it makes little sense to consider paint brand to feature among those ideals. Remember the examples above: the artist seeks to make work that is luscious or calming or clean or (to extend the list) revelatory of the suffering at the heart of all life. No doubt the right paint will sometimes be among the means to achieving these goals, but its expressing those ideals, in any of the senses above, is quite another matter. Of course, what is normal need not be universal. Perhaps the artist who chooses industrial paint has as her ideal work that is of a piece with the humble products of everyday making and mending. The more integral the choice of paint is to enacting those ideals, the stronger its claim to count as stylistic.

To tighten our grip on what AI requires, consider a more typical example: a given subject matter and the way it is represented. Our case study will be clouds in the work of two painters: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and El Greco. Corot's clouds are mostly just depictions of clouds more or less as clouds look.

is in her style? AP could bite the bullet and say such one-hit wonders only *seem* to have style. But since AI isn't biting any bullets, it has the advantage here.



View of the Chalet de Chenes, Belvue, Geneva, 1857;
The Roman Campagna with the Claudian Aqueduct, 1826–28;
Wooded Plateau, Fontainebleau, 1835–40

Let's imagine that Corot did not take the way he painted clouds to reflect the ideals he has for his art, that when it came to the sort of art he aimed to produce, he could have painted clouds in many ways, emphasizing bluer tones perhaps, or crisper lines, or more abstract or geometrical shapes. Contrast this with the fact that *Corot painted clouds* (or perhaps that *Corot painted cloud-involving scenes*). Arguably, this is stylistic for Corot. His subject matter is consistently that of the outdoors on partly cloudy days. He often includes obscured clouds even in his darker images, from a perspective within a forest or grove. How so, on AI? Corot's ambition seems to have been to capture the quiet beauty of the everyday. No picturesque vistas for him, or gathering thunderheads, or dazzling fine days. His search is for an aesthetic of the ordinary: clouds, dull expanses, and all. The presence of clouds in his work is one way in which this ideal is expressed.

El Greco's clouds, in contrast, mimic and reflect his distinctive palette and elongation of figures:

Vision of Saint John, 1608–14



View of Toledo, 1596–1600

The way El Greco painted clouds is part of his style. What about the fact that El Greco painted clouds? In contrast with Corot, this is arguably

not a feature of El Greco's style. Again, AI explains why. El Greco sought an art of exaggeration, of febrile excess. Those ideals render the presence of clouds optional, but when they are present, they must vibrate with the same energies that animate his figures.

Now, imagine a student of El Greco's who learned how to paint clouds from him. Imagine, furthermore, that he simply paints clouds that way — doing so is not an expression of his artistic ideals, but a mere manifestation of his artistic training. (Of course, it is possible to acquire artistic ideals through training, just as it is possible generally to acquire ideals through exposure or influence. But that is not what we are imagining here.) In this case, the El Greco-like clouds would not figure in the student's style, even though they look exactly like El Greco's clouds, which are features of *his* style. Suppose further that the student values a subject matter much like Corot's, with the result that, in that respect, his output mirrors that of Corot, except that his clouds look like El Greco's. AI allows *the fact* that the student painted clouds to be stylistic, while *the way* they are painted is not.

IP and AP would handle this case differently. Consider AP: the character of the student's clouds would presumably manifest his artistic personality, given that he has a standing artistic disposition to produce them in that manner. AP entails that their character is stylistic. That is likely to be IP's conclusion, too. Since El Greco's clouds are stylistic, IP needs to propose some character trait that they express: perhaps their turbulence implies a restless energy in the personality behind the work. But if clouds looking that way imply such a personality in the master's work, why won't they do just the same in the work of his student? Of course, other features of the student's work may cancel out what the clouds imply. (Perhaps the clouds alone vibrate, the rest of the landscape exhibiting a stolid serenity.) Equally, however, they might not. Where they do not, IP will treat the student's clouds as stylistic. AI, in contrast, will not: the clouds looking as they do does not express the artist's ideals, but merely manifests rote learning.

To sum up this section, AI generates different predictions from its rivals on which features count as stylistic and why. In our view, the

rivals over-generate, counting more features as part of artistic style than is warranted. Perhaps readers will disagree. Even so, the issue of range at least establishes ground for debate.

3. Flaws

What about flaws? Artists are more or less competent in certain respects, and their respective competencies reveal themselves in and across works. David Bowie said that Bob Dylan had a "sand and glue" voice — one that everyone recognizes as part of Dylan's style. Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs are smudged, smeared, splotchy, torn, dirty, and unfocused. And while these are flaws that arise from mishandling the wet collodion development process, Cameron seemed to accept them and they are recognized as part of her individual style.¹⁵

AP and IP seem to be in a position to count the results of incompetence as stylistic. On AP, it would seem that any dispositional incompetence in making art features in the artist's artistic personality. And on IP, artistic incompetence manifests in and across works, and so should count as a feature of, or at least reflect, the personality of the implied artist.

While a theory should count *some* flaws as stylistic, it should not count them all. Some flaws are just that; they might even count against the artist having formed a style at all. Can AP and IP count only some flaws as stylistic? This may be a struggle for AP. Provided a flaw appears regularly, it may well manifest some disposition operative in making the work. To exclude enough cases, AP will have to rely on an appeal to one of the richer notions of expression, hoping thereby to impose further conditions on a feature's counting as stylistic, conditions these flaws fail to meet. IP is in a better position. The notion of personality with which it operates is the everyday one, and that is more demanding than AP's. Not any old disposition can figure in

15. Amanda Ruggeri on the BBC: "From the start, Cameron's work was lambasted in the press. And the biggest cause of criticism was the thing that, ironically, would turn out to be the hallmark of her style and her enduring fame: her mistakes" (2007).

personality so conceived. And whether a given feature implies the expression of some aspect of personality depends in part on context. The lack of care paid to the vocals won't imply an impatience with detail if attention has clearly been lavished on the lyrics.

AI might seem to face the converse challenge: can it allow *any* flaws to count? AI holds that a flaw is stylistic only if it expresses the artist's artistic ideals, and it is odd to think that a flaw might feature among an artist's ideals. However, we see three ways in which AI can allow flaws to count.

First, works can express the artist's ideals not by exhibiting the features those ideals valorize, but by *aiming* to exhibit them. The artist aims for F-work, fails, but at least creates work with a feature that reveals that F-ness was the goal. Such features might be part of style, conceived as the expression of ideals, if someone can work out what the aim was on the basis of the work. And such features might be flaws — they reflect the aspiration to give the work merits but are not themselves merits; and, insofar as failure is bad, are indeed defects.

Second, an ideal is a set of concerns, and a set of concerns is identified as much by what it *leaves out* as by what it includes. The work can thus express an artist's ideals in part by those values she has not chosen to strive to attain, and those flaws she has not bothered to eradicate. (The roughness of Dylan's singing in part reflects his passionate focus on the lyrics.) What's out matters as much as what's in, so weaknesses can express ideals as surely as strengths. But note that this second move allows flaws to be elements in style, *provided they are present through neglect*, not mere incompetence. If an artist was simply incapable of improving their work in a certain respect, the resulting flaw does not reflect their artistic ideals in any interesting way, and so cannot form part of their style.

Finally, flaws can be retained, not through neglect but through deliberate preservation. Rather than simply devoting energies elsewhere, the artist may adjust other features so as to provide a context in which the flaw makes a positive contribution. Surely this is the story with Dylan's singing. Its roughness not only shows that his attention is

elsewhere: it also adds a raw energy to the message of protest his lyrics convey. Perhaps features repurposed in this way no longer count as flaws. Even so, this third proposal allows AI to explain how features that at least at first blush look like flaws can get to be stylistic.

Thus, AI has promising resources for counting certain flaws as stylistic. IP fits the facts, but perhaps in a way less illuminating of the pressures at work hereabouts. AP struggles even to generate the right results in this regard.¹⁶

4. Limits

Are there limits to the artistic output that can manifest a given style? Can a single style be manifested in different forms of picture-making (oil, watercolor, drypoint, etching, etc.)? Rembrandt's output suggests yes. But what if we add sculpture, too? Or consider literature — could an author have a single style across his novelistic and poetic work? What about someone who both paints and writes? Or composes music? While it may be hard to imagine some artists preserving their style across a vast range of media, others do so fluidly. Some artists work with music, song, installation, performance, fine art painting, drawing, mixed media, installation, and sculpture — and somehow achieve a stylistic unity across these media. What limits, if any, does an individual style impose on an artist's output and why?

Let's revisit P to get a grip on this issue. On P, there would seem to be almost no limits. A single coarse-grained personality can be expressed through any number of activities, artistic and non-artistic.

16. If flaws can be stylistic, what about technique? The term is sometimes used to refer to the traces of the artist's working. So understood, technique can certainly figure in style. But often, it means instead the artist's ability to achieve her aims. Since ideals are high-level aims, there is a connection here to AI's central claims. Even so, technique in this sense is not stylistic. The ability to attain one's aims is not itself another aim, nor is it a feature of the work it enables. It is thus neither an ideal nor a feature that expresses one. What *can* be stylistic, however, is an artist's persistent pursuit of achievements that demand considerable technique in this second sense. (Consider the writerly showmanship of David Foster Wallace.) Hitting one's targets is not stylistic, but constantly aiming high can be. And so AI predicts: the pursuit of what is difficult can be among an artist's ideals, and one her work expresses.

Consider a jovial, flighty, quick-witted personality: we might find this in music, painting, sculpture, narrative literature, poetry, and so on. If style is the expression of personality, then since most art forms ground the expression of a wide range of personality traits, there are no (or only very loose) stylistic limits on the range of media and forms in which a given style can find expression. If we should think of a style as somehow limiting the range of media in which it is expressed, P is in a poor position to explain how it does so.

Let's assume that style does impose limits on the range of media across which an artist can work. The assumption is not gratuitous: consider how difficult it is to imagine a painting or sculpture in Henry James's individual artistic style, or a novel in Picasso's. The difficulty does not suggest that such works are impossible, but it suggests that style imposes stricter expressive limits than P allows. How do the refined personality views fare on this score?

Here, IP looks inferior to AP. On IP, the personality implied by a work is not limited to works of that kind. Henry James's style, for example, involves his apparent *interest in abstraction*, his apparent *interest in the subtleties of mental life*, and his apparent *humorous compassion for people*. As a result, any other art form that supports the apparent expression of these personality traits can be a locus of James's individual style: poetry, sculpture, song, narrative painting. But if the nature of Henry James's individual style is in fact such that he could not have produced songs or narrative paintings in that style, then this is a shortcoming of IP. This suggests that the personality traits specified by IP are too generic. IP's problem here is to pay too much attention to the implied artist and too little to the details of the medium.

AP has an easier time here. Its traits are ones that get expressed primarily in art-making contexts. Thus, the specification of the personality trait can, and perhaps should, refer to a specific art form. What is expressed in James's work is an interest in abstract *writing*, or a tendency to be humorously compassionate toward his *written characters*. On this view, when the artist with an individual style takes up another art form, different dispositions are potentially engaged, and so a different

artistic personality is potentially expressed. In general, *compassion in writing* has different expressive demands than *compassion in sculpture* or *compassion in cinema*, and so it is plausible to think that one's individual style in writing will not, or not easily, translate to sculpture or cinema.

AI and AP seem to be on equal ground in this respect. According to AI, the ideals that feature in style are ideals the artist has *for her art*. It is, of course, perfectly possible for such ideals to be so abstract as to span many, or even all, art forms. Perhaps our artist seeks to produce work of Apollonian calm or Dionysian torment. But ideals so abstract are too general to guide artistic action. They can lead to work that realizes them only when earthed through other, more concrete, ideals. Those more specific ideals are highly likely to vary across the various art forms to which our artist turns her hand. Since AI's claim is that a work's style is a matter of *all* the ideals it expresses, it is very likely that working across a range of art forms will, beyond a certain point, render it impossible for her to maintain a single style. Perhaps, for instance, if her architecture is to be Dionysian it must also be organic, while any Dionysian music she might write could not be.

Where AI and AP differ is in the explanation of stylistic limits. AP holds that such limits are a brute psychological fact about the artist's art-making dispositions. The artist just has a certain psychological (or psycho-motor) profile which may or may not have been cultivated or endorsed and which restricts her output to a particular range of media. AI, on the other hand, locates the ground of these limits in the structure of artistic ideals.

Which explanation is preferable? The answer depends on precisely what question we are trying to answer. Is it about the limits a style imposes on the range of works that can exhibit it? Or is it instead about the limits on the range of works able to exhibit a style *if that style is one in which some individual, A, can work*? AP's appeal to psychological fact addresses this second question. Changing media imposes different demands on the artist, and perhaps those demands are ones her psychology is ill-suited to match. AI's appeal to the structure of artistic

ideals addresses the first question. The limits it invokes are not psychological but about what counts as realizing an ideal. They thus apply to all artwork, regardless of who makes it.

Surely it is the first question that should be our concern. For only that bears on Belonging. Belonging asks what is required for a given work to be in a given style, and the answer will clearly have implications for the range of works that can play that role. The question AP addresses, in contrast, does not bear on Belonging at all directly. Focusing as it does on what is possible for individual artists, it has no immediate implications for the general issue of what must be true of a work if it is to exhibit a given style. To connect with Belonging, its claims would need ramping up. They would have to concern what was possible for *any* artist, coupled with the assumption that constraints on our common psychology also constrain what works there could be.¹⁷

5. The Style-Art Link

Can an artist express her individual style in certain forms of *non-artistic* activity? Is artistic style confined to Art-with-a-capital-A? Of course, if by the phrase we just mean “style in Art”, then it is so by stipulation. But we can still ask a coherent question: is the very same phenomenon

17. Does the second question bear on Ownership instead? Not quite. It bears most directly on a third issue. Compare

Ownership: What is it for an individual style S to be artist A’s?

with

Participation: What is it for an individual style S to be such that an artist A can work in it?

Perhaps no one can own a style in which they cannot participate; but artists can certainly participate in styles they don’t own. (Think, for instance, of forgers or workshop assistants.) It may be that the answer to Participation has implications for the second question above, i.e., for what range of works can be in any style that is available to a given artist. Facts about the limits on such ranges may thus bear on answers to Participation. If they bear on Ownership at all, they will do so only indirectly, via Participation.

that is limited by that phrase to Art also found in non-Artistic activity, such as humbler forms of writing or depicting?

Let’s suppose the answer is “no”. Why not? AI yields an answer: since artistic style is bound up with the ideals one has for one’s art, it can only be present where at least the aspiration to Art is. To the extent that giving one’s work style is a matter of enacting one’s artistic ideals, to that extent style can only be present where the aspiration is fulfilled and there is Art.¹⁸

But what this yields is an answer to this question:

Co-Presence: Why is Art (artistic achievement) always present wherever artistic style is?

What it doesn’t yet give us is an answer to the following:

Constitution: Why is artistic style *itself* an artistic achievement?

Yet Constitution also requires an answer. We criticize budding artists precisely for their failure to have yet developed a style. That criticism makes no sense unless what they fail to develop would have positive artistic value. An account of style should capture what that value is.¹⁹

The personality views can answer this question only if they can make sense of the idea that, within art or without, it is an achievement to express personality. Whether, with P, we have in mind personality in the everyday sense; or, with AP, a wider range of dispositions manifested in art, our personalities are expressed all the time, effortlessly,

18. In discussing flaws, we allowed that ideals can be expressed without being attained. That may seem to imply that the extent to which achieving style requires enacting one’s ideals is not very great. However, to say that style is consistent with failure to attain some ideals is hardly to say that it is consistent with failing to attain many. Nothing above commits us to this last possibility.

19. Note that giving such an account is entirely consistent with our focus on Belonging. Belonging asks what individual style is, Ownership asks who gets credit for it. Constitution asks why what is credited to that person counts as an achievement. Whatever the answer, surely it lies in what style is (Belonging), not in why it goes to her (Ownership).

and we don't think that doing so merits praise (or even attention). Of course, the more demanding the notion of expression in play, the more room there is for achievement. Expression of personality is not merely a matter of its having effects, but involves at least the cause being legible to others (the forensic notion), or legible to them in ways revealing one's own intentions (the communicative). There may well be room for achievement in bringing it about that these conditions are met. But locating the achievement in expression, rather than in what is expressed, fails to tell us what is specially valuable about style as opposed to any other form of self-expression.

A deeper worry lies around the corner. Suppose that, in general, expressing personality is indeed an achievement. That alone is not enough to show that it is an *artistic* achievement. And nothing changes even if the arena in which that achievement is attained happens to be art. Persuading others to back one's artistic projects is an achievement, and one that goes on in art. But that is not enough for such persuasion to be an artistic achievement. The real personality views must show why things are different for style.

IP also seems to have little to work with. Why should it be an achievement to imbue the work with an implied personality? Sure, that does look like it might be an artistically interesting thing to do, but to assert as much is just to say that style is an artistic achievement. Can anything be said about why it is worthwhile, and in particular why any value it brings counts as artistic? Until these questions find answers, we seem to have hit bedrock. Of course, perhaps this is just where answers run out.

However, AI allows us to say rather more, provided it is coupled with the right notion of expression. One promising candidate is the idea of expression as articulation. In making her work, the artist is articulating her ideals for her art to herself. As she produces her output, she makes clear to herself what her ideals are. (No doubt this will also simultaneously involve those ideals becoming more defined.) Alternatively, we might appeal to the somewhat less demanding idea of expression as communication: the artist's work doesn't clarify her

own understanding of her ideals, but it does communicate those ideals to her audience. On either view, the answer to Constitution is that style creates understanding, either in oneself or in others, of what one is trying to achieve as an artist. Is that itself an artistic achievement? Why not? True, there is a hint of bootstrapping in being told that doing something with style is an achievement because it engenders understanding of what one is trying to achieve in that activity. But a lot of our activities have this quality — their value lies in doing them well, not in their offering us something the value of which is independent of the activity itself; and, additionally, it's not as if all artistic value thereby disappears down this self-reflexive plughole — the point is confined to its value qua exhibiting style. Indeed, since the value of style is to clarify what other values the work intentionally exhibits, the presence of other values is guaranteed. On AI, style is essentially connected to broader artistic values.

To sharpen our sense of the advantages of AI over its rivals here, consider what at first appears an objection.

Is the question we are trying to answer appropriate? Constitution presupposes that style is always an achievement. Is this so? If the artist's output is terrible, are things made any better by its displaying a distinctive style? Perhaps style is only an achievement when the art it styles is good. In value's absence, perhaps style makes matters worse, adding the insult of coherence to the injury of the vices it weaves together.

The issue here is delicate, and intuitions vary. It parallels some questions in ethics. Is the wholehearted pursuit of one's ethical values a good thing? Even if one's values are themselves corrupt? In this case, as in that of style, it's easy to feel pulled in both directions, and it's hard to see how to settle on one. Perhaps we do best not to attempt such a resolution, at least at present. A minimum, immediate goal would be to understand the source of the tension. In this, AI again outperforms its rivals. If style in art is the expression of ideals, then our uncertainty about whether style is good is comprehensible: there's something artistically good about clarifying what one's artistic ideals are, but that

benefit depends in complex ways on whether those ideals are appropriate. AP and IP, in contrast, seem incapable of explaining why we even feel torn. To the extent that they can make sense of it being good to express personality, why is that goodness in any way conditional on the value of the art that expresses it? And even if they simply take style's value as brute, why does adding that value to bad art, rather than simply mitigating its badness, call into question that value itself?

6. Unity

One problem with the discussion of AI thus far is that every point we have made could be run for individual ideals an artist has for her work. For each ideal, if she makes something enacting it, then, to that extent and by her own lights, she has achieved something artistically (Co-Presence). And if she expresses the thought that the feature in question is artistically valuable, she's done something more (Constitution). But this says nothing about how the various ideals she has for her work interrelate. It thus leaves open the possibility that she holds disparate ideals which her work expresses in a fragmented manner. Yet style, we might think, involves cohesion: style is a kind of unity.

Is this something AI can capture? What secures that a work possessing and displaying diverse or disunified ideals — and displaying them as valuable — could not count as exhibiting a style?

Here, the personality approach may have an advantage. The idea of a personality is itself the idea of a unity as the idea of a set of ideals is not. If what is expressed is unified, we can readily understand how unity must also be found in that which expresses it. AI, in contrast, seems less well placed. How can the unity of style be captured rather than merely imposed by stipulation or ad hoc addition?

One answer is that such unity is just one of the valuable features that any plausible set of artistic ideals will possess. This builds unity in at the first-order evaluative level. The problem is that it is not clear why it has to be there. Why can my ideal not be to be a non-unified artist, one whose output is radically diverse? If it is, why can't my work exhibit my style, even though it lacks unity?

A better reply lies in the nature of artistic ideals themselves. They are not simply pro-attitudes towards particular specific features. If they were, AI would be far too weak to capture style. Its claim would be that style amounts to the work's having a range of specific features, each of which is there because the artist wanted it to be, and manifestly so. That condition is met by almost any work that is obviously an artefact, whether or not it exhibits an individual style. AI can avoid this difficulty because all ideals are abstract to some extent. They are pro-attitudes, not to specific features but to values such features might realize. The artist's ideal will not be that her pencil lines be thin, or her colors pale, but (say) that her work be clean and sparing, and achieve subtle effects with maximum economy.

The more abstract an ideal, the wider a range of particular features in which it is liable to find expression. Cleanliness and a sparing quality, for instance, may place demands not merely on the lines the artist lays down, but also on the palette she deploys, the composition she gives to the whole, and which aspects of her subject matter she captures. Each ideal admits of expression in several features. Works that take up only some of the opportunities thus offered are liable to fail to express the ideal. The message they send by realizing it in some features is confused by their apparent lack of interest in realizing it in others. Given the abstractness of an ideal, the wider range of features it is realized in, the more clearly it is expressed. (This will be true on any of the notions of expression above.)

The pressure for a single ideal to find expression in many features is pressure towards unity in the work: more of its features will share a role as realizing that ideal. But there is a complementary pressure in the other direction. Each ideal, qua abstract, seeks realization in several features. The more ideals there are, the more the features in which they seek realization will overlap. The artist's line must not only express her valuing cleanliness but also her prizing economy; the palette must not only realize her search for subtle effects but also her desire to be sparing. But if every feature is to express several ideals, the ideals must cohere. They must be such that a given feature *can* realize

them all at once. Here, the pressure is for unity in the ideals expressed. So there is a circle of influence. The abstractness of ideals pushes for each ideal to be realized in many features, thereby exerting pressure for each feature to realize many ideals, thereby placing constraints on those ideals as a set. A set of artistic ideals may lack unity, but any set that finds expression in work is liable to be unified itself and to impose unity on the works that express it.

We do not claim that these pressures are irresistible. Works of art can be shaped by disunified sets of ideals, and can have sets of features not unified by the ideals that shape them. It is another question whether works fitting these descriptions can be in an artist's individual style, but we are ready to accept that in principle they can. What the theory secures is not that every work in a style is maximally unified, or even unified to a relatively high degree; but just that there are significant tendencies towards unity at work in the realm of style. Those who think this insufficient, and think it a reason to reject our view, need to do two things. First, they must justify the idea that unity is always present wherever style is. Can't disunity even be part of what characterizes some individual styles? And second, they need to justify their confidence that any theory can meet the stronger demand they seek to impose. After all, personalities are often far from perfectly unified. Someone need not be schizophrenic for there to be strikingly opposed currents in their nature: generosity pulling against a certain meanness of spirit, compassion against indifference. It is unclear that any account of style that makes personality its key notion will secure greater unity in style than does AI.²⁰

7. Gestalt

Are the machinations of the preceding section really necessary? There is an important idea we have yet to mention but which, arguably, every view of style should accept. This is that it is essential to a style that

20. It's notable that Robinson does not say that style is unified because personality is. The closest she comes is her claim that we find style where we find it to be an expression of a unified set of personality traits (1985, pp. 244–245).

it be something we *experience*, and, more particularly, that style is tied to Gestalt. What it is for work to be in an individual artist's style is, in part, for it to be (able to be) experienced as organized in some overall way. Different individual styles show up in experience as distinctive overall ways in which the features of the works that fall under them are organized. But the way in which something is organized, or hangs together, is a kind of unity. However disunified the thing may be in other respects, if it manifests a Gestalt, it is in that way unified. If styles are tied to experienced Gestalt, why can't AI appeal to this idea to explain why styles must exhibit unity and to clarify the kind of unity involved? But then where does that leave our thoughts concerning the ways ideals unify features and features unify ideals? They now appear redundant.

The appeal to experiencing Gestalt certainly faces some questions. One is whether the idea can be understood broadly enough to yield a condition on style that holds across the arts. We can see Picasso's style and hear Thelonious Monk's, but what exactly is our relation to Henry James's style? If his style does sustain a Gestalt, it is one not seen or heard, but experienced in some extended sense. What is that sense?²¹

Another question concerns where in an account of style we should place a condition mentioning Gestalt. Our original statement of the rival positions made no mention of the idea. Is it to be added as a mere supplement, or can it be integrated into them?

Now, we are indeed drawn to the idea that style is something that must be experienced in a Gestalt. We are not overly worried about how to specify the relevant sense of "experience". The problem is hardly confined to style. Many aspects of literature are grasped in a way that is somewhat experiential in nature, even though it cannot be identified with experience in any of the traditional sensory modes. (Think, for instance, of our purchase on *form* — the "shape" of a plot, or the arc of a storyline.) That problem is thus not specific to the current

21. Robinson concentrates on literary style, and perhaps for this reason she seems not to appreciate the need for style to show up in experience. The idea comes closest to the surface in her discussion of unity (*ibid.*).

proposal, and can wait on progress in the philosophy of literature at large.²²

What about the problem of how to incorporate the Gestalt condition? An elegant solution is simply to modify AI thus:

Artistic Ideals* (AI*) For a work to be in A's individual artistic style is for it to exhibit a Gestalt that expresses the ideals A has for her work.

In effect, the modification incorporates Gestalt by giving it a particular role: it is that by means of which expression is attained. If expression is forensic, then the artist's ideals must affect the Gestalt her work displays, and it must be possible to recover those causes from that effect. If it is communicative, the ideals must be recoverable from the Gestalt because the artist intended them to be. And if expression is articulation, the Gestalt must be the vehicle of her, and her audience's, grasp of her ideals. Note the claim is not that Gestalt can play this role alone. Perhaps someone could grasp the Gestalt without grasping the ideals it communicates, articulates, or whatever. To do the latter, she may also need to reflect, to use her imagination to reconstruct the process of creating the work, or to do any of the other things we do in trying to make sense of art. The point is merely that, insofar as it is directed at individual style, any such reflection, reconstruction etc. should be focused on, and driven by, the artist's engagement with the Gestalt. That engagement plays an indispensable role in whatever purchase on the ideals the subject ends up having.

All this amounts to an important, if not fully developed, amendment to our account of style. (We think the rival views we discuss should also be amended in this way.) But we do not agree that appealing to Gestalt renders redundant our previous thoughts about unity. Here's why.

22. The problem is not confined to literature. Some of the features constitutive of style in music are sufficiently large-scale, or sufficiently scattered, that one might wonder whether the Gestalt that organizes them can really be *heard*. Cf. Levinson (2007).

Imposing the Gestalt condition means accounts of style involve two elements. There is an element that is nothing more than a matter of appearance, the Gestalt; and an element that does not reduce to appearance, the expression of ideals, personality, or whatever it might be. The former imposes a kind of unity. What of the latter? If nothing in that element also imposes unity, then the account threatens to lack coherence: its two components are consistent, but fail to dovetail. If, for instance, the second element involves ideals, and ideals can be hugely disunified, then only a small portion of the ideals the artist has for her work will show up in the Gestalt it exhibits — most will not admit of unification under that, or any other, Gestalt. And then style would be the tip of a much larger iceberg: a matter of those ideals, from the many the artist's work realizes, that happen to find reflection in the perceptual unity the work presents. This leaves style looking like a somewhat arbitrary category, the site of accidental interplay between two very different forces.

Personality views do not face this threat, since, as noted above, the notion of a personality is itself the notion of a kind of unity. But AI* would do if the idea of expressing ideals did not also bring with it pressure towards unity. In showing the antecedent of this conditional to be false, the thoughts offered in the last section do real work. They give us confidence that the ideals the artwork realizes will themselves be unified, and thus that what can be found in the work's Gestalt is at least a good part of the underlying reality which that appearance reflects. They thereby secure a kind of coherence for AI* that it would otherwise lack.

8. The Appeal of Style

Let's return to the thought that set us off: individual style is often inspiring and imitated — innovations in style are a driving force of the avant-garde. Even individual styles that don't widely inspire call on our attention. They are notable, hard to ignore. This holds even of styles that one does not especially like. A serious painter who did not like Picasso's individual style when it emerged could not simply *ignore*

it. Once it was present, her output became part of a tradition in which that individual style was operative. And merely continuing in her artistic ways must be seen in relation to, perhaps even as a response to, the new style.

It would seem, then, that style has some kind of normative force. It makes a claim on artists. Sometimes that claim is profound, but we need to be careful not to overstate it. The normativity of style does not consist in a demand that others adopt this way of painting — style is more personal than that, even though it does make some claim on others. In making her work in her style, it's not clear that the artist need in any way be exhorting others to do the same. Anyone drawn to that style will feel impelled not to imitate it, but to learn from it in developing her own style. If that's right, then the normative claim of style seems to be of a distinctive kind — roughly and minimally: you should attend to this style and consider what you might learn from it, without being under any obligation to imitate it. For individually variable reasons, sometimes attending to and learning from a style can have a profound influence on one's work. Other times, it's little more than a new contrast case in the light of which one sees one's output.

IP and AP seem to have some trouble here, for it's not clear what in the notion of a personality could ground even this relatively weak sense of normativity. If, as AP says, my individual artistic style lies in expressing my personality in making art, what can I gain from considering the style of others? They might be able to teach me something about the *methods* by which to express artistic personality, but why, as an artist, should I attend to the character of the personality they've expressed? Quite generally, the expression of one personality has no normative implications for the expression of any other.²³ So why

23. Perhaps in some cases, the expression of personality does have normative force. Consider, for example, how the personality a celebrity expresses might inspire or influence people in their thrall. That will help the personality views address the issue of style's appeal only if they can say what makes the difference between such cases and ordinary, normatively inert, expressions of personality. For perhaps whatever normative import there is in the celebrity case is due not to the personality expressed but some other factor. And one

should its expression in art have any normative claim at all? Before this question, AP looks speechless and *prima facie* IP fares no better: things don't improve when the personality is merely implied.

In this respect, AI is more promising. AI holds that style is the expression of ideals. Ideals are such that one may recognize their interest or appeal without regarding them as worthy of pursuit on one's own part. There are many ideals, after all, and different ideals can clash and conflict. Ideals are therefore personal without being as normatively inert as a preference or liking. A person who clearly expresses punk ideals says more than that she likes living this way. Her style makes a kind of claim: *one can build a life around the ideals I'm expressing; consider that in living your own life*. In making a range of ideal-guided choices about hairstyle, clothing, demeanor, musical taste, etc., a person suggests that life choice more generally can be guided by these ideals. And it's that suggestion that might attract or intrigue. If so in life, similarly in art. If style expresses ideals, it will have precisely the normative force described.

We can sharpen our sense of AI's advantage here by considering a reply on behalf of personality views. They struggled to explain why developing a style is an artistic achievement (section 5). But, that hit taken, surely they can at least take style's status as an achievement as brute. If they do, can't they explain much of the lay of the normative land hereabouts? Artists should attend to others' styles for the same reason they should attend to any achievement in art — to learn what to emulate. Since the achievement is *developing* a style, not merely working in one, emulation should take the form of creating a style of one's own, not copying that of others. And since developing a style is just one achievement among many that might be pursued, attending to style at all is an option, no more: something to consider, but not compulsory.

However, this puts style on a par with any other artistic achievement: the solution of some technical problem, the attainment of some

candidate is AI's: the ideals our celebrity's actions embody, e.g., ideals of glamor, luxury, confidence, or coolness.

insight, the expression of some new feeling or atmosphere. Any of these are worthy of an artist's attention, but none must figure in the goals she sets herself. Is the call of style no more urgent than that? If not, then having given it due consideration at some stage, any artist could ignore it in future, as she might ignore work that aspires to solve ever more demanding technical problems, or work that searches to capture previously elusive atmospheres or moods. But style's appeal seems more overarching. Any artist, at any point, should find interesting the development of a new individual style. Style figures in reflection on art in a way that is permanent and pervasive, as other achievements do not. This AI alone can explain. Any artist should at any time be open to diverse conceptions of how art could and should be. And that is what the individual styles of her fellow artists express.

So far, we've concentrated on the appeal of style to artists. What of its appeal to appreciators? They, too, ought to notice style. Those who do not appreciate a work's style are missing something aesthetically important. Style is frequently the source of aesthetic attraction and appreciative attachment. Why?

Unless we make the implausible assumption that expressing personality is always of artistic interest, even when personality is construed capaciously or even when it is merely implied as lying behind the work, personality views again struggle to answer. AI, in contrast, does not. Those interested in art should be interested in the artistic goods it can realize. Since style expresses the artist's sense of those values, their artistic ideals, style is something to which they should attend.

This answer, of course, applies only to those who are already appreciators, who already care about art. It says nothing about why the individual style of a work should make a claim on anyone who does not already have that interest. Why should it matter even to them?

Maybe it shouldn't. It's not out of the question that the normative pull of artistic style is limited to those who are engaged by art. But AI does offer the prospect of saying more here. We have already seen that ideals can be more or less abstract. Some of the ideals proposed for art

have been very abstract indeed. Should art be Apollonian or Dionysian, aim at beauty or at the grim truth, soothe or shock, be minimal or monumental, stand on its own to be contemplated and admired, or reach beyond art and the individual to a broader community?

Some might reject one or another of those grander visions of what art (or painting, sculpture, film, and so on) is all about — historically there has, after all, been plenty of disagreement here — but it is hard to deny their general appeal. And part of that appeal is independent of whether one is interested in art. These broader themes in art mirror in structure and content similar themes in life. An artistic devotion to minimalism might result in works whose style puts us in mind of a simpler life; a creative output animated by political zeal might resonate with the boldness and ferocity embodied in the life of a devoted activist. (We might even see the ideals in each pair as realizing some yet more abstract ideal common to both.) This suggests that our attraction to style is not just an attraction to particular ways of making art but to bigger-picture stances on the importance of art that resonate with bigger-picture ways of living life. Style, then, is a locus of the connection between art and life and a site of attraction to outsiders looking in — on this view, the intrigue of style is inseparable from an interest in being alive.

Conclusion

The view that individual artistic style is the expression of artistic ideals competes with its rivals along a range of questions about style. In closing, let us take stock of how they fare.

What range of features can express style? While the facts here are open to debate, we suggested that AI's rivals overgenerate; only AI allows us to distinguish between stylistic features and features that manifest other aspects of the artist's agency, e.g., mere dispositions to act, or mere rote learning.

On two of the questions we raised, AI initially appears at a disadvantage with respect to one or more of the personality views. These are the questions of whether flaws can contribute to style, and why a

style is a kind of unity. However, closer examination reveals that in the end, AI is at least as well placed as its rivals to answer these questions in ways that accommodate and illuminate the facts.

When we turn to the limits on the forms of art able to exhibit a given style, only one personality view, AP, can compete with AI. Moreover, AI's explanation of those limits is both deeper and better targeted on the key facts.

Finally, if our interest is in the connections between style and art, or on the appeal of style, AI looks to be in a league of its own. Only it explains why style is an artistic achievement. And only it grounds style in a phenomenon with the appropriate normative contours.

Since any view is equally well placed to accommodate the connection between style and Gestalt, all this leaves AI with significant advantages over its rivals. AI is a workable theory of individual style, and preferable in a number of ways to existing views. To be sure, our remarks here fall far short of a definitive account of style; we leave many important issues for future consideration. In particular, we think that detailed case studies of the oeuvres of particular artists will further bolster our account of artistic style and address a range of criticisms we foresee. But we leave all that for another occasion.

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