Aesthetic Gestures:
Elements of a Philosophy of Art in Frege and Wittgenstein

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Summary

Gottlob Frege's conception of works of art has received scant notice in the literature. This is a pity since, as this paper undertakes to reveal, his innovative philosophy of language motivated a theoretically and historically consequential, yet unaccountably marginalized Wittgenstinian line of inquiry in the domain of aesthetics. The element of Frege's approach that most clearly inspired this development is the idea that only complete sentences articulate thoughts and that what sentences in works of drama and literary art express are 'mock thoughts' (*Schiengedanken*).

The early Wittgenstein closely followed Frege's lead on this theme. One sees this, for example, in the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein announces that only sentential propositions model ('picture') states of affairs whereas works of art are objects we perceive *sub specie aeternitatis* (1961, 83). By the 1930s, however, Wittgenstein began to revise his view beyond his initial Frege-inspired standpoint. He came to insist that works of art *can* convey thoughts as well, but that thoughts do not model (picture) the world of facts and hence do not convey information about measurable objects and events. Rather, his contention was that aesthetically configured thoughts that artworks communicate impart information about our perspective on reality and reconfigure our view of life. To be more explicit, successful (*gelungene*) or 'good' works of art (ibid.), in Wittgenstein's view, can supply aesthetically instructive 'gestures' that open to living experience promising new ways of being. It is in this respect, he held, that artists '*have something to teach*' (1980, 36).

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1. Frege's Aesthetics: Works of Art as One and Many

To grasp the sense and philosophical purport of Frege's aesthetics presupposes a sound understanding of Frege's philosophy of language. Frege held that only complete sentences express thoughts and thereby deliver information that enables us to derive truths from them. Sentences employed to command, to express a wish, to request, and so on are, to Frege's way of thinking, 'exclamations in which one vents feelings, groans, sighs, laughs' (Frege 1918,

355). Such sentences are consequently but 'mock thoughts' (*Scheingedanken*), and one acquires no knowledge from them.

Starting from this position, Frege advanced an idiosyncratic theory of art. According to Frege the poet, for example, 'does not really depict (*malt*) anything: he provides only the impetus for others to do so, furnishing hints (*winke*) to this end, and leaving it to the hearer to give his words body and shape' (Frege 1897, 140). In other words, works of art only stimulate one's imagination so that one constructs one's own, private work of art. 'The real work of art', states Frege, 'is a structure of ideas within us. ... The external thing—the painting, the statue—is only a means for producing the real work of art in us' (Ibid., 132). On Frege's view, those who are genuinely taken with a work of art compose it—'in their head', as it were—for themselves.[1]

Given the seminal influence that Frege's thinking had on Wittgenstein, it is most illumining to consider Frege's conception of how art 'works' by recasting his view in the somewhat better-known Wittgenstinian terms. The artist's task as one apprehends it from this standpoint is not to depict facts (states of affairs) for us, but rather to move us to believe a narrative, for instance, or to 'imagine' for ourselves a musical theme.[2] Quite different from this is the semantics of mathematics and science, which is by contrast a-subjective, *objective*. Numbers, for example, inhere in the 'third world'—waiting, as it were, to be brought to light like unexplored continents by adventurous explorers. This holds as well for the propositions of everyday life when we speak 'seriously', i.e. with occurrent actualities in mind. Thus if someone seriously asks about the weather at the present moment and one replies, 'It's raining', one obviously enough aims to state the truth. What this comes down to is that propositions of mathematics and propositions about facts (states of affairs) have cognitive import. One can grasp, learn, and communicate their sense. Works of art, on the other hand, manifest, as Frege saw it, no cognitive signification, but instead evince emotive import.

Frege argues, in addition, that precisely because those engaged by a work of art construct it in different ways, no truth-in-general is to be found in this realm: every art aficionado is preoccupied with his or her own self-constructed aesthetic entity. This amounts to a Fregean ground for inferring the old adage, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. Frege's 'public' domain,

[1] Quite recently, Kendall Walton made a similar contention: pieces of art express our thoughts, whereas we usually believe that they express the thought of their author (Walton 2015). See also Stambovsky (2004), ch. 1.

[2] A similar conception was developed a century later by Walton (1990), without any reference to Frege, though, and apparently independently of him.

by contrast, includes the world of logic, mathematics, language and science, along with the individuals of practical life.

We have just seen that concomitantly with this doctrine of the objective character of mathematical and scientific truth, Frege had formulated a persuasive aesthetic philosophy. But his aesthetic conception can face serious critical challenges. One problem is that individuals who make up an audience, for all their private constructs of a given artwork, nonetheless unerringly identify one particular artistic product to which all their personal constructive engagements with it collectively refer. Another point that would seem to challenge the Fregean view is that usually one is able at least potentially to distinguish an original work of art from its counterfeit. Further, and with respect specifically to music, we normally can discern when a new melody to which we happen to be listening is stylistically similar to a different one. One way to meet the foregoing difficulties is to assume that even if individuals do in some manner construct for themselves each work of art they encounter, different minds can unmistakably identify the source of these personal constructions as the same artwork—this in a manner analogous to how we can have many different photos of one individual but unmistakably recognize them all as pictures of the same person.

Another challenge facing Frege's theory is that it fails satisfactorily to account for the fact that some successful works of art are celebrated as masterpieces in radically different historical periods and across diverse cultures. This suggests that the seminal artworks are in some sense aesthetic universals. The problem is how to square this with Frege's doctrine, given his position that aesthetic experience is strictly private.

2. That and How Wittgenstein Initially Assimilated Frege's Position, Then Moved Beyond It

The early Wittgenstein adopted Frege's position on works of art, holding that we acquire information from other persons only through propositional language. In its propositional form, according to Wittgenstein, language arranges things 'experimentally', its role being logically to model—'depict', 'picture'—facts, or states of affairs (1961, 13). What distinguishes works of art, musical compositions in particular, is that they do not, as he sees it, model reality in this way and consequently have no cognitive import.

Moreover, while two propositions—true and false—correspond to every fact, or state of affairs, note-scripts of music do not. Unlike note-scripts, 'seriously articulated' propositions model facts and on that score one must recognize them as proxies for possible facts. (Those propositions which lack cogency are 'senseless' and consequently neither true nor false.) No

such model/original relation obtains, however, vis-à-vis the work of art, which is no model of facts. It is on this count that the early Wittgenstein would not dismiss artworks as senseless.

Starting from the 1930s, Wittgenstein began radically to modify his position on this theme. He slowly grew convinced that we have a command of language—we can produce and understand sentences—only because it is embedded in life practices. This novel consideration clearly looms large when one considers Wittgenstein's later thinking on how humans master languages. He argued that we learn to speak and understand sentences by training ('drill'), by examining acts of speaking and understanding the language employed by those who teach us language, and by being attentive more generally to the linguistic practices of others. Possessing a command of language does not mean, though, that we learn to follow *rules* that govern linguistic praxis. It indicates, rather, that we have the capacity to speak and understand language so far as it is embedded in our lived experience.

Wittgenstein ultimately concluded that even if not identical with language, art (again, music in particular) is more akin to language than he had earlier thought. This evolved perspective is adumbrated in the following, typically gnomic Wittgenstinian declaration: 'In art it is hard to say anything [is] as good as: saying nothing' (1980, 23). In other words, art is not a language as such, yet it is 'almost' a language. This position led Wittgenstein to delineate some pregnant distinctions applicable to the relation between art and language. He opined, for instance, that 'music, *some* music at least, makes us want to call it language; but some music of course doesn't' (62).

Wittgenstein moved on from this to assert that while composers and writers can 'think', they do not 'think' equally well or consistently. In this regard, he pronounced Beethoven and Brahms 'good thinkers' but judged Gustav Mahler less accomplished by this measure. This evaluative approach correlates with Wittgenstein's belief that like the thoughts that language expresses, those that a musical composition can express bear messages. The cardinal point for Wittgenstein is that such messages, the content of musical thought, are what the composer aims at bottom to communicate. It is true that musical thoughts cannot be put into words: indeed, artists turn to the work of music, as they do to other genres of art, precisely in order to express with often incomparably compelling precision messages that discursive language simply cannot convey.

We turn, next, to the nature of the messages that Wittgenstein associated with the work of art. All the while we shall keep in mind that as he thought through this development in his philosophy of art Wittgenstein did not abandon but rather supplemented his earlier, Fregean

aesthetic in ways that expanded its scope and depth, opening in light of it new horizons. We shall return to this point in § 7.

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It is worth summarizing at this juncture the key findings of the two foregoing sections: (i) A work of art, we saw, does not to Frege's mind and also to the early Wittgenstein refer to individuals or events that one can measure, which is to say to individuals or events with a strictly fixed space-time determination. That is why it has no cognitive import. (ii) To the later Wittgenstein, an artwork can express thoughts and not merely amorphous feelings, the latter view being the position of such improbable bedfellows as Leo Tolstoy[3] and the logical positivists. This point is supported by the fact that the work of art is segmented and articulated. It has, that is, a specific structure that is embedded in the context of a particular art-form, one that crystallizes at some definite present moment in time.[4]

3. Works of Art as Sources of Information

To further clarify the Frege-inspired Wittgenstinian philosophy of art, and in particular how from that standpoint works of art have life-transforming information that can teach us, we turn to Wittgenstein's claim that 'good art' (1961, p. 83) 'insinuates itself [*schleicht sich ein*] into my life', having the character of something that 'I adopt … as my own' (1980, 73). The artist's creation thereby comes to be intimately bound up with my inner life. Indeed, artistic creations speak to defining problems of personal life. More specifically, a poem, a musical composition, even a masterwork of architecture can inform one of ways of being that enable him or her, imbued with that aesthetically communicated 'message', to resolve problems of living (27). In the process the work of art can also profoundly deepen one's self-understanding. It is in just this respect that Wittgenstein champions works of art as sources of information, sources from which we often feel that we have important things to learn. On this Wittgenstein was insistent: 'poets, musicians, etc. … *have something to teach*' (36). He was convinced that in their different ways the arts thus communicate knowledge.[5]

[3] See Tolstoy (1897). We are going to say more about Tolstoy's philosophy of art in § 6, below.

[4] Cf, § 4, below.

[5] Some authors today hold that works of art have cognitive import. They discriminate two types of cognition: knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and acquaintance (*Kenntnis*). The acquaintance is an immediate type of cognition and can be conveyed by works of art. Knoweldge, in contrast, can be conveyed by science and also by facts and events of ordinary life. Cf. e.g. Gabriel (2015, p. 68). That emotions have cognitive import was clearly

Referring to the musical compositions of the American folk singer/song writer Woody Guthrie, the pop artist Bob Dylan unwittingly echoed the Wittgenstinian position when he remarked that 'you could listen to his songs and actually learn how to live' (Corliss 2005). To be sure, Wittgenstein was more explicit when he argued that a work of art can 'show' a novel and fully determinate life-direction—a hitherto untraveled path that can lead one to a new way of living. Works of art can thus enhance our ability to discover what we genuinely wish for in life and how to achieve it, or the social group to which we truly belong.[6] It can implicitly school us in how to live our life and how to transform it. Given this understanding of art one can appreciate why a cohort of influential thinkers have taken works of art to be embodiments of philosophy. Friedrich Nietzsche, for one, declared that 'music is the true philosophy: it can namely intimate us a higher form of knowledge, or wisdom' (1888, pp. 2–3).

Significantly, it is difficult to predict whether, having been literally 'informed' in this manner by a novel work of art, one ought to expect a revolution in the configuration of one's life-concerns (in Wilhelm Dilthey's *Lebensbezugen*). Generally, such a fundamental transformation can occur only after a gradual inner development in the same direction, and when some, often unexpected spark triggers it.[7] We can look to the late Wittgenstein for a hint as to how it is that a successful work of art can transform one's way of pursuing a life. 'The fact that life is problematic', he avers, 'shows that the shape of your life does not fit into life's mold. So, you must change the way you live' (1980, 27). Wittgenstein's idea is that a successful work of art can prove of value in such cases by transforming the perspective from which we see our life; and this along lines that enable that life better to fit into its proper vital mold.[8]

Wittgenstein perhaps most tellingly signals the change in his conception of the work of art when he introduces in his philosophy the notion of the 'riddle', something that in the

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understood by Max Scheler. To be more exact, according to him emotions are not really acts of knowing but rather cognitive acts of grasping values of, among other things, works of arts. (Scheler 1979)

[6] On how we join social groups see Milkov (2012). A similar conception was developed in Bourdieu (1979).

[7] Similar processes take place by falling in love. We have several acquaintances for whom we feel sympathy. Then all of a sudden, and for unclear reasons, we fall in love with one of them (Cf. Eastwick and Hunt 2014). This similarity is, of course, not surprising: falling in love is a paradigm cause of changing lifestyle. It is also noteworthy that decisive changes in the way of life take place only a couple of times in life.

[8] According to Wittgenstein, the role of religion is similar. 'One of the things Christianity says is that sound doctrines are all useless. That you have to change your *life*. (Or the *direction* of your life.)' (1980, 53)

Tractatus he dismissed as non-existent (6.5). Wittgenstein invokes the 'riddle' as an explicit observation or question that has no equally explicit solution or explanation. He finds, for example, that colors in particular 'seem to present us with a riddle, a riddle that stimulates us—not one that disturbs us' (1980, 67). Wittgenstein takes this to be true of all qualia. He finds a similarity here with the fact that 'art *shows* us the miracles of nature. It is based on the *concept* of the miracles of nature.' (56)

The problems of life are immersed in these deep waters. To be sure, 'the problems of life', as Wittgenstein understands them, 'are insoluble on the surface and can be only solved in depth. They are insoluble in surface dimensions' (74). It comes therefore as no surprise that he regards works of art as bound up with the 'problems of life'. As reflected in music, such issues get represented 'not [in] the *melody*' as such, but rather in 'what gives the melody its *depth* and power' (37–8). It is in this connection that Wittgenstein revisited and emended his early theory of 'showing', along the complex and novel lines that distinguish his mature position in which he advances the view that 'good' works of art can show the miracle of nature and can also communicate reconfigured life-concerns in ways open for us to adopt.

The late innovations in his philosophy of art put Wittgenstein in the company of Friedrich Schiller, who famously taught that a work of art can teach things to those who genuinely encounter it on the work's own terms. That said, Wittgenstein radically diverged from Schiller on the matter of exactly what it is that artwork communicates and precisely how it effects spiritual (*geistige*) instruction. Wittgenstein argued that works of art do not teach us in any explicit manner, as Schiller thought, but rather that they tutor us in ways that are tacit or implicit. By the same token Wittgenstein sharply criticized those who reject the notion that art can educate us in life-transforming ways. He singles out for censure in this connection French poet Charles Baudelaire's pronouncement that the most one stands to learn when one goes to the theatre is the form of its newly installed chandeliers; to Baudelaire's way of thinking, art does not instruct, it simply entertains (cf. Bohrer 2015).

4. An Ontology of Aesthetic Gestures

While he assimilated core ingredients of Frege's philosophy of art, the later Wittgenstein dropped Frege's reference to *hints* (*Winke*), advancing instead the not-unrelated notion of aesthetic *gestures* (*Gebärde*).[9] Wittgenstein came to adopt the view that successful art posits (*setzt*) gestures in this sense—at the level of the complete work or of its component elements.

[9] Semantically, Frege's German term *Wink(e)* is closely related to the extension of the word *Gebärde*.

Hence ‘architecture’, to his mind, ‘is a *gesture*’ (Wittgenstein 1980, 42), as is so such an aesthetic component as a ‘musical phrase’ (73).[10] Aesthetic gestures, as conceived by Wittgenstein, indicate in their different ways various ‘styles’ of life. Although this notion cannot be pursued here, there is a compelling case to be made for the idea of an entire universe of aesthetic gestures, each of which ‘shows’ (as a quasi ‘vector’) a distinctive direction in which one might lead one’s life.

Significantly, this doctrine of gestures as pointing to new ways of life can be applied to non-aesthetic domains as well. (i) In the domain of religion a miracle, observed Wittgenstein, can count as a ‘*gesture* which God makes’ that directs the devotee’s life (p. 45). (ii) In the realms, further, of oneiric experience and psychoanalytic psychology one of Wittgenstein’s close followers, and his successor in the philosophy chair at Cambridge University, John Wisdom noted that not only dreams but also psychoanalytic sessions can change the light in which one sees the facts and events of one’s life, and as a result can change its direction (Wisdom 1973, p. 43). (iii) More generally, an event in life too can change the path, in essence the ‘style’, of one’s life. An incalculably influential cultural-historical instance of this occurred as the Buddha’s epiphanic awakening from the lethargy of the mundane life upon encountering sick, aged, and suffering persons. One sees the same thing play out as well within the much more narrowly circumscribed events. Somerset Maugham’s *Summing Up* (1938), for instance, depicts how the author’s witnessing a seven-year-old boy dying of meningitis motivated a change in his life direction. (iv) By way of their rhetorical and ideational gestures, political leaders and sages typically ‘put’ to their communities alternative ways of life. The breathtaking range of such alternatives is manifest in the different types of gestures of, for example, political life-direction as promulgated by Lenin, Saddam Hussein, and Yasser Arafat. Every one of them points to very specific way of life.

In all of the above instances, ‘gesture’, as Wittgenstein understood it, denotes, similarly to artworks,[11] a mode of expression. He asserted moreover that

> what we regard as expression *consists* in incalculability. … I can after all listen again and again to a piece of music that I know (completely) by heart; and it might even be played on a music box. Its gestures would still be gestures for me, even though I knew all the time what was going to come next. Indeed, I might even keep being surprised. (p. 73)

[10] See more about the works of art as gestures in Gall (2014), and Maddalena (2015).

[11] In his *Notebooks 1914–1916* Wittgenstein asks: ‘Art is a kind of expression.’ (1961, p. 83)

Apparently Wittgenstein reads aesthetic gestures as potential actions or, better, as 'germs' of actions—something substantiated by the circumstance that like gestures, actions can be only performed or copied (mimicked). Their intrinsic content, however, cannot be comprehensively conveyed in verbal form (Aristotle, *Poetic* 1779b25). Being germs in this sense, gestures may intimate in various ways the form of actions presently unrealized.

5. Style

The Wittgenstinian answer as to how a work of art alters the direction of a way of life closely connected with his notion of 'style'. Wittgenstein was convinced that virtuosic works of art actualize 'good' 'aesthetic gestures' in the form dictated by the particular style that the artist employs. It is style, in other words, that is formally constitutive of artwork. One might say, that style is the 'bridge' connecting the work of art and the form of life it depicts or expresses. It follows that the style of an artistic masterwork is operative in ways that can transformatively redirect the life practices of those who engage it on its own terms: love for freedom, strength of character, grace, etc. In other words, artistic style as a mode of expressing the way of experiencing the world can radically influence one's way of life, one's style of living and acting in the world.

What the modal verb 'can' signals here is that this influence is a function exclusively of what Wittgenstein would identify as successful or 'good' works of art.[12] Tellingly revealing of his aesthetic taste, Wittgenstein dismissed the music of Felix Mendelssohn as deficient by this criterion, since to his ear Mendelssohn's compositions display a lack of depth and originality, exemplifying the work of the merely ' "*reproductive*" artist' (38). From early on, Wittgenstein held to the doctrine that the 'good' work of art is wholly originary as opposed to being mimetic ('reproductive'). Exemplary art of this sort achieves, he declared, a *vision* of a single object *sub specie aeternitatis*,[13] and it is as founded upon such an achievement that artwork can not only reconfigure one's perspective on a particular object or theme but can transformatively enlarge one's view of life (*Lebensanschauung*) in general. Compared to 'great' artistic creations—again, creations classified by Wittgenstein as 'good'—mediocre

[12] We have already referred to Wittgenstein's thought that there are qualitatively different musical phrases: 'music, *some* music at least, makes us want to call it language; but some music of course doesn't' (1980, 62).

[13] Cf. Wittgenstein 1961, p. 83. In a similar key, in his *Aesthetics* (1835), Hegel maintained that the successful work of art 'touches' the Absolute. Unfortunately, maintains Hegel further, it cannot fuse with the Absolute since art is not the appropriate form to this purpose in principle: art only works in the field of appearances. We can reach fusion with the Absolute only in philosophy.

paintings, poetry and music are, in his terminology, aesthetic gestures that are in different respects and to different degrees anemic, insipid. Their main role is to convey entertainment, to bring their consumers away from the 'necessities' of the external world (from what Sigmund Freud had called, following the Greek mythology, ἀνάνκη[14])—and nothing beyond that.[15] One need only call to mind the contrast between the lifeworld set up in the classic novels of Fielding, George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Proust, and Thomas Mann with those of formulaic pulp fiction to appreciate Wittgenstein's point.[16]

Beyond its formative role as a factor of the cogency of artistic creations apprehended as aesthetic gestures, style is what typically distinguishes more generally the character of any artefact that is a product of craft (*τεχηε*), of know how (Ryle 1949, 48).[17] To be sure, while there is no 'style' in the proper sense of coughing, for example, or sneezing, or eating, there are styles of such non-artefacts as chess play, a soccer play, painting, and musical and theatrical performance. In line with this wider ranging function, style in Wittgenstein's sense understandably has different implications for art, sports, politics, indeed for life at large. Wittgenstein's idea of style arguably applies this broadly because we express ourselves through cultural (often artefact-producing) practices[18] whereby we freely objectify the human world of will and ideas.[19] Where free will plays only a subordinate role, or none at all, namely when we produce artefacts determined by rigid norms, 'style' as Wittgenstein understands it is less significant. One sees familiar examples of this in textbooks of grammar and formal logic, wherein style is rarely if ever a substantive factor.

The philosophical bottom line of Wittgenstein's understanding is that it is the *style* of the 'good' work of art that underwrites one's being able to see (or hear or contemplate at large) what the artwork is about, its 'object', *sub specie aeternitatis*. As he put it in 1934, evidently referring expressly to works of art (as opposed to logic or grammar), style is 'the general necessity seen *sub specie aeternitatis*' (1997, 27). Apparently, Wittgenstein saw the style as 'general necessity' in the sense that the artist produces the synthetic a priori—the norm—of

[14] See Freud 1916/17, 410.

[15] On this score Wittgenstein wrote: 'Is it the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks the world with a happy eye?' (1961, p. 86)

[16] Similarly, Kant maintained that there are works of art with spirit (*Geist*) and works of art that only entertain. Works of art with spirit possess the 'living up principle of the soul (*Gemüt*)' (AA. 5. 303).

[17] Merleau-Ponty, in contrast, meant (1964, 131) that style also characterizes the way we perceive the world.

[18] Cf. n. 11.

[19] We are going to develop our conception of the freedom of the will in another paper.

the work of art. It follows that the norm or 'law' of an artwork is what implies its 'necessity', and that the alternative interpretations of a given portrait or novel or symphony or sculpture are merely different ways of following its law, its 'general necessity'.[20]

6. Mood

Given that Wittgenstein's primary interest in the arts centered on the philosophy of music, it stands to reason that one may best appreciate the fruitfulness of his later philosophy of art by considering how it applies to music.

In his essay *What Is Art?*, Leo Tolstoy, an author Wittgenstein highly esteemed, maintained that music communicates emotions. This view, interestingly enough, can be easily seen as related to Frege's and the early Wittgenstein's insistence that propositional language communicates thoughts. Indeed, what Tolstoy understood by 'emotions' and their communication is clearly correlated with what the two logical philosophers understood by 'thoughts' and their communication.

To make Tolstoy's definition of works of art more clear, one might reformulate it in an analogy to the Frege-inspired Wittgenstinian axiom that a proposition is nothing but a 'thought … expressed perceptibly through the senses' (1922, 3.1), which is to say a sense-wrought expression of thought. Thus we can conceive works of art, and for Wittgenstein this applies especially with musical compositions in mind, as emotions likewise 'expressed perceptibly through the senses'; so that those who 'tune in' to them may be imbued with the same emotions that animated the creative artist.

A Wittgenstinian refinement can be added here by suggesting that music expresses not simply an emotion in some general sense, but more precisely what it expresses is the species of cognitively informed affect that we term a 'mood'.[21] This follows Wittgenstein's appropriation of Schiller's notion of 'poetic mood' (1980, 65), in view of which one could regard mood as the 'fuel' of artistic expression, or even its soul.

This line of development finds support in the thinking of Gilbert Ryle, a close student of Wittgenstein and a distinguished philosopher in his own right. Ryle held that moods are neither identical with feelings, nor with emotions, for while feelings are short-lived, moods 'monopolize'—they penetrate our whole nature. 'Somewhat as the entire ship is cruising

[20] Nelson Goodman extensively discussed the problem of the relations between the original work of art, which works following a priori laws, and its interpretations (cf. Goodman and Elgin 1986).

[21] See more about philosophy of moods Bollnow (1941).

south-east, rolling, or vibrating, so the entire person is nervous, serene, or gloomy. His own corresponding inclination is to describe the whole world as menacing, congenial, or grey.' (Ryle 1949, 96) So far as works of art function this way, they can insinuate themselves 'into my life' (cf. § 3), and eventually change my view of life and consequently my way of life.

Among other things, Ryle's remark on moods comports with Wittgenstein's early Tractarian position that the message of the work of art lies on the 'boundary' of the world of facts, a boundary determined by an affectively keyed attitude (cf. Milkov 2004), to be more precise a boundary determined by way of a mood.[22] This 'message' can inspire us to contemplate objects of the world of facts in a new way: *sub specie aeternitatis*. Objects thus contemplated can acquire powerfully, even sublimely novel meaning that can enable us to better orient ourselves in the world. Further, acquiring a new view of life in this way is tantamount to appropriating a newly redrawn boundary of the world of facts. Finally, in order to be 'perceptible through the senses', the expression of the mood that the work of art communicates is embodied, 'encapsulated' in a particular aesthetic construction, embedded in the context of a specific art-form.

Three observations on the work of art, music in particular, follow from the foregoing reflections:

(i) Once an aesthetic mood is encapsulated—i.e., created and preserved in the work of art—the individual who accesses the work of art can acquire the mood it expresses at any point in time. The mood is fully and communicatively conserved in it.

(ii) The composition of a successful art work (Rachmaninov's third piano concerto, say) goes hand in hand with the development of the specific structure of an artistic genre (e.g., piano concertos) as the work takes its place in the history of art (here, that of the piano repertory). This makes it clear why the craft to create 'good' works of art generally plays such a shaping role in the history of art.

(iii) At the same time, however, a defining element of genuinely accomplished, 'good' works of art is that they achieve, encapsulated in artistic compositions, an intense mood. In other words, the preeminently 'good' work of art presupposes not only masterly creative technique but also an ability to attain and encapsulate an intense mood. In a sense, it is a fusion of these two. Unfortunately, since moods are difficult to control and change at will, and consequently difficult to preserve, quite often the ability to compose successful works of

[22] cf. § 5.

art irreversibly wanes.[23] Interestingly enough, one finds no comparable rate of substantial decline in creative scientific and mathematical work, nor in the arts of painting and poetry—perhaps because in them mood plays a lesser role.

7. Frege-inspired Wittgenstinian Aesthetic Theory Vindicated

As indicated at the outset, the aim of this essay is not just to rehearse and move beyond Frege's theory of art and the related doctrine of the early Wittgenstein. The intention is also to spell out and build upon the aesthetic thinking of the later Wittgenstein, and this in ways that shed novel light upon the enduring contributions of his own earlier and Frege's views (both now unwarrantably little-known or appreciated), and in the process to enhance our understanding of them.

Consistent with this essay's aim of at least indicating how one might build upon Frege and the early Wittgenstein, we conclude with a word about the sense in which artists are explorers of human psychology, adventurers who examine the human inner landscape in ways analogous to how geographers explore the earth and astronomers are explorers of celestial objects.[24] And this notwithstanding the all-important difference that unlike those who discover and investigate previously unknown objects of the external world, artists construct the objects they depict in their artwork; which is to say that the epistemology of the work of art is anti-realistic *per definitionem*. Employing their art in aesthetic 'studies' of the human mind, creative artists introduce ever-new aesthetic forms that elicit 'aesthetic pleasure' in the sense of Kant.

An epistemological aporia that would seem to threaten the plausibility of this account, one adumbrated earlier (at the end of § 1), has to do with the circumstance that while individual human minds react to a given aesthetic form differently, 'good' works of art commonly communicate across a diversity of human cultures what, in Wittgenstein's sense, they have to 'teach' us. This, if anything, attests to the reality of aesthetic universals ('eternal works of art') that cannot be simply circumvented for theoretical reasons. Of course, aesthetic

[23] In the realm of popular music, for instance, the Beatle Paul McCartney was in his youth a highly successful composer of pop tunes, producing a series of top-rated popular hits. But McCartney proved unable to compose equally successful pop tunes in his mature and late years. One could attribute this decline in musical creativity to McCartney's inability to sustain the level of mood he had once achieved.

[24] According to the pop artist Robert Irwin, 'to be an artist is not a matter of making paintings or objects at all. What we are really dealing with is our state of consciousness and the shape of our perceptions.' (Schoenholz Bee & Heliczer 2004, p. 269)

universals are not the sort that populate of Frege's third world. Rather, they are relative, and on that count vague. Be this as it may, they exist, are *real*—but in what sense?

A singularly disclosive means, till now overlooked, of addressing this issue is by way of exploiting depth-psychologist Carl Jung's signature idea of the 'collective unconscious.' The factor of the collective unconscious as a formative ingredient of the human mind can go far toward clarifying how it is that large and diverse human communities concur on aesthetic universals. The principal divergence from Jungian psychology here is that our approach to the works of art is attuned not to religious or mythological archetypes but instead to the aesthetic archetypes that are activated when one encounters the work of art in its own terms. Hence, works of art that are 'good' in the philosophically pregnant Wittgenstinian sense we've reviewed realize the power to transform one's view of life by operating with the currency of the aesthetic archetypes that orchestrate the aesthetic of human mindfulness.

This is compellingly borne out in, for example, the most celebrated productions of the visual artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—Seurat, Degas, Renoir, Van Gogh, Matisse. Every one of them discovered (Degas in his *Ballet,* for example) some new recurs—a new physiognomy, a new aspect of acting, a new gesture that stimulates human mind in a new way. In other words, each of these masters owed his success, in effect the 'cogency' of his most celebrated creations, to the new perspectives—new aesthetic objects—that perennially impel the serious viewer to construct it as his or her own, 'private' work of art.

Considerable historical and philosophical significance attaches to the fact that this account substantiates the unduly neglected theoretical value of a Fregean aesthetic, particularly in the ways we've seen that it was developed by the early Wittgenstein. The latter maintained, once again, that those who share an encounter with a single artistic production construct the artwork on their own, individually, 'privately'. At that point in time Wittgenstein denied that there exist any objective, generally valid aesthetic objects. As we saw at the outset, in § 1, this element of Frege's and Wittgenstein's aesthetic conception is sound. Nonetheless, we have found that there *are* general aesthetic archetypes that inform human mindfulness. While these cannot establish the general validity of any particular 'good' work of art—cannot justify 'eternal aesthetic truths'—they do substantiate archetypal validities of art in relative terms. Consequently, good works of art are general enough to secure the warrant of human aesthetic practice at large, this insofar as human cultures and civilizations have aesthetic universals (in what is cross-culturally esteemed as their 'great' works of art) that communicate novel and transformatively enriching visions of aesthetic life.

8. Concluding Remark

The upshot of the foregoing discussion is that from a genuinely philosophical standpoint the work of art is most effectively approached by recourse to psychology, not logic. Having established this along the lines pursued in the preceding sections, we are in a position to understand why Frege, the fierce warrior of anti-psychologism, ultimately turned his back on aesthetic theory. At the same time, however, by having made explicit the grounds of the authority of this approach to philosophical aesthetics we can appreciate why, in contrast with Frege, the later Wittgenstein, who nurtured a progressively deepening interest in psychology, came to treat aesthetic theory with ever-greater seriousness and penetration.[25]

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[25] First variant of this paper was delivered under the title "Aesthetic Gestures: Essay in Frege–Wittgenstein Theory of Art" at the 39th International Wittgenstein Symposium at Kirchberg am Wechsel, Austria, on August 10, 2016. The author is indebted to stimulating remarks of the audience.

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