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Edited by Mark Textor

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Contributors

Tim Crane is professor of philosophy at University College, London and director of the Institute of Philosophy of the University of London. His publications include *The Mechanical Mind: A Philosophical Introduction to Minds, Machines and Mental Representation* (second revised edition, London: Routledge 2003) and *Elements of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001).

Rolf George is professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He is the author of many papers and reviews and has published editions of Carnap's *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, Bernard Bolzano's *Theory of Science*, and Franz Brentano's books and manuscripts.

Keith Hossack is lecturer in philosophy at King's College, London. He has published papers on consciousness, the logic of plurals and the philosophy of mathematics. He is currently preparing the book *Metaphysics of Knowledge* for publication.

Wolfgang Künne is professor of philosophy at the University of Hamburg and the current president of the International Bernard Bolzano Society. He has published on Bolzano, Frege, Moore, Wittgenstein und phenomenology (Husserl, Reinach). He published the books *Abstrakte Gegenstände: Semantik und Ontologie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1983) und *Conceptions of Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003). He is currently working on a commentary on Frege's *Logical Investigations*.

Edgar Morscher is professor of philosophy at the University of Salzburg. He is the founding president of the International Bernard Bolzano Society and has edited works by Bolzano and volumes in the series *Beiträge zur Bolzano Forschung*. He publishes on ethics, philosophical logic and history of philosophy, especially Bernard Bolzano. His publications include *Das logische An-sich bei Bernard Bolzano* (Salzburg-München: Pustet 1973) and numerous articles.

Kevin Mulligan is professor of analytic philosophy at the University of Geneva. He has published on mind and value, ontology, truth-makers, and the history of philosophy (Austrian philosophy). Representative publications are 'From Appropriate Emotions to Value', in: P. Menzies (ed.) 'Secondary Qualities Generalised' (*The Monist* 1998: 161–88), together with P. Simons and B. Smith 'Truth-Makers', in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14 (1984: 287–321) and 'Brentano on the Mind', in: D. Jacquette (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004). He has recently edited with Herbert Hochberg, *Relations and Predicates*, *Philosophical Analysis*, Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2004.

Maria E. Reicher is university docent at the University of Graz. She works on aesthetics, philosophy of logic, ontology and the history of Austrian Philosophy. Her recent books are *Referenz, Quantifikation und ontologische Festlegung* (Frankfurt–London: Ontos 2005) and *Einführung in die philosophische Ästhetik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2005).

Paul Rusnock is assistant professor at the University of Ottawa. He is interested in the philosophy of mathematics and logic, epistemology and Austrian philosophy. He has published the book *Bolzano's Philosophy and the Emergence of Modern Mathematics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi 2000) and further articles on the topics above.

Benjamin Schnieder is assistant professor at the University of Hamburg. He works on ontology and philosophical logic. His publications include the books *Substanz und Adhärenz: Bolzanos Ontologie des Wirklichen* (Sankt Augustin: Akademia 2002) and *Substanzen und (ihre) Eigenschaften* (Berlin: de Gruyter 2004).

Peter Simons is professor and Director of the Centre for Metaphysics and Mind at the University of Leeds. His interests include ontology and applied ontology, logic and philosophy of mathematics and history of central European philosophy especially in Austria and Poland. His publications include the books *Parts: A Study in Ontology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1987) *Philosophy and Logic in Central Europe from Bolzano to Tarski: Selected Essays* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1992) and numerous articles. He is director of the Franz Brentano Foundation.

Fabrice Teroni is assistant at the University of Geneva. He has recently completed his PhD dissertation on memory and currently works on the philosophy of emotions.

Introduction*

Mark Textor

> Philosophy, without the history of philosophy, if not empty or blind, is at least dumb.
>
> Wilfrid Sellars

Analytic Philosophy has recently started to discover its roots. You will naturally ask 'Well, what is Analytic Philosophy? When does someone count as belonging to it? Do you have a good definition up your sleeve?' No, but I don't need one. Analytic Philosophy is a tradition held together by the use of a distinctive family of concepts, acceptance of specific assumptions, problems and methods for their solution. There is little doubt about the main founders of Analytic Philosophy in this sense: Frege, Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein[1] provided the framework and the topics for the central debates. But none of the founders of Analytic Philosophy worked in an intellectual vacuum. It is now well known that Austrian Philosophers made contact at various points with the founders of Analytic Philosophy:[2] Russell discussed Meinong's assumption that there are things that do not exist. Moore states in his review of Brentano's *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* that '[i]t would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this work'.[3] Husserl's early work on the concept of number has been discussed and criticised by Frege. Frege's criticism led to a fruitful exchange between both philosophers. Dummett takes Frege and Husserl to be so close in philosophical orientation that he devotes a book to explain how Phenomenology and Analytic Philosophy could develop in such different directions in the end.[4]

Another line of influence of Austrian Philosophy on Analytic Philosophy is via its Polish branch. Twardowski's Habilitationsschrift, a second extended doctorate, *On the Content and Object of Presentations. A Psychological Investigation*[5] was written under the influence of

the militia, though some of the things he says suggest that he assumed they would not be.

51 *On the Best State*, Chapter 7 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 62).

52 Bolzano discusses relations between church and state in greater detail in *Ansichten eines freisinnigen katholischen Theologen über das Verhältniss zwischen Kirche und Staat* [Views of a liberal Catholic theologian on the relations between church and state], Sulzbach: J.E. v. Seidelsche Buchhandlung, 1834. Published anonymously. See also: 'Über das Recht der Geistlichkeit, ihren Lebensunterhalt von Personen zu beziehen, welche nicht ihres Glaubens sind. [On the right of clergy to draw their living from people who are not of their faith] Eine Abhandlung nach B. Bolzanos Ansichten von einem seiner Schüler bearbeitet.' [actually by Bolzano] *Freimüthige Blätter über Theologie und Kirchenthum*, Stuttgart, 1838, Vol. 11, pp. 291–331 and Vol. 12, pp. 5–47.

53 *On the Best State*, Chapter 7.

54 *On the Best State*, Chapter 16.

55 *On the Best State*, Chapter 2; the provision for married couples is suggested in Chapter 21.

56 '*Rath der Geprüften*', literally, 'council of the proven'.

57 *On the Best State*, Chapter 2.

58 *On the Best State*, Chapter 2.

59 *On the Best State*, Chapter 4.

60 *On the Best State*, Chapter 27.

61 *On the Best State*, Chapters 25, 27.

62 *On the Best State*, Chapter 27.

63 As was the case with military service, Bolzano does not explicitly mention whether women are to attend universities, though the remarks in the sermons quoted above suggest that they would.

64 *On the Best State*, Chapter 8.

65 *On the Best State*, Chapter 23.

66 *On the Best State*, Chapter 9.

67 *On the Best State*, Chapter 26 (BBGA IIA 14, pp. 129–30).

68 *On the Best State*, Chapter 26.

69 *On the Best State*, Chapter 14.

70 *On the Best State*, Chapter 12. We are unable to detect even the slightest trace of irony in this observation.

71 *On the Best State*, Chapter 12.

72 *On the Best State*, Chapter 17 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 111).

73 *On the Best State*, Chapter 24.

74 *On the Best State*, Chapter 10.

75 *On the Best State*, Chapter 10 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 74).

76 *On the Best State*, Chapter 10.

77 *On the Best State*, Chapter 10 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 87).

78 *On the Best State*, Chapter 20 (BBGA IIA 14, pp. 114–15).

79 Ibid.

80 *On the Best State*, Chapter 6.

81 *On the Best State*, Chapter 26 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 125).

82 *On the Best State*, Chapter 26.

83 *On the Best State*, Chapter 11 (BBGA IIA 14, p. 90).

84 *Narodni Noviny*, 22 December 1848.

10 Austrian aesthetics

Maria E. Reicher

Introduction

Thinking of problems of aesthetics has a long and strong tradition in Austrian philosophy. It starts with Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848); it is famously represented by the critic and musicologist Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904); and it is continued within the school of Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), in particular by Christian von Ehrenfels (1859–1932) and Stephan Witasek (1870–1915).

Nowadays the aesthetic writings of Bolzano, Ehrenfels and Witasek are hardly known, particularly not in the Anglo-Saxon world.[1] Austrian aesthetics is certainly less known than Austrian contributions to other philosophical disciplines, like ontology, epistemology or philosophy of science. One of the aims of this chapter is to show that this is both regrettable and unjustified for the following reasons: Austrian aestheticians have dealt with a number of problems (mainly concerning the foundations of aesthetics) that are still relevant; in terms of subtlety and depth as well as exactness and originality, in general, they easily stand comparison with today's analytic aesthetics; and many of their views and arguments are still worthy of consideration.

Despite the widespread ignorance of what one might call 'Austrian aesthetics', Austrian philosophy in general has had a considerable influence on analytic aesthetics. There are two completely independent strands of such influence. The first concerns a particular problem within the ontology of art, namely the so-called '*problem of fictitious objects*'; a variety of theories of fictitious objects have been inspired by Alexius Meinong's so-called 'theory of objects', according to which there are objects which do not exist. The second concerns the most fundamental problem of the philosophy of art, namely the problem of the *definition of art*: in the middle of the twentieth century, in the light of the developments in the representative arts of the past decades, it

was plain that the traditional attempts to define 'art' (art as representation, art as expression) had failed; and the search for a new, adequate definition seemed to be a hopeless enterprise. In this situation, Morris Weitz was the first who made use of Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of *family resemblance* in an extremely influential article (Weitz 1956/57) in order to resolve this problem.[2]

In this chapter, however, the focus is on a number of lesser known Austrian contributions to aesthetics. These contributions concern the following, partly interrelated, central problems of philosophical aesthetics:

i The problem of the definition of beauty (i.e. What is beauty? What does it mean to say of an object that it is beautiful?)
ii The problem of the ontological status of works of art (i.e. What kinds of objects are works of art?)
iii The problem of the objectivity of aesthetic values (i.e. Do we claim objective validity for aesthetic value judgements and, if so, is this claim justified?)

This chapter will consider the answers of Bolzano, Meinong, Witasek and Ehrenfels to these questions.

Bolzano's definition of beauty

Bernard Bolzano's reputation as an early forerunner of analytic philosophy is primarily based on his main work, the famous *Wissenschaftslehre* (*Theory of Science*). But his lesser known essays on problems of aesthetics justify this standing as well. Bolzano may not only be considered a forerunner of analytic philosophy in general, but also a forerunner of analytic aesthetics. In sharp contrast to the bulk of writings on aesthetics in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, Bolzano's treatises on art and beauty show a clarity and precision that easily meets the highest standards of what is called 'analytic philosophy' today. Besides, Bolzano is an excellent writer; reading his texts is a constant pleasure.

Bolzano has published two quite extensive essays on questions of aesthetics: 'Über den Begriff des Schönen' ('On the concept of the beautiful', originally published 1843, henceforth referred to as 'CB') and 'Über die Einteilung der schönen Künste' ('On the classification of the fine arts', originally published 1849, henceforth referred to as 'CFA').

The task of the essay 'On the concept of the beautiful' is to find a definition for the concept of beauty. In the preface to this treatise Bolzano states in a few sentences his views on what philosophical aesthetics should do and how it should be done:

> That I have filled so many pages with the analysis of a single concept will necessitate an excuse in the eyes of some. I cannot state anything but that I found this concept to be of particular importance and that analysis of concepts is a business that commonly demands somewhat lengthy investigations, if it shouldn't be just *stated* that one thinks of the concept as consisting of these parts, but rather *shown* to the reader in an at least fairly convincing way, which entails that one has to demonstrate that the previously suggested, other explanations have been more or less erroneous.[3]
>
> (CB, 3)

This passage shows clearly that Bolzano does not take philosophical aesthetics to be a discipline that demands less rigour than, say, epistemology and ontology. The task of philosophical aesthetics is, according to Bolzano, to clarify the basic concepts of aesthetic discourse by means of meticulous analysis. The two perhaps most prominent concepts of aesthetics are the concept of beauty and the concept of art. Consequently, Bolzano considers the clarification of these concepts to be the most important task of philosophical aesthetics.

In this context, Bolzano makes use of a distinction that he had already introduced in his *Wissenschaftslehre*, namely the distinction between what he calls '*subjective concepts and propositions*' and '*concepts and propositions in an objective sense*'. Subjective concepts and propositions are something 'in the consciousness' of a thinking being. They are *private* in the sense that only the thinking being in whose consciousness the subjective concept is has direct access to it. Furthermore, they are *singular* in the following sense: If both you and I are thinking of beauty, *my* subjective concept of beauty is numerically distinct from *yours* (even if they are qualitatively the same). When you think of beauty right now and again ten minutes later, your subjective concept of beauty right now is not identical with your later subjective concept. The same holds for subjective propositions (which are also called 'thoughts' in Bolzano). Subjective concepts and propositions are that which is 'in the head' of a particular subject at a particular occasion. In contrast to this, objective concepts and propositions are not 'in the head' of anybody: they are unchangeable abstract objects, like Fregean concepts and Fregean thoughts. They are objective in the sense that they are in no way dependent on mental acts and that one and the

same objective concept and proposition may be grasped by different subjects at different occasions.

Bolzano applies the distinction between subjective and objective concepts to the concept of beauty, and he makes it clear that, of course, the object of analysis is the *objective* concept of beauty. Before he starts with the analysis of the concept of beauty, he makes some elucidatory methodological remarks on how a definition can be justified or argued. It is worthwhile to consider them briefly, not only because they contribute to a deeper comprehension of Bolzano's results, but also because they concern problems of philosophical argument that lurk in the background of many debates even now. As Bolzano states, when we aim at a justification of a certain definition, the first thing to do is, of course, to show that the proposed definition gives the concept the proper extension, that is, to show that the definition is neither too wide nor too narrow. This, however, is not sufficient, because, as Bolzano stresses, there may be *several* concepts with the same extension. Therefore, there may be more than one definition of 'beauty' that gives the concept of beauty the proper extension. However, we should not give more than one definition for one and the same concept, because, as Bolzano states, if we postulate two incompatible definitions, we have not defined *one* concept but *two* (CB, 7f.).

But how can we decide between two definitions that give a concept the same extension? Or, more generally, what evidence can we have for the claim that a given definition is adequate, if the proper extension is not sufficient as a criterion of adequacy? Bolzano's answer is that the only way to ensure the adequacy of a definition (beyond the question of the proper extension) is *introspection*. (He doesn't use the term 'introspection', but it is obvious that this is what he means.) In other words, we have to investigate what is 'in our heads' when we use a certain term, and the definition should correspond to this.

However, Bolzano immediately notes the difficulty with this procedure of justification:

> A person who is not used to this particular kind of attentiveness to himself, or perhaps not even has the will to it: such a person will always reply, and in a certain sense even truthfully reply, that he does not at all find in his own consciousness that which we suggest in our explanation, whatever we might say.
>
> (CB, 10f.)

Bolzano remarks that it is an unpleasant situation that we have to rely on our consciousness when we need to justify an explication of a concept. However, there is a further consideration that alleviates this discomfort, and this further consideration brings more *pragmatic* aspects into play: often, Bolzano claims, it is less important that a given definition corresponds to what we find in our consciousness than that the definition yields a concept that is *functional*, and a concept is functional if it proves fruitful within a theory (CB, 11).

Let us now turn to Bolzano's definition of beauty. At first sight, it looks somewhat clumsy and perhaps not immediately plausible. But on closer examination it gains plausibility; at any rate, it draws attention to an important but largely neglected aspect of our pleasure in beautiful objects. According to Bolzano, a beautiful object is such that

> its examination gives pleasure to all those persons whose cognitive faculties are properly developed, for the reason that it is neither too easy nor does it cause the effort of distinct thinking to construct, after one has grasped some of its features, a concept of it that allows to guess its further features, which can be perceived only through further inspection, which leads them to an at least dark comprehension of the skill of their cognitive faculties.
>
> (CB, 33)

In what follows, I will explain briefly the main lines of reasoning that lead Bolzano to this definition. The concept of pleasure figures prominently here. That beauty gives us a kind of pleasure is quite uncontroversial. The question is: What is the source of this pleasure? Bolzano approaches this question with a more general question: What is the source of pleasure in general? Bolzano's answer is that it gives us pleasure to employ or increase our own faculties (whatever these faculties are) (CB, § 9). The use of our faculties is for Bolzano the main source of pleasure.

This is not an implausible view. Think of the pleasure that human beings (though not only those) find in playing games of all sorts: of course, playing games may be fun for different reasons. But isn't there a common element in the pleasure that we find in playing, and isn't the source of this pleasure exactly that the playing enables us to use and possibly improve certain faculties (cognitive faculties or others) just for their own sake?

But in what sense can beautiful objects engage us in an activity which can improve our cognitive faculties? With regard to this question, Bolzano's idea is that the beauty of an object lies in certain rule-governed relations between its elements. In other words, a beautiful object has a kind of intrinsic order. The task of the recipient is to find

out the rules behind this order. This does not mean, of course, that the task is to give an explicit formulation of a rule; but rather, that the task is to grasp the rule intuitively.

When we perceive an object, normally, we are not able to grasp all of the (relevant) features of the object at once. But as soon as we have grasped *some* of its features, we start having *expectations* with regard to the others. These expectations may be met or disappointed. A plausible case for this picture is listening to music: in order to grasp a melody, it is not sufficient to hear clearly and distinctly every note of the melody in the right order. Rather, we must have a memory of the notes we have already heard *and* expectations concerning how the series of notes will continue.

Making use of a term coined by Nicholas Wolterstorff, one might say that Bolzano's view is particularly plausible for '*occurrence works*' (see Wolterstorff 1980). Occurrence works are, for instance, musical works, drama, film and dance. Occurrence works are to be distinguished from '*object works*'. Object works are paintings, sculptures, works of architecture and the like. Occurrence works are temporal in the sense that there is no single moment where *all* the elements of the work are there for inspection. There is a temporal succession of these elements which does not hold for object works. There is no temporal succession of their elements; rather, the elements are all there in one single moment, once the work is finished.

When we perceive an occurrence work, we are not able to perceive all of its features at once, for the simple reason that there is no single moment in which all of the features of the work are there to be perceived. But what about object works? Bolzano argues convincingly that memory and expectations play a role for the perception of object works as well. As Bolzano points out, although all elements are there to be perceived at once in an object work, we do not actually perceive all of them at once (at least not if the object in question has a certain degree of complexity). Although a painting itself is not temporal (in the sense outlined above), the *inspection* of the painting is temporal. Therefore, Bolzano's reconstruction of the process of the perception of a work of art as something that involves memory, expectations and hypotheses may be applied not only to temporal works of art, but also to architecture, sculpture and painting.

To sum up, in Bolzano's view, the pleasure that we feel when we examine a beautiful object is a result of a successful use of a particular cognitive faculty, namely the faculty to grasp the principles that govern the relevant relations between the elements of the object. Thus, the source of the pleasure is not the object itself (or only in an indirect way)

but rather the process of examination. For Bolzano, beauty is nothing else than the *disposition to give rise to processes of examination* of the sort just described.

One must be careful not to conflate a dispositional theory of beauty like Bolzano's with aesthetic *subjectivism*. According to subjectivism, 'x is beautiful' has to be understood as 'I like x'. That is, according to subjectivism, to apply the predicate 'beautiful' to an object x is a somewhat misleading way to express that there is a particular relation between the speaker and x. To say 'x is beautiful' is allegedly misleading because it suggests that beauty is a feature of the thing itself, independent of its relation to the person who examines it. If the subjectivist story is right, then there is no inconsistency between (1) 'x is beautiful' and (2) 'x is ugly', given that (1) and (2) are uttered by different subjects (or even by the same subject at different occasions). For there is no inconsistency between 'A likes x' and 'B doesn't like x', given that A is not identical with B (and there is neither an inconsistency between 'A likes x at t_1' and 'A doesn't like x at t_2', given that t_1 is not identical with t_2).[4]

Bolzano explicitly rejects subjectivism. He argues that subjectivism runs counter to our experiences when we apply the predicate 'beautiful' to an object. In his critical examination of subjectivism, Bolzano makes use of the method of introspection delineated above. Bolzano rejects the subjectivist view because, he argues, it is simply not true that we always intend to express a relation between ourselves and an object when we utter a sentence of the form 'x is beautiful'. Normally, when we make aesthetic judgements, our attention is directed to the object itself, not to our response to it. Usually, when we call an object 'beautiful', we claim a certain amount of objectivity, as is indicated by the fact that there is disagreement and debate about aesthetic judgements. This is just an empirical fact about our mental states and processes in particular situations, which an adequate definition of beauty should take into consideration.

Bolzano's definition does justice to this fact: an object's property of being such that 'its examination gives pleasure to all those persons whose cognitive faculties are properly developed' because it gives rise to an improvement of certain cognitive faculties is a property of the object itself, just as the property of appearing red to a human being under normal conditions is a property of the object itself.

However, Bolzano immediately notes an obvious objection to this explication: the examination of beautiful objects is by no means the only activity in which we make use of and may improve our cognitive faculties. Doing mathematics and philosophy also promotes the

development of our cognitive faculties (arguably even to a bigger extent than the examination of beautiful objects). Yet, normally we do not call works of mathematics and philosophy 'beautiful'. Thus, there must be a difference between the pleasure that is raised by mathematics and philosophy and the pleasure raised by beautiful objects. According to Bolzano, the difference consists in the fact that doing mathematics and philosophy demands 'the effort of distinct thinking'. In contrast, the examination of beautiful objects improves our ability to think 'by means of dark presentations' (CB, §10). Thinking by means of dark presentations is a kind of 'intuitive' gaining of knowledge, intuitive not in the sense that we make use of a mysterious faculty over and above those cognitive faculties that we also use when we think clearly and distinctly (among others, memory, imagination and reason), but just in the sense that we are not conscious of the various steps that lead us finally to a certain belief. It must be emphasised that intuition in this sense is in no way opposed to rationality. It is just that in the course of 'intuitive thinking' we are not (fully) aware of the processes going on in our consciousness.

One cannot overemphasise Bolzano's fervent hostility to any kind of darkness and lack of clarity in philosophy. Philosophers ought to make explicit the various steps that lead them to their conclusions. However, Bolzano does not disdain intuitive thinking in general. He even concedes that in everyday life 'thinking by means of dark presentations' may be more important than clear and distinct thinking. (Bolzano has, despite his strong interests in mathematics and theoretical philosophy and his overall methodological rigour, an eye on practical purposes and usefulness.)

To sum up, it is the use and improvement of a particular skill (thinking by means of dark presentations) that gives rise to the pleasure that we feel when we examine beautiful objects and that makes us call them 'beautiful'. Or so Bolzano tells us.

One may or may not agree with Bolzano's definition of beauty. But even if one has reservations, one can appreciate the way Bolzano arrives at this definition and defends it against various objections as an excellent piece of philosophical analysis that provides many stimulating insights on its way. Part of his defence is a lengthy consideration of alternative definitions and theories of beauty, including an extensive and very critical discussion of Kant's aesthetics. Among other things, Bolzano rejects Kant's famous doctrine of disinterestedness, according to which beautiful things raise a pleasure *without interest* in us, where 'interest in an object' means 'desire that the object exists' (CB, § 37).

Although Bolzano picks Kant's aesthetic to pieces, he also shows a certain amount of respect for the famous philosopher from Königsberg – but not so for Kant's followers, the German Idealists, in particular not for Fichte and Hegel. Having presented and discarded an array of definitions of beauty that were discussed in German philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century, he concludes:

> But be it enough with these *unclear explications of the beautiful*, which one could call, since they do not conform to a single requirement which the mere common sense states for *explications, paradigms of ugliness*.
>
> (CB, 118; italics are original)

Bolzano's ontology of art

Under the somewhat dry heading 'On the classification of the fine arts' (the title of his second essay on questions of aesthetics), Bolzano develops an ontology of art works. What makes this treatise fascinating is that not only does Bolzano here anticipate subtle distinctions made some 80 years later by perhaps the most important ontologist of art, Roman Ingarden, and, again some decades later, by contemporary authors like Nicholas Wolterstorff, but also he discusses an array of questions that are fervently debated in aesthetics today. Rather, the wealth of insights combined with Bolzano's magnificent clarity of style makes this paper an extremely worthwhile and always thought-provoking reading not only for historians of aesthetics but for everybody who is interested in the ontology of art.

One might label the ontology of art Bolzano advocates a 'mentalist' one. A mentalist ontology of art is the view that works of art (or at least some kinds of works of art) are something mental. In Bolzano's terms: some works of art are mere complexes of thoughts.

Perhaps it should be emphasised again that Bolzano's thoughts are, unlike Fregean thoughts, not objective abstract entities, but something in the consciousness of a particular conscious subject at a particular occasion.

Bolzano distinguishes two kinds of thoughts: (subjective) propositions (*Sätze*) and (subjective) presentations (*Vorstellungen*), the latter being cognitive acts without propositional structure. Apart from thoughts, Bolzano's classification of mental phenomena contains sensations, desires and acts of will.

Bolzano states that neither sensations nor desires nor acts of will (nor complexes thereof) can be considered as works of art. However,

presentations as well as propositions can be works of art (CFA, § 11). Bolzano talks about 'arts of mere presentation' (CFA, § 12) and, more general, about 'arts of thought'.

> The work of art must be something real, but it does not need to be an object of the *external reality*, that is, not an object which can be perceived by the *external senses*. For also among those creations which taken in itself are merely episodes *inside* ourselves are some (. . .) which are generally considered as works of art, for which we even have theories of art since millennia (like the poetics and rhetoric of Aristotle).
>
> (CFA, § 11)

Arts of mere presentation are by no means rare, according to Bolzano. He claims that an artist who creates a work of art which consists 'in an object of external reality' (i.e. a physical object) must always create in advance a 'very detailed presentation of this object' inside himself; and, as Bolzano sees it, 'exactly in this, in the creation of these presentations consists, we don't say the whole, but surely a large, sometimes indeed the largest part of his art' (CFA, § 12).

The claim that the creation of a physical work of art is always preceded by the creation of an 'inner presentation' of it is one of the rare aspects of Bolzano's aesthetics that seem to be doubtful for empirical reasons and surely cannot be held in general for works of art of the twentieth century. But it may be unfair to blame Bolzano for not having foreseen such developments as abstract expressionism, *objets trouvés* or aleatoric music.

But let us consider what Bolzano has to say about *literature: literary works* do not consist of presentations but of propositions. Incidentally, Bolzano gives a characterisation of *fiction* (in contrast to 'serious' discourse): a poet, he tells us, presents us propositions, but

> not with the intention that we should consider them as truths, but only for the purpose (. . .) that we shall yield to those feelings, sensations, desires and acts of will in our consciousness which these propositions can induce in us through their consideration, even if we leave it completely open whether they are true.
>
> (CFA, § 13)

However, Bolzano's concept of the literary work of art comprises much more than fiction. Apart from fiction, he distinguishes five 'arts of mere thought', including, among other things, the art of narrating, the art of

describing, the art of proving empirical truths, as well as philosophy and mathematics (CFA, § 15). It is worth noting that for Bolzano beauty is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for something being an artwork.

Bolzano does not confine his ontology of literature to the claim that literary works are works of mere thought. Instead, he also investigates their mereological structure. In general, Bolzano distinguishes *simple* arts and works of art from *compound* ones. Bolzano's concept of a compound art or work of art is a very particular one. Most aestheticians would easily agree that a song, for instance, is a compound work, since it contains poetry as well as music. But in Bolzano's sense even a pure literary work is compound, since we have to distinguish in literary works the *thoughts* expressed in them from the particular *words* used to express these thoughts.

In support of this claim, Bolzano states that usually we do not treat the *translation* of a poem as a *new* poem. According to Bolzano, the 'invention of thoughts' (as he puts it) is already an art of its own, independent of how these thoughts are expressed. Therefore, not only has one to distinguish in a literary work the element of thoughts from the element of words, one also has to consider the complex of thoughts that constitutes (in part) a literary work as a work of art in its own right (CFA, § 6).

The conviction that a complex of thoughts may be a work of art in its own right does not lead Bolzano to underestimate or even neglect the importance of the element of language. According to Bolzano, thinking is not *necessarily* bound to language, but it is an *empirical* fact that it is often difficult (perhaps even impossible) to form a thought clearly and distinctly, and even more difficult to recall it, without putting it into words. Apart from this, the creator of a work of thoughts needs language, naturally, in order to make his work accessible to others. Bolzano observes that 'the invention of appropriate words for our thoughts (. . .) is not a very easy task' (CFA, § 17). Whether certain words are appropriate for the expression of a given thought depends on their sound qualities as well as on their connotations which they have received through their use.

Thus, Bolzano distinguishes works of art which are '*collections of thoughts*' ('*Gedankeninbegriffe*') from works of art which are '*collections of words*' ('*Wortinbegriffe*'). These 'collections' are not abstract entities, but either something mental or something physical. Bolzano explicitly distinguishes collections of words that belong to the external world (i.e. particular sounds or inscriptions) from collections of words that are mere presentations (CFA, § 17).

The distinction between collections of thoughts and collections of words as two distinct elements of literary works may be considered as anticipation of Roman Ingarden's distinction between the element of meaning and the element of sounds within a literary work. (It must be emphasised, however, that Ingarden's ontology of literary works is *not mentalist* and thus has to be distinguished sharply from Bolzano's.)

Bolzano distinguishes the arts of thought from the 'arts of the external sense'. Works of art of the external sense fall into one of two categories: they are either *permanent* or *transitory*. The distinction between permanent and transitory works is analogous to Nicholas Wolterstorff's above-mentioned distinction between object works and occurrence works. Paintings and sculptures are permanent works of art of the external sense; musical works and works of drama are transitory (CFA, §18).

Bolzano introduces the term 'tonic works' ('*tonische Werke*') for all works that are made for the auditory sense. Not every tonic work is necessarily a work of music, in Bolzano's lights. Only tonic works that have both rhythm and melody are works of music, according to Bolzano's classification. At first sight, this might seem as an unnecessary restriction from the point of view of the twenty-first century. But at closer inspection, the distinction between tonic works that are music and tonic works that are not music makes good sense *especially* in the light of certain avantgardistic and experimental creations on the boundaries of music. Think, for example, of John Cage's famous piece '4′33″'. A performance of this piece consists in the following event: a pianist enters the stage, opens the piano lid and does not produce a single note during the following four minutes and 33 seconds. After that, he closes the piano lid and leaves the stage. The end. The point of this piece is, as the composer explained, to draw the audience's attention to the manifold sounds that surround the audience in a concert hall (apart from the sounds intentionally produced by the musicians). Obviously, it is difficult to classify '4′33″' as a work of *music*; on the other hand, it is a work that occupies (primarily) the auditory sense and thus can be properly classified as a *tonic work* in Bolzano's sense.

Bolzano observes that, although works of music are necessarily transitory, there might be tonic works that are *permanent*. Such works would 'consist only in a type of notes which would continue during the whole period while we are listening with the same volume, the same pitch and the same purity and would harmonise with the greatest exactness' (CFA, § 21). Obviously, what Bolzano has in mind here is something like a 'sound carpet', which seems to be pretty close to certain avantgardistic experiments.

Bolzano is also aware of the fact that normally a composer does not fully determine the relevant qualities of the performances of his works; certain aesthetically relevant decisions are 'left to the free and intentional activity of the performer'. Thus, the performing musician does not merely perform; more, to a certain extent, he continues the work of the composer (CFA, § 23). These observations might be considered as the core of an important idea that became prominent much later in the history of philosophy, namely the idea that a musical work has 'places of indeterminacy' (see Ingarden 1989) or, to use a term coined by Alexius Meinong (although in another context), that a musical work is an 'incompletely determined' object (see Meinong 1972).

Within Bolzano's categorical framework, the question arises of whether musical (or, in general, tonic) works are simple or compound in the sense explicated above. In other words, is a musical work a pure work of the external sense, or is it composed of a work of the external sense and a work of thoughts?

It is clear that there might be simple tonic works, i.e. tonic works that are merely works of the auditory sense and do not contain any element of thought. But, in Bolzano's opinion, most musical works are in fact compound works; that is, not only do they consist of a work of the external sense, but also of a work of thoughts.

Bolzano distinguishes two kinds of compound tonic works. The first kind is the one in which words are used. Bolzano calls this the '*mediate* way in which tonic arts and arts of thought may merge to the creation of a joint work of art' (CFA, § 25). But Bolzano dedicates much more space to the investigation of what he calls the '*immediate* linkage' between a tonic art with an art of mere thought. In a compound work that exemplifies such an immediate linkage, words do not occur. Nevertheless, the complete work of art contains a work of thought as its part; and this comes about through the fact that

> the notes which enter our ear are chosen in such a way that (. . .) their impression nevertheless causes certain sequences of thoughts in us which can be considered as a sort of artwork of thoughts and have been intended by the artist.
>
> (CFA, § 25)

Bolzano's examples make it clear that he is not thinking of 'programme music', that is, instrumental music which is expressly designed to *represent* something (a scene, a landscape, a story). At least, these particular cases of music are not the only ones (and not even the primary ones) that Bolzano has in mind. He mentions as examples

> that, when we hear the first notes of a melody which is customary with funerals, a funeral procession will occur to us, and that we will think of quarrel and confusion when the music seems to come off the time.
>
> (CFA, § 25)

It is plain that what Bolzano has in mind here are not accidental, subjective associations, which are dependent on the specific personality of the hearer and her specific previous experiences. Rather, he has in mind the effects which a composer can predict because

> there are certain laws which are based on the nature of man and on the general circumstances under which we have grown up, due to which one can expect with a lot of certainty that certain notes and combinations of notes will cause these or other feelings and sequences of thoughts in us.
>
> (CFA, § 25)

It is not too far-fetched to derive from this and similar remarks that Bolzano advocates something like a 'communication theory' of art: one of the major aims of the artist is (at least in those cases where the work of art contains a work of thoughts as a part) to cause certain feelings, thoughts and acts of will in the audience. In general, over and again Bolzano calls attention to the relevance of the artist's intentions.

Bolzano also explicitly takes up a position in a dispute that nowadays causes a big stir in aesthetics: Are works of art (or, more exactly, the 'meanings' of works of art) constituted by the artists' intentions (or by the artists' intentions alone) or are they constituted (in part or as a whole) by the recipients? The two extreme positions in this debate are on the one hand the view that (the meaning of) a work of art is determined exclusively by its author and on the other hand the view that (the meaning of) a work of art is determined exclusively by the subjective interpretations of particular recipients. One might label these two positions the 'author-centred' and the 'recipient-centred' view, respectively.

Given the fact that for Bolzano a work of thoughts is a mental phenomenon, one would expect that he adopted a clear recipient-centred point of view. But, rather to the contrary, Bolzano's standpoint is more on the author-centred side. However, he does not neglect the role of the recipient. For instance, he highlights the fact that it depends essentially on the hearer's background which sequences of thoughts a given piece of music triggers in him. Nevertheless, Bolzano states that even if a work of thought is partly a result of the recipient's effort to bring about

certain sequences of thoughts, it is always primarily the composer's work:

> The work of art of thoughts is here not really created by the artist, at least not by the artist alone, without the hearer's involvement, but it always remains to be considered as a work of the former in that it is him who has induced us (and induced us intentionally) to it, in that he caused through his notes our chain of thoughts and gave it this specific direction.
>
> (CFA, § 25)

Incidentally, Bolzano even goes a step further and counts not only intended but also *unintended* effects to the credit of the composer (CFA, § 25).

It would go too far to delineate in full Bolzano's many distinctions concerning the 'optical arts' (that is, those arts that are made for the optical sense). I confine myself to mentioning only the most basic distinctions plus a particularly charming detail that illustrates very well Bolzano's original and at the same time thorough way of thinking. Optical works may be divided into permanent and transitory ones. Examples of the former are paintings and sculptures, examples of the latter, for instance, dances and fireworks. But optical works may also be divided into (1) those in which only the *colours* are relevant; (2) those in which only the *shapes* are relevant; and (3) those in which both colours *and* shapes are relevant. Examples of (2) are drawings; examples of (3) are most paintings; and examples of (1) are monochrome paintings. Of course, Bolzano never saw a monochrome painting (and he doesn't use the term 'monochrome'); but he mentions explicitly the possibility that an artist might present us just a single colour such that it seems to us 'as if the colour would be indeed boundless' (CFA, § 28).

Bolzano has certain reservations against accepting monochrome paintings as 'real works of art'; but he pursues his almost visionary 'aesthetic fiction' further: there could be, Bolzano tells us, a kind of 'eye music' (*Augenmusik*) which consists in a succession of colours that change in certain temporal intervals (CFA, § 29). Such 'eye music' was presented more than a century after Bolzano's death on festivals of experimental short films. Note that at the end of Bolzano's life cinematography was not yet invented!

The struggle between subjectivism and objectivism: Alexius Meinong, Stephan Witasek, Christian von Ehrenfels

In what follows, I shall outline the views of Meinong, Witasek and Ehrenfels with respect to one of the major problems concerning the foundations of aesthetics, one that could be called the subjectivism–objectivism problem. Before I start with this, however, I will briefly introduce the problem in a systematic way, thereby making use of a conceptual framework that is not taken from any of the above-mentioned authors, but that strikes me as a useful tool for describing their respective views.

There are two questions to be distinguished. The first is: What is the meaning of statements that are usually considered as 'aesthetic judgements'? I will follow the tradition in using statements of the form 'A is beautiful' as paradigm cases of aesthetic judgements. Thus, we might put the question as follows: What is the meaning of judgements of the form 'A is beautiful'? What do we intend to express with such judgements? In what follows, I refer to this as 'the *semantic* question'.

In addition to the semantic question, there is an *ontological* question, namely: Are there genuine aesthetic properties and aesthetic facts in the world? Is there, for instance, a property of being beautiful, which cannot be reduced to a set of non-aesthetic properties (say, properties of colour and shape) nor to a merely relational property (say, the property of causing a feeling of pleasure in an observer)? Is there a state of affairs that A is beautiful in addition to the states of affairs that A has certain non-aesthetic properties and that A causes a feeling of pleasure in an observer?

Aesthetic theories are often labelled 'relativist', 'subjectivist', 'absolutist' or 'objectivist', depending on which position they take with regard to these questions. It is worth noting, however, that these terms ('relativism', 'objectivism', and so on) are systematically ambiguous, since they are applied both to semantic and ontological views. To make things clear, I distinguish here the following positions:

1 *Semantic subjectivism*: by means of an aesthetic judgement, we express the belief that there is a relation between the object of judgement and ourselves. 'A is beautiful' means something like 'A pleases me' or 'A causes a particular feeling of pleasure in me'. Thus, the truth of 'A is beautiful' does not depend on the object alone but also (and primarily) on the (mental) state of the judging subject.
2 *Semantic objectivism*: by means of an aesthetic judgement, we express the belief that the object of judgement has a certain intrinsic property. The truth of 'A is beautiful' does not depend in any way on the state of the judging subject, but on the object alone.
3 *Ontological subjectivism*: there are no genuine aesthetic properties and aesthetic facts in the world. The 'truthmaker' of 'A is beautiful' is the fact that A causes a feeling of pleasure in the judging subject.
4 *Ontological objectivism*: there are genuine aesthetic properties and aesthetic facts in the world. The truthmaker of 'A is beautiful' is the fact that A has the (intrinsic) property of being beautiful.
5 *Semantic relativism*: 'A is beautiful' is short for 'A is beautiful for S' (where 'S' stands for a particular subject, or perhaps for a group of subjects).
6 *Semantic absolutism*: 'A is beautiful' is complete as it is; it is not short for 'A is beautiful for S'.

Ontological relativism and ontological absolutism collapse into ontological subjectivism and ontological objectivism, respectively.

Of course, this is not a complete overview of all possible and not even of all actually existing views on the matter. For instance, it does not comprise non-cognitivist positions like emotivism, i.e. the view that judgements of the sort 'A is beautiful' are not genuine judgements but rather mere expressions of feelings like 'Wow!'. Neither does it comprise certain kinds of naturalism, namely views according to which aesthetic predicates are mere abbreviations for more or less complex physical predicates. But emotivism and physicalism can be omitted here, since neither Meinong nor Witasek nor Ehrenfels embraced at any stage a non-cognitivist or physicalist view. These views became prominent only in the wake of logical positivism.

Alexius Meinong's theory of emotional presentation

Alexius Meinong, a disciple of Brentano and founder of the 'Graz school', was an important figure in Austrian value theory. He dealt only incidentally with aesthetic values (or aesthetic value predicates, like 'beautiful'); he was much more concerned about ethics. However, his general theory of values is applicable to aesthetic as well as to ethical values. (I will say a few words on what Meinong had to say on aesthetics at the end of this section.)

Meinong's first essay on value theory appeared in 1894 and is entitled 'Psychologisch-ethische Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie' ('Psychological-ethical investigations in value theory', henceforth referred to as 'IVT'). In this treatise, Meinong introduces the term '*value feelings*'.

Value feelings are those emotions that we experience when we appreciate or despise something, where we have a positive value feeling in the former case and a negative value feeling in the latter.

According to Meinong, value feelings are based on judgements, more specifically, on *existence judgements* or judgements of being.[5] A value feeling is, as it were, an 'emotional statement' to the existence (or being) of something. Value feelings have existence judgements as their *psychological presuppositions*. It seems that Meinong considers this psychological presupposition even as the defining characteristic of value feelings. This, however, leads to questionable consequences. But I will postpone the criticism of Meinong's explication of value feelings until the end of this section.

As Meinong states in IVT, values *are based on* value feelings. Applied to the value property of being beautiful, this means: an object's being beautiful is based on a positive value feeling in a subject.

What exactly does it mean that the value property 'is based on' a value feeling? According to the standard interpretation, Meinong advocates a sort of value subjectivism in IVT and turned into an objectivist only much later. Undoubtedly, there is strong evidence in favour of this interpretation. For in IVT, Meinong states explicitly that there are no absolute values, that is, no values without a subject who is able to experience value feelings. However, closer investigation shows that things are not that clear-cut. For Meinong emphasises that the value is *not identical with* the value feeling. It is impossible, Meinong argues, that having value is the same as being appreciated, because, on the one hand, it often happens that something is appreciated although it doesn't have value; and, on the other hand, it often happens that something has value and is not appreciated. In other words, our value feelings are not always appropriate. People sometimes fail to recognise (either because of intellectual or of emotional deficiencies) the value objects have for them. Furthermore, as Meinong observes, if a thing has value for me, it has value for me not only during the limited periods while I am thinking of it. However, my value feelings for the object exist only as long as I am thinking of it. This is another argument to the conclusion that values cannot be identical with value feelings. The following is a concise formulation of Meinong's early views on value (by 'early' I mean here before 1912):

> In general, one can say: the value is not bound to the actual appreciation but to the possible appreciation, and even for it we have to take into account favourable circumstances, more exactly: sufficient information and a normal intellectual and emotional state. Thus, value does not consist in being appreciated but rather in possibly being appreciated under the necessary favourable circumstances. An object has value, insofar it has the capacity, for a normally disposed and sufficiently informed subject to be the actual basis for a value feeling.
>
> (IVT, § 9)

A very similar formulation is to be found in the essay 'Über Werthaltung und Wert' ('On appreciation and value', henceforth 'AV') that appeared only one year later, in 1895: 'The value of an object can be defined (. . .) as its capacity to be appreciated by an intellectually and emotionally normal subject' (AV, 248). Meinong's reference to the concepts of 'favourable circumstances' and a 'normal subject' in his early definitions of value already shows a tendency towards objectivism (at least to semantic objectivism). But the real breakthrough for Meinong's value objectivism comes with the essay 'Für die Psychologie und gegen den Psychologismus in der allgemeinen Werttheorie' ('For psychology and against psychologism in general value theory', henceforth PPGVT) from 1912. Here, Meinong states that absolute, impersonal values are the proper objects of value theory. His latest publication on this matter was the treatise *Über emotionale Präsentation* (*On emotional presentation*) from 1917. Here, Meinong develops a theory that is already outlined in PPGVT, namely the theory of emotional presentation. The gist of this theory is the following: in general, objects are *presented* to the mind by means of certain mental states. More specifically, different kinds of objects are presented to the mind by different kinds of mental states. In fact, Meinong's classification of objects mirrors his classification of mental states. Meinong distinguishes two kinds of mental states: intellectual and emotional ones. The intellectual states are divided into *presentations* (*Vorstellungen*) and *thoughts* (*Gedanken*); the emotional ones fall into *feelings* (*Gefühle*) and *desires* (*Begehrungen*).

Originally (around 1900, when Meinong developed his theory of objects), Meinong distinguished two kinds of objects: objects in the narrower sense (*Objekte*)[6] and objectives (*Objektive*). Objectives are those objects that can be denoted by that-clauses (e.g. the objective that it is raining, the objective that 2 plus 2 equals four, etc.).

Objects (in the narrower sense) are presented to the mind by presentations. Objectives are presented to the mind by thoughts. Thus, both kinds of intellectual mental states have a presentational function: they present either objects in the narrower sense or objectives. As far as the emotional mental states (feelings and desires) are concerned, Meinong's original view was as follows: only the intellectual states have a

presentational function; feelings and desires are just emotional responses to those objects that are presented by presentations and thoughts, but they themselves do not present something to the mind. However, according to the theory of emotional presentation, the emotional states also have a presentational function. Meinong maintains that *values are presented by emotional states*.

> An object does not have value, in this so far neglected sense, insofar as a subject's interest is directed to it, but only insofar as it *deserves* this interest. More simply, it could be put thus: it has value insofar it really possesses that which is to be presented through a value experience; and in this lies the even simpler determination: *value is that which is presented through value experiences*. Of course, the emotionally presented object as such is no more an experience than the intellectually presented one. It is true that value in the sense we are talking about here is grasped through an experience, like anything that is grasped, but in its nature it doesn't have a relation to an experience anymore: it is neither personal nor relative, may thus well be called an impersonal or absolute value.
>
> (PPGVT, 280; my italics)

Thus, the late Meinong was an overt ontological objectivist with respect to values. He considered values as properties 'of higher order', i.e. properties that are based upon more fundamental properties but are not reducible to those. For instance, the beauty of a flower may be based upon the flower's colours and shapes, but to say that the flower is beautiful is more than just to say that it has such-and-such colours and shapes.

If one grants that there are value properties, Meinong's claim that we grasp values by means of *feelings*, is extremely plausible. For it is obvious that we cannot grasp value properties by means of intellectual faculties. For instance, it is easy to imagine a being that has the same perceptual and intellectual faculties that we have but is completely unable to experience beauty.

At this point, however, it should be mentioned that Meinong would not consider the experience of beauty as a *value feeling*, but as an *aesthetic feeling*. Meinong's distinction between value feelings on the one hand and aesthetic feelings on the other is grounded in his doctrine that value feelings always have existence judgements as their psychological presuppositions. In contrast to this, he characterises aesthetic feelings as feelings that have either mere presentations or assumptions as their psychological presuppositions (see Meinong 1917, § 10). Assumptions

are, as Meinong explains, 'judgements without belief'. Just as judgements, assumptions present objectives to us; but in contrast to judgements, assumptions are not held to be true. Meinong observes, correctly, that assumptions are extremely important for aesthetic experiences. For instance, when we read a (fictional) novel, normally we do *not believe* the sentences we read to be true; we do *not judge* that this-and-this is the case, we just *assume* it. (We have found a similar insight into the nature of fiction already in Bolzano.)

However, it is just not plausible to distinguish, as Meinong does, value feelings from aesthetic feelings. Rather, it seems that aesthetic feelings (like the feeling of beauty) are just a special *kind* of value feelings. Aren't beauty, grace and harmony *values*? Moreover, it is implausible to assume that value feelings must be based on judgements. It seems that value feelings, even ethical value feelings, can also be based on mere assumptions (and sometimes even on mere presentations). Readers of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* feel compassion for the heroine. Although there is a difference between the feeling of compassion for Anna Karenina and the feeling of compassion for, say, Monica Lewinski (the first one is based on assumptions, the second one on judgements) it seems odd to classify the latter as a value feeling and the former not.

Stephan Witasek's theory of immanent aesthetic objects

Stephan Witasek belonged to the inner circle of Meinong's favourite disciples. However, due to unfavourable circumstances, Witasek was denied the career that other disciples of Meinong had. He earned his money as a librarian and worked for many years in Meinong's 'psychological laboratory' in an honorary capacity. Only two years before his early death in 1915, he received an academic position.

Witasek's scientific interests were twofold: experimental psychology and aesthetics. He published two treatises on aesthetics: the monograph *Grundzüge der allgemeinen Ästhetik* (*Foundations of general aesthetics*, 1904, henceforth referred to as 'FGA') and the short essay 'Über ästhetische Objektivität' ('On aesthetic objectivity', 1915, henceforth referred to as 'AO').

In FGA, Witasek analyses the concepts of aesthetic experience, aesthetic properties and aesthetic objects (i.e. objects that are the bearers of aesthetic properties). The main theme of Witasek's aesthetics is the struggle between aesthetic relativism/subjectivism and aesthetic absolutism/objectivism. To draw a very rough picture, one could say that Witasek turned from aesthetic relativism and subjectivism (in FGA) to

a sort of aesthetic objectivism (in AO). However, at closer inspection things turn out to be more complicated.

Witasek distinguishes two kinds of properties: *real* properties and *ideal* properties. Real properties can be perceived (either through sense perception or through 'inner perception', i.e. introspection); ideal properties cannot be perceived, neither through sense perception nor through introspection. Relations (for instance similarity or dissimilarity) are ideal properties, according to Witasek. In FGA, Witasek claims that aesthetic properties must be ideal properties, more exactly, *disguised relative properties*. The two terms of the relation are the aesthetic object on the one hand and the 'mental behaviour' of the recipient on the other hand. The basic idea is that an aesthetic object causes a particular mental state in the recipient. The aesthetic property is a disposition to cause a particular mental state in the recipient, or, as Witasek himself puts it, 'the capability to have an aesthetic effect' (FGA, 22). Witasek calls this particular mental state 'aesthetic behaviour'. The aesthetic behaviour is essentially an *emotional* state, a particular kind of *feeling*.

The relationship between the aesthetic object and the recipient is a complex one that goes in both directions: on the one hand, there is a *causal relation* between object and recipient (the object causes a certain emotional response in the recipient); on the other hand, the recipient's aesthetic feeling is *directed to* the aesthetic object. Witasek calls the latter relation '*target relation*' (*Zielrelation*), because it is aimed at the object.

In FGA, Witasek states:

> Whether an object is to be called beautiful or ugly depends on whether, given that there is a subject, the object arouses pleasure or displeasure. Moreover, the degree of beauty or ugliness that we apply to it is a function of the intensity of our pleasure or displeasure.
>
> (FGA, 353)

Obviously, whether an object arouses pleasure or displeasure in a subject depends on two factors: on the qualities of the object and on the dispositions of the subject. The big question is: How are these two factors to be weighted? Does it depend primarily on the qualities of an object whether we call it beautiful or ugly? If this were the case, we could divide the objects themselves in beautiful ones, ugly ones, and aesthetically indifferent ones. Or does beauty and ugliness primarily depend on the dispositions of the subjects? In the latter case, all objects

were in themselves aesthetically indifferent. It would be wrong to say of a given object that it is beautiful (or ugly) per se; at best one could say that the object is beautiful (or ugly) *for a particular subject* (FGA, 27–32).

One might expect from the above quotation that Witasek chooses the relativist option, i.e. the view that the beauty of an object ultimately depends on the dispositions of a given recipient. However, this is not the case. Witasek explicitly rejects the relativist contention that one and the same thing can be both beautiful and ugly and that it is therefore impossible to divide objects into beautiful and not beautiful ones (FGA, 342f.). In this regard, Witasek's point of view is clearly objectivist.

The big problem of aesthetic objectivism is how to explain the differences of aesthetic responses not only between individuals but also between cultures and epochs. Witasek is, of course, fully aware of this problem. In a first attempt to cope with it, Witasek observes that the conditions for aesthetic responses might be more or less favourable. The relevant conditions include not only external factors (the way in which an object is presented), but also the dispositions of the subject. As Witasek states, if we want to determine whether an object is objectively beautiful, only aesthetic responses *under most favourable conditions* are pertinent (FGA, 354f.). This holds both for external and internal conditions (the dispositions of the subject). Unfavourable external conditions are, for instance, bad lighting in an art museum, an inappropriate distance or perspective, bad acoustics or coughing neighbours during the performance of a piece of music, and so forth. Here are some examples of relevant internal conditions, i.e. dispositions that might be relevant for an aesthetic experience: power of concentration, sensitivity, acquaintance with other art works (perhaps with works from a particular school or of a particular genre or style), the absence of (non-aesthetic) emotions connected with the work, its author and its cultural setting. (For instance, a general aversion against American popular culture is not a favourable condition for the assessment of the aesthetic qualities of Jazz.) However, Witasek does not assume that all differences in aesthetic responses can be explained by pointing out differences in the relevant circumstances.

In chapter VI of FGA Witasek introduces the concept of the '*aesthetic norm*'. The aesthetic norm is explained as a regularity of aesthetic behaviour which is supposed to be grounded in human nature as well as in the cultural environment. Aesthetic responses may or may not correspond to the aesthetic norm.

> Accordingly, the fact that there is an aesthetic norm is based on two things: first on the fact that, despite individual particularities, there are general laws of the mental life; and second on the fact that, again despite individual particularities, the environment is within certain (temporal, spatial, cultural) limits by and large the same for all human beings. Insofar there is a normal psychology, and insofar the environment is for the big majority of a group the same, insofar there is an aesthetic norm. However, insofar the laws of normal psychology are changing, furthermore, insofar the environment differs according to time, place and cultural society, insofar also the aesthetic norm is variable.
>
> (FGA, 367f.)

As the quotation shows, Witasek admits the existence of different aesthetic norms, varying according to cultural contexts. This suggests strongly a cultural relativism. However, Witasek explicitly assumes a '*hierarchy*' of different aesthetic norms: some norms are '*higher*' than others. That is to say that in conflicting cases not all aesthetic judgements have the same claim to validity. Assume that according to an aesthetic norm N_1 an object A is beautiful and according to another aesthetic norm N_2 the same object A is not beautiful. According to cultural relativism, there is no way to decide whether 'A is beautiful' is true or false. Rather, the question doesn't even make sense. An object cannot be beautiful or ugly *simpliciter* but only beautiful or ugly *according to a particular aesthetic norm*. Accordingly, 'A is beautiful' must be considered to be an incomplete judgement. A complete aesthetic judgement has the form of 'A is beautiful according to N_x'. Of course, there is no real conflict between 'A is beautiful according to N_1' and 'A is not beautiful according to N_2'. Both aesthetic judgements may be true. But Witasek does not take this path. According to him, 'A is beautiful' may be understood as a complete aesthetic judgement; and if 'A is beautiful' is considered to be true in the lights of an aesthetic norm N_1 and false in the lights of an aesthetic norm N_2, whether we should consider A as beautiful or not depends on whether N_1 or N_2 is the 'higher' aesthetic norm.

This raises the question of how we can decide which of two conflicting aesthetic norms is higher than the other. Witasek answers: 'The *more comprehensive* norm, the norm that can be applied to a wider extension of objects, the norm that belongs to a bigger group of individuals, is the higher one' (FGA, 368).

It is plain that this answer is not at all satisfying. There is no obvious reason to assume that the taste of the majority is pertinent for the truth

of an objective aesthetic judgement. Moreover, in fact, we tend to trust the judgements of experts, that is, persons who are particularly educated and sensitive; and normally, these are a *minority*. But there are much deeper problems with the aesthetics Witasek develops in FGA. It seems that Witasek is torn between relativist and objectivist intuitions and that in the end neither of the two sides can gain the upper hand. The result is, to put it carefully, that the theory of FGA is a sort of hybrid between relativism and objectivism with heavy inner tensions. That it is not a full-blown relativism should be clear from the foregoing paragraphs. The claim that there is a hierarchy between conflicting aesthetic norms so that some of them are closer to the truth than others is surely not consistent even with weak forms of relativism. On the other hand, Witasek's insisting that aesthetic properties are relative properties dependent on aesthetic responses of recipients, is obviously inconsistent with a full-blown objectivism.

It is indeed not easy to combine the different strands in Witasek's early aesthetics into a consistent overall picture; perhaps it is impossible, unless one decides tendentiously to neglect certain formulations as mere 'slips' of the author.

In his essay from 1915, Witasek makes a fresh start. He focuses on the following two questions: (1) What is the *meaning* of an aesthetic judgement, a judgement of the form 'A is beautiful'? (2) Can a judgement of the form 'A is beautiful' ever be true and, if so, what facts in the world make it true? More specifically, are there aesthetic properties and aesthetic facts in the world? Witasek starts by rejecting semantic subjectivism:

> The property that we originally mean to apply to A in the judgement 'A is beautiful', that, which the word 'beautiful' originally and naturally means, is *not* the fact that A triggers a feeling of pleasure.
>
> (AO, 4f.)

Witasek argues for this claim in exactly the same way as Bolzano argued against subjectivism some 70 years earlier: all we have to do in order to see that 'A is beautiful' cannot have the meaning of 'A triggers a feeling of pleasure in me' is to engage in introspective observation whenever we form a judgement of this sort. If 'A is beautiful' meant the same as 'A triggers a certain feeling in me', then, in forming this judgement, we would have to be directed to our *feelings*, not to the object in question. But this is simply not the case. In fact, when we judge that an object is beautiful, our attention is directed to the *object*, not to our feelings. In

this respect, aesthetic judgements are analogous to 'sense judgements', i.e. colour judgements, sound judgements, taste judgements, and so forth.

> When I come to the judgement 'The grass is green', then I read, as it were, the property green from the object grass. In a similar way, I read the property beautiful from the object A by examining the object, without thinking of relations, without paying attention to what is inside me. I find the 'beautiful' with its particular attractive, gripping, elevating, moving quality inside the object, it beams out of the object to me as an objectual quality which is found, 'perceived', without any involvement of *inner* perception. However, I talk indeed of something psychical of what is inside me, when I say 'A pleases me', just as when I say 'I see the grass green'.
>
> (AO, 6)

Thus, the answer to the *semantic* question of what aesthetic predicates and judgements mean is clear. Witasek might be called a 'semantic objectivist' with regard to aesthetic judgements. But this does not determine an answer to the *ontological* question of whether there are aesthetic properties and aesthetic facts. That we obviously *believe* that there are aesthetic facts does not imply that there actually *are* aesthetic facts. In other words, semantic objectivism does not imply ontological objectivism.

Is the late Witasek an ontological objectivist? There is no short and simple answer to this question. Indeed, one might say that Witasek develops a sort of ontological objectivism, but it is a very specific sort of objectivism, one that is compatible with standard forms of subjectivism.

Crucial for Witasek's theory of aesthetic objects is his distinction between *immanent* and *transcendent objects*. An immanent object is something that exists in dependence of a particular mental act or state; a transcendent object exists independently of a particular mental act or state. For instance, suppose I imagine the tree in front of my house. Of course, the tree that stands in front of my house is a transcendent object; its existence does not depend on its being perceived or imagined or thought of by me or anybody else. However, according to Witasek's theory, while I am imagining this tree, there exists in addition to the transcendent, physical object an immanent object, the 'tree of my imagination', as one might put it. The existence of the tree of my imagination depends on this particular act of imagination. It comes into being with the beginning of this act and it ceases to exist when I stop imagining the tree. When my neighbour imagines the tree in front of my house, she imagines of course the same transcendent object, but the tree of her imagination is numerically distinct from the tree of my imagination – even if our two imaginations are qualitatively alike, that is, even if she imagines the tree in exactly the same way as I do. And when I imagine the tree in front of my house today and again tomorrow, then the tree of my imagination today is numerically distinct from the tree of my imagination tomorrow, even if the two imaginations are qualitatively alike.

It may happen that there is an immanent object without a corresponding transcendent object – as in cases of dream and hallucination. But immanent objects do not only occur with acts of imagination, dream and hallucination but also with acts of veridical sense perception. If I perceive the tree in front of my house, there is, in addition to the transcendent tree, the immanent object of my perceptual act – the 'tree-as-perceived-by-me', as one might call it. If both my neighbour and I perceive the same transcendent tree, her tree-as-perceived-by-her and my tree-as-perceived-by-me are two numerically distinct objects. If I turn away or close my eyes, the tree-as-perceived-by-me ceases to exist, while the tree-as-perceived-by-her may continue to exist, or the other way around.

According to Witasek's late aesthetics, there are aesthetic properties as 'real' properties, but the bearers of aesthetic properties are *not the transcendent, but the immanent objects*, and only those. In other words, the world that surrounds us is aesthetically neutral, is neither beautiful nor ugly. Beauty and ugliness are properties of our immanent objects of imagination and perception.

Christian von Ehrenfels: against aesthetic scepticism

A view that seems in certain respects similar to Witasek's theory of aesthetic properties as properties of immanent objects is expressed in Christian von Ehrenfels's only posthumously published essay 'Über das ästhetische Urteil' ('On the aesthetic judgement', henceforth referred to as 'AJ'). In this paper, Ehrenfels argues against what he calls 'aesthetic scepticism', that is: subjectivism. Against the subjectivist claim that 'This is beautiful' is equivalent to 'This pleases me', Ehrenfels argues:

> There is no doubt that this opinion goes against a view that has been held for millennia, the most certain evidence of which is the fact that one always used to treat the domain of tastes different from the domain of beauty. According to the conviction of so

> many thousands, who considered the beautiful in a particular way, all those impressions that are properly called beautiful have something in common, to whose existence in the particular case the judgement 'this and that is beautiful' was supposed to point to. If one had not intended to say by this anything else than that this and that has a pleasant effect, then there would have been no reason for the use of the word 'beautiful'. Furthermore, it would not be possible to explain why there are many things which one does not call beautiful, although they have surely a pleasant effect (like, for instance, drink and food, healthy air and exercise, or a good consciousness, a revenge that one was longing for for a long time etc.).
>
> (AJ, 202)

Furthermore, Ehrenfels argues that the aesthetic sceptic cannot explain the fact that the aesthetic qualities of works of art are often subject of *debate*, whereas with respect to the taste of food the old saying '*de gustibus non est disputandum*' ('there is no disputing about tastes') is generally accepted.

The upshot of all these arguments is that semantic subjectivism has to be rejected: it is plain that in general we intend to express by sentences of the kind 'A is beautiful' something different from 'A has a pleasant effect on me'.

The following quotation concerns the ontological side of the problem:

> If, for the time being, we consider only the domain of human art, certainly nobody should, no matter how fervently he defends the existence of something that is common to all beautiful works, assume that this common something is in the external objects, which convey to us the artistic impression. It is not the vibrations of air brought about by the instruments to which we apply beauty, but the sound object of our imagination which those vibrations cause in us. (. . .) This is even more conspicuous with a poem that we read. It is not the printed sheet of paper that contains the beauty of the poem, but the complex of presentations which it arouses in us. In the same way, it is not the painted canvas as such that bears the beauty which we admire in the picture. This will be particularly evident if one takes into account that there are no colours at all outside us, but only fabrics which set vibrating the ether in such a way that it, by means of our sense organ, causes the colour sensations in us.
>
> (AJ, 203)

Ehrenfels states that the 'complexes of presentations', which are, according to him, the real bearers of beauty, are created by the subjects of these presentations. Just like Bolzano, he claims that in a certain sense works of art are created only through the imagination of the recipients.

Unfortunately, however, the nature of Ehrenfels's 'complexes of presentations' is left unclear. It seems obvious that the term 'complexes of presentations' cannot be taken in its literal sense, i.e. in the sense of 'complexes of mental acts of a certain sort'. For a complex of mental acts cannot be a 'sound object', nor can it be coloured. One might interpret them as 'immanent objects' in Witasek's sense; but one might also interpret them as 'merely intentional objects' in the sense of Roman Ingarden, i.e. objects that come into being through intentional acts, but whose further existence is independent of mental acts. Thus, Ehrenfels's remarks on the ontology of aesthetic objects in general and works of art in particular are at best a rough sketch that might stimulate further investigation.

However, Ehrenfels gives a very detailed and convincing description of the role of imagination in the process of the perception of a work, with respect to paintings, sculptures, architecture, music and literature. In general, the role of imagination is twofold: first, we need 'recollective imagination' in order to get a more or less complete presentation of the object in question; second, we need 'creative imagination', among other things in order to add certain details which have been only outlined by the artist. Furthermore, we need imagination in order to grasp the mental states of represented persons (AJ, 204–11).

Ehrenfels uses his insights in the role of imagination in order to give an explanation for the obvious lack of intersubjective agreement with respect to aesthetic judgements. The explanation goes as follows: different persons have a different amount of talent of imagination and therefore produce different objects of presentation under the impression of the same external objects. These differences may be partly innate but they may also be the result of the environment, the conditions of life and the personal history of development of a person. This explains both individual and national and social differences in aesthetic judgements (AJ, 211f.).

Conclusion

It was not my intention in this chapter to give a complete survey of aesthetics within Austrian philosophy. Rather, I wanted to highlight a number of contributions that strike me as highly original as well as

distinctive for Austrian aesthetics and, not the least, still relevant for current debates within aesthetics, in particular within so-called 'analytic aesthetics'. Analytic aesthetics is characterised not only by a distinctive style and methodology, but also by a strong emphasis on questions concerning the *foundations* of aesthetics, questions concerning the ontology of aesthetic properties, objects and facts and the semantics of aesthetic concepts and judgements. If a reader who is interested in questions of this sort gets the impression that it may be worthwhile to study the writings of Austrian aestheticians, the chapter has fulfilled its task.*

Notes

1 For exceptions see Smith 1994.
2 However, the family resemblance theory of art was subject to serious and warranted criticism. See, for instance, Mandelbaum 1965.
3 All translations in this chapter are mine.
4 For more on aesthetic subjectivism versus aesthetic objectivism see the section 'The struggle between subjectivism and objectivism' below.
5 Meinong distinguishes between existence and mere being; but this is not important in the present context.
6 Meinong uses the German word 'Objekt' for a particular kind of entities and the German word 'Gegenstand' for entities of all kinds. Since there is just one English equivalent for both terms (namely 'object'), the distinction is a bit hard to convey. I use 'object' for 'Gegenstand' and 'object in the narrower sense' for 'Objekt'.

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