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Toward a Syncretistic Theory of Depiction (or How to Account for the Illusionist Aspect of Experiencing Pictures)

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In this chapter I argue for a syncretistic theory of depiction, which combines the merits of the main paradigms which have hitherto faced themselves on this issue: namely the perceptualist and semioticist approaches. The syncretistic theory indeed takes from the former its stress on experiential factors and from the latter its stress on conventional factors. But the theory is even more syncretistic than this, for the way it accounts for the experiential factor vindicates several claims defended by different perceptualist theories. In a nutshell, according to the syncretistic theory a picture depicts its subject iff i) it is transformed into an entity-*cum*-meaning and ii) one has the twofold experience of seeing the subject of the picture *qua* non-interpreted entity, the image, just in case one consciously misrecognizes it in consciously seeing that image, for that subject resembles the image in some grouping properties (originally labeled *Gestalt*-qualities in psychology). By appealing to objective resemblance in grouping properties, the theory can vindicate what are nowadays taken to be the most neglected doctrines in the perceptualist camp: objective resemblance theories. By appealing, moreover, to conscious misrecognition, the theory not only squares with both the seeing-in and recognition theories of depiction, but it also shows the grain of truth in illusion theories of depiction, since conscious misrecognition is a kind of perceptual illusion.

1. Introduction: the state of the art and a sketch of the theory

Depictions – to use this term as a general label both for two-dimensional representations such as drawings, paintings, photos, sketches ... and three-dimensional representations such as puppets or sculptures[1] – are representations of a particular kind: *pictorial* representations, different from representations of other kinds, such as primarily verbal signs. Yet it is notoriously difficult to explain what makes depictions representations that *depict* their subject – that is, what the picture is about (either a particular individual, as in a painting of Canberra, or some instance or other of a certain kind, as in a painting of a romantic landscape) – namely, that represent a given subject in a depictive way. In short, it is difficult to single out the mark of pictoriality.[2]

Unclear, please rephrase

Traditionally, two main theoretical paradigms confront each other here. On the one hand, there is the large group of so-called *perceptualist* theories, according to which the relevant factor lies either in a perceptually relevant property of pictures or in some sort of experience of the subject depicted in a picture that people have when facing that picture. In this group, we find first *objective resemblance theories*, namely the Platonic-inspired doctrines according to which a picture is a depiction of its subject iff it resembles that subject, where resemblance is meant to occur between experientially graspable properties of a picture and its subject, respectively.[3] Second, we have *subjective resemblance theories* that interpret the relevant resemblance as holding not between the picture and its subject, but either between the *experiences* of them (Peacocke, 1987) or in the way the picture is experienced (a picture is a depiction of its subject only if it is experienced *as* similar, in a relevant way, to that subject (Hopkins, 1998)). Third, *illusion theories* instead claim that a picture depicts insofar as it leads a perceiver facing it to seemingly see its subject.[4] Fourth, going in a seemingly different direction, the *seeing-in theory* (Wollheim, 1980[2]) holds that the relevant experiential factor is the *sui generis* experience of seeing the subject *in* the picture. Fifth, by trying to ascertain what this seeing-in experience may be grounded on, *recognition theories* (Lopes, 1996; Schier, 1986) maintain that a picture depicts its subject only if it tracks the very same recognitional ability people activate when facing that subject.

On the other hand, the smaller group of *semiotic theories* (Goodman, 1968; Kulvicki, 2006a) claims that what makes a picture depict is the

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fact that it signifies in a particular way. This way is specific to the semiotic system to which it is taken to belong.

Up to now, these two paradigms have been taken to be antithetical, but one may wonder whether this is really the case. In point of fact, one can well advance a theory containing elements of both paradigms. In this respect, *make-believe theories* (Walton, 1973; 1990) are emblematic.[5] For such theories, a picture depicts iff seeing it prompts one to make-believe that such a seeing amounts to seeing its subject. Now, to "make-believedly" see something has both an experiential and a conventional flavor: it is a *socially shareable prescription* to *imagine* something, the subject depicted in the picture.

It would indeed be wiser to take those paradigms as complementary. On the one hand, perceptualists are quite right in thinking that a possible world with no perceivers would be a pictureless world. However sophisticated the signs that subjects would use in that world might be, they would not be pictures. Thus, the pictoriality of a picture has to do with a perceptual factor, possibly an experiential one. On the other hand, phenomenological appearances notwithstanding,[6] semioticists are quite right in claiming that, since what a picture is about – its subject – rests on conventional factors, it cannot be literally "read off" the picture itself.[7] Thus, the intentionality of the picture does not have to do with perception. Granted, both a picture and a verbal sign can be taken as interpreted entities, that is, as entities endowed with meaning; thus, one has to discover what makes pictures and interpreted verbal signs different kinds of entities-*cum*-meaning – let me call these different kinds *icons* and *symbols*, respectively. As we will see later, this difference must be suitably accounted for by appealing not merely to a perceptual, but also precisely to an experiential factor. Yet this does not mean that receiving an interpretation that turns pictures as well as verbal signs into interpreted entities has anything to do with an experiential factor rather than with our conventions. As many say, pictures as well as verbal signs have intentionality *derivatively*, not originally.[8] Let me thus call a theory that accounts somehow perceptually for the pictoriality of the picture and conventionally for its intentionality a *syncretistic* theory of depiction: both conditions (the perceptual and the conventional) are necessary in order for something to be a depiction of its subject, and they are together jointly sufficient. In what follows, my goal is precisely to try to sketch such a theory.

Once a syncretistic theory is developed, the Cinderella among the perceptualist theories, the objective resemblance theories, can be vindicated. For suppose first that the appeal those theories makes to some objective resemblance occurring between the picture and its subject is embedded

into a syncretistic theory, with the mere task of explaining the pictoriality, though not the intentionality, of the picture. Moreover, suppose that an objective resemblance of a particular kind between the picture and its subject, namely a resemblance in what (after von Ehrenfels, 1988) are labeled *Gestalt*-qualities, can be invoked to account for the merely necessary, but not sufficient, conditions regarding pictoriality in order for something to depict. As a result, at least a suitable appeal to an objective resemblance of that kind between the picture and its subject can be rescued by both the old criticisms famously raised by Goodman (1968) against the objective resemblance theories and the more recent criticisms that in the intention of their maker "have made [objective] resemblance theories historical curiosities" (Lopes, 2005, p. 26).

Finally, the way in which syncretists account for the pictoriality of the picture also re-evaluates many other theories in the perceptualist paradigm, namely those theories appealing to an experiential factor. In particular, the old illusion theories can be vindicated, at least in their sophisticated version which appeals to conscious illusions. As we will see, the experiential factor in the case of the pictorial experience is the very same kind as that involved in the experience of the Müller-Lyer lines, as well as many other illusory perceptions.

2. The syncretistic theory

A syncretistic theory must first of all hold that an icon is a kind of interpreted sign. Like symbols, an icon is an entity-*cum*-meaning into which a certain non-interpreted entity, the material[9] part of a picture – let me call it the picture's *image* – is turned into once it is ascribed that meaning, as semioticists would probably accept saying. Let me call this the *intentionality constraint*. Yet the theory must also hold that unlike symbols, an icon is such that its depicted subject can – a physical "can" – be experienced in the picture's image, as perceptualists would say. Let me call this the *experience constraint*. In a nutshell, what accounts for the intentionality of the picture does not account for the pictoriality of the picture, and *vice versa*. Both things lead to the following rough attempt on the part of the syncretistic theory at saying what "to depict" means, the First Syncretistic Sketch:

> (FSS) a picture depicts a subject – whether a particular or some individual or other of a certain kind – iff i) it is turned into an entity-*cum*-meaning and ii) its image's perceivers are led to experience that subject.

According to this definition, both derived intentionality and subject-experience are necessary but only jointly sufficient conditions for depiction.

That derived intentionality is merely a necessary but not sufficient condition for depiction is unsurprising. As I just said, verbal signs are also ascribed intentionality so as to be transformed into symbols, but they do not depict what they are about. I have not yet defined what the experience of a subject consists of. I can already say, however, that even that experience is merely a necessary condition for depiction. The fact that while perceiving something one experiences something else does not make the first something a depiction of the second something. First of all, in order for the famous Martian rock assemblage to be a picture of a face – which, ufologists, it is not – that assemblage would have precisely to be derivatively ascribed a certain meaning; that is, the assemblage would be transformed into an icon of a face. Moreover, one can also see a picture that is already a picture of something, say Piero's painting of St. Louis, and nevertheless experience something else – say Michael Schumacher, who definitely is not the picture's subject.

(FSS) immediately needs an explanation as to what the relevant terms occurring in its *definiens* mean. As to derived intentionality, I rely on standard accounts: there is a convention to the effect that both the name "Canberra" and a painting of Canberra represent Canberra. There is another convention to the effect that both the expression "romantic landscape" and a painting of a romantic landscape stand for a certain kind / denote a class of all and only the individuals that belong to that kind. Such conventions are enough in order to turn an un-interpreted sign – a verbal sign, an image – into its corresponding entity-*cum*-meaning – a symbol, an icon. To explain what "experiencing" means is instead both more problematic and more important, for experiencing has to account for the pictoriality of the picture.

One might think that this experiencing is nothing but the complex experience towards pictures Wollheim (1980[2]) labels *seeing-in*.[10] Wollheim describes this complex experience as the twofold experience in which, while consciously perceiving the material part of the picture, the image, one also consciously sees the depicted subject in it.

If we could stick to Wollheim's theory, perhaps (FSS) could be refined as follows, the First Syncretistic Refinement:

(FSR) A picture depicts a subject iff i) it is turned into an entity-*cum*-meaning and ii) one can have the twofold experience of seeing that subject in the picture's image while seeing that image.

intention-ally /?

As a matter of fact, the criticism that basically arises against Wollheim's theory is that there are many cases of pictures which involve no twofold experience, typically trompe l'œil paintings. For in trompe l'œil paintings one pays attention only to the subject depicted, not the image – otherwise, they would not be delusive.[11] Yet I think that this criticism misses the point. For, insofar as a trompe l'œil painting deceives one in the sense that when facing it, one only seems to see its subject, the painting is very far from working as a *picture*. Someone who is deceived by a trompe l'œil is in the very same boat as someone deluded by holograms or puppets. By merely seeming to see their subjects, one fails to consciously see all those items. Yet, insofar as one fails to have the right experience required for something to be a picture, one fails to appreciate its pictorially representational nature. Put in another way, realizing that something is a trompe l'œil amounts precisely to realizing that one does not face the painting's subject, but rather the painting. Thus, the complex experience involved from that point onwards in seeing the trompe l'œil turns out precisely to be the twofold experience which Wollheim indicates. At that point, one may start confronting himself or herself with a picture.[12]

illusive /?

But the main problem with this refinement is that it brings us no real step forwards. For, as Lopes rightly envisages,[13] merely appealing to seeing-in as such does not bring about a substantial theory; rather, this is what any theory of pictoriality must account for. For we all agree that in some sense or other, when faced with pictures we see their subjects in them. In my terms, such an appeal is just another way of stressing the experience constraint. Moreover, some explanation is due to account for the fact that, while consciously seeing a certain image, one consciously sees a subject in it. As pictorial experiences particularly show, the two parts of the twofold experience do not come apart. For, as Podro (1998) has efficaciously pointed out, one indirectly sees features of the subject which is seen in an image one directly sees in virtue of perceived features of that image: seeing-in is *inflected*.

Thus, we have to dig down deeper in order to understand what Wollheim's twofold experience really consists of, especially as regards its seeing-in fold. At this point, let me review recognitional theories. Such theories claim that pictures depict only if they mobilize the very same kind of recognitional abilities their subjects independently mobilize. Thus, one may conjecture that the seeing-in fold of the twofold experience is nothing but an *experience of recognition*. Seeing something in an image is nothing but recognizing that very something. This recognition indeed holds independently of whether that image turns into an icon or not: we recognize Canberra in a picture of Canberra or a

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landscape in a *genre*-picture in the very same way as we recognize faces in clouds or in the Martian rock.

Yet to say that we *mis*recognize those subjects is to be more precise. For those subjects are *not* what we really see, that is, the things that, once they are taken as pictures, figure as the pictures' material parts, the images. Thus, the seeing-in fold is unlike an experience of *successful* recognition, as when we seem to see our fiancée over there and in point of fact we do see her. For in the seeing-in case, even though we seem to see a certain subject, we rather see the object with which we are really faced, that is, the picture's image. Thus, since images are what we really see, the recognition experience is unsuccessful, as when we seem to see our fiancée over there and in point of fact we are seeing our lover; as we would say in such a case, we *mistake* our lover for our fiancée.[14] Moreover, insofar as seeing the object we are really faced with, the image, is a *conscious* phenomenon, our misrecognition of the subject there depicted is conscious as well. That is, if that recognition of the subject is illusory, it is *awarely* such: we awarely seem erroneously to see the subject in the image. This makes the aware misrecognition a part of a twofold experience: in Wollheim's terms, we attend not only the subject, but also the image.

We can thus see the grain of truth in illusion theories of depiction. Taken at face value – pictures depict insofar as they deceive us – these theories are obviously incorrect. Yet there is a sophisticated version of these theories, according to which a picture depicts something only if we consciously see the picture *as* that something.[15] According to this formulation, although we know that the image we are consciously facing is not the picture's subject, we are still forced to see that image as that subject. In this respect, we can rank that kind of experience, the seeing-in fold of the twofold experience we have when facing pictures, with all cases of aware perceptual illusions such as the experience of the Müller-Lyer lines as being different in length. For *qua* forms of *seeing-as*, all these mental states are first nonveridical, in that seeing something as *F* does not entail factive seeing that that something is *F*, hence that that something is *F*[16] – seeing the Müller-Lyer lines as being different in length does not entail seeing that the lines are different in length, hence that the lines are different in length; seeing the image as the picture's subject does not entail seeing that the image is that subject, hence that the image is that subject. Second, those states are *experiences* – although we well know that the lines are identical in length or that the image is not the picture's subject, we are still forced to *see* the lines as different in length or the image as that subject. In this way, the sophisticated

are the lover and the fiancée the same person /?

ther is no such word as *awarely* – is there another way to say this/?

look at /?

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version of the illusion theories can be nicely embedded into the syncretistic theory.[17] For the syncretist holds that the seeing-in fold of the two-fold experience we have when facing pictures is the perceptual illusion of consciously misrecognizing the image as the picture's subject.[18]

I am thus holding that, *qua* twofold experience, the pictorial experience *involves* a perceptual illusion known as such, not that the pictorial experience is merely a perceptual illusion known as such. A perceptual illusion, even known as such, is not a pictorial experience for it is not twofold. Knowingly seeing the Müller-Lyer lines as being different in length involves no twofold experience. For simply one illusorily sees the lines, he or she sees no material part of a picture beyond illusorily seeing that part as the picture's subject.

To be sure, a *mere* misrecognition of something involves a certain mental complexity. For, insofar as that something is not where it is supposedly experienced, that misrecognition is an illusory experience of that very something. This experience goes along with an unaware perception of what the perceiver is actually facing: the image. Yet my point is this: once a misrecognition of something is recognized as such, that very misrecognition is precisely embedded into a twofold experience of the same kind as a pictorial experience. For the fact that such a misrecognition is aware implies that the nonconscious perception of what actually confronts the perceiver becomes a conscious perception. Thus, the perceiver finally entertains precisely an aware perception of what she is actually facing plus a misrecognition now known as such of the subject which is not there and is now merely seen *in* what the perceiver is actually facing. There indeed is a phenomenological change in one's experience when one passes from a mere misrecognition of a subject to a twofold experience that not only involves that misrecognition recognized as such, but also a conscious perception of what one is actually facing.

In this respect, the paradigmatic cases of depictions are not example of trompe l'œil as such, as the naïve version of the illusion theories claims, but instances of trompe l'œil which are recognized as such. For examples of trompe l'œil which are recognized as such are the picture's images that we are forced to see as the picture's subjects; that is, they are things which are both consciously seen and consciously misrecognized as such subjects.

Some deny that, once trompe l'œil*s* are recognized as such, they are objects of a twofold experience, for the material part of the picture, the image, is not altogether seen.[19] Yet consider puppets. Once the viewer realizes that she is not facing a human but a puppet, the

> can a misrecognintion be aware /?

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phenomenological quality of her experience dramatically changes: from mistaking a puppet as a human, she passes to consciously misrecognizing a puppet to be a human while consciously seeing that puppet itself. Now, puppets are nothing but examples of 3-D trompe l'œil. So, too do instances of 2-D trompe l'œil unsurprisingly involve the same process.

Let me proceed. By appealing to conscious mis*recognition*, the syncretistic theory intends to vindicate not only the illusion, but also recognition theories. According to these theories, we mobilize the very same recognitional abilities with respect to certain subjects both when these abilities are successfully manifested, that is, when we really face those subjects, and when they are unsuccessfully manifested, that is, when we really face the images themselves. As Lopes points out, this means that the very same recognitional ability is mobilized with three-dimensional objects (the subjects) and two-dimensional ones (the images, at least when they are not three-dimensional items such as puppets or sculptures). For Lopes, to explain why this is so is a mere matter for psychologists.[20]

I disagree with Lopes just on this last point. If that explanation were just a matter for psychologists, then the fact that we have those recognitional capacities would basically be just a matter of how we are hardwired (on some supervenient hypothesis of the psychological on the physical). Hence, if we were differently hard-wired, we would have different recognitional capacities enabling us to see subjects for example also in verbal signs. If this were the case, then the distinction between pictures and other signs would merely be a *de facto* one; in a world in which we were so differently hard-wired, verbal signs would work as depictions. Yet to my mind that distinction is a *de jure* one. If we fail to see subjects in words, that failure has to do with how words are rather than with how *we* are. A world in which words were depictions of their subjects would thus be an impossible world.

One has therefore to find a principled reason as to why aware (mis) recognition of an image as the picture's subject can take place with images but not with words. One such explanation, moreover, must also account for why, as I remarked before, seeing-in is inflected – that is, one indirectly sees features of the subject which is seen in an image one directly sees in virtue of perceived features of that image.

In order to find what grounds the aware misrecognition of the picture's subject, let me reiterate that such a misrecognition can be elicited by both two-dimensional entities (paintings, photographs…) and three-dimensional entities (puppets, sculptures…). Thus, one may

the phrase is not complete

conjecture that there must be something that both two-dimensional and three-dimensional entities possess, in order for them to prompt that misrecognition.

Fortunately enough, there are properties of this kind: to stick to the label originally chosen by Von Ehrenfels (1988), *Gestalt*-qualities, meaning by this expression whatever leads an array of units of sensorially sensitive fields to turn into an organized entity. To give now another name for those organization properties, let me call them *grouping properties*. In Von Ehrenfels' original example, a series of sounds turns into a melody once those sounds are organized in a certain way. But the same of course may hold for an array of two-dimensional points (for instance, six two-dimensional points may be grouped into a certain rectangular whole). Moreover, in the case of spatial units, in order for them to be organized in a certain way they do not have to be two-dimensional. In the case for example of the Necker cube, independently of whether one is faced with an ambiguous two-dimensional picture or with an ambiguous three-dimensional item with no representational value, the units of what one is faced with may be grouped differently. As a result, differently oriented icons of a cube vs. differently oriented cubes are provided.

For my purposes, the organizational properties relative to foreground/background contrast are an important subset of the grouping properties. Background/foreground properties (from now on, b/f properties) are spatial groupings which involve a third dimension of depth. In order to perceive b/f properties, one has to perceive a third dimension along which units of a certain array may be located, namely depth. More precisely, depth is literally perceived in the case of a three-dimensional item yet in the case of a two-dimensional item is merely *visualized*, is seen when it is not there (the 2-D item has really no depth), in order for the relevant array of units in that item to be properly grouped according to a foreground/background contrast.

Now I am ready to say what grounds the aware misrecognition of a picture's subject through the aware perception of an image. As with anything else, that subject also has its own grouping properties that can be perceived as any such property. So, perceiving the relevant grouping properties in an image precisely enables the aware misrecognition of another thing, the picture's subject, when the subject in its turn has some grouping properties which are close to those grouping properties of the image. Thus, in order for that subject to be consciously misrecognized in an image, the subject and the image must approximately share some of their grouping properties, they must be similar in such properties.

> the sentence needs a main verb

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It is also now clear why seeing-in is inflected. The image possesses features, namely certain of its grouping properties, whose perception elicits the aware misrecognition of the picture's subject, insofar as that subject possesses some grouping properties that are very close to the grouping properties of the image.

Thus, the experiential factor *qua* necessary condition of depiction amounts to a conscious misrecognition of the picture's subject as grounded in perceiving some of the image's grouping properties insofar as they are close to some of the subject's grouping properties. Hence, this factor involves a re-evaluation of the old idea of an objective resemblance between a picture and its subject: closeness between the image's grouping properties and the subject's grouping properties is *objective* resemblance. All in all, therefore, the syncretist takes into account a great variety of claims in the perceptualist camp. In order for a picture to depict a certain subject, it must be experienced in a way which is grounded into perceiving some of its grouping properties, insofar as these properties are objectively similar to some of the subject's grouping properties.

Let me thus give the Syncretistic proposal in its second, final, Refinement:

> (SSR) A picture depicts a subject iff i) it is turned into an entity-*cum*-meaning and (ii) one can have the twofold experience of seeing that subject in the picture's image just in case she consciously misrecognizes that subject in consciously seeing that image, for that subject resembles the image in certain of its grouping properties.[21]

According to this definition, the second necessary condition of depiction concerning the experience constraint is a twofold experience whose seeing-in fold consists in an aware misrecognition of the picture's subject based on perceiving the grouping properties of the picture's image which resemble some grouping properties of its subject.[22]

3. Some advantages of the theory

Before considering some objections, let me just show some of the advantages of the theory. First of all, as you will remember, there seems to be a principled distinction between images and words; it does not seem to be accidental that words represent yet they do not depict what they are about. The syncretistic theory is able to account for this. For the syncretist, if a representation does not resemble its subject in some of its grouping properties, it cannot turn into an icon of that subject, it can at

most turn into a symbol of it. This is the basic difference between words and images: only the latter can be transformed into icons, for only the latter are such that one can grasp which of their grouping properties resemble their subject.

In order to find an answer to the question of what makes the difference between a verbal sign and an image, consider a case in which we legitimately think that a verbal sign has become an image. Take, for instance, the name "Alfred Hitchcock". Given our semantic conventions, this name stands for one of the greatest British movie directors. And now consider the famous logo of the director. No doubt, the logo stands for the director but is also a picture of him. But now suppose that the name were written in such a way as to roughly follow the contours of the face one sees in the logo:

No doubt, again, we would say that the name has become a picture of the director. For its units would be now grouped in a way roughly similar to the way in which the two-dimensional points in the logo are grouped, which is again roughly similar to the way in which the units in Hitchcock's face are grouped.[23]
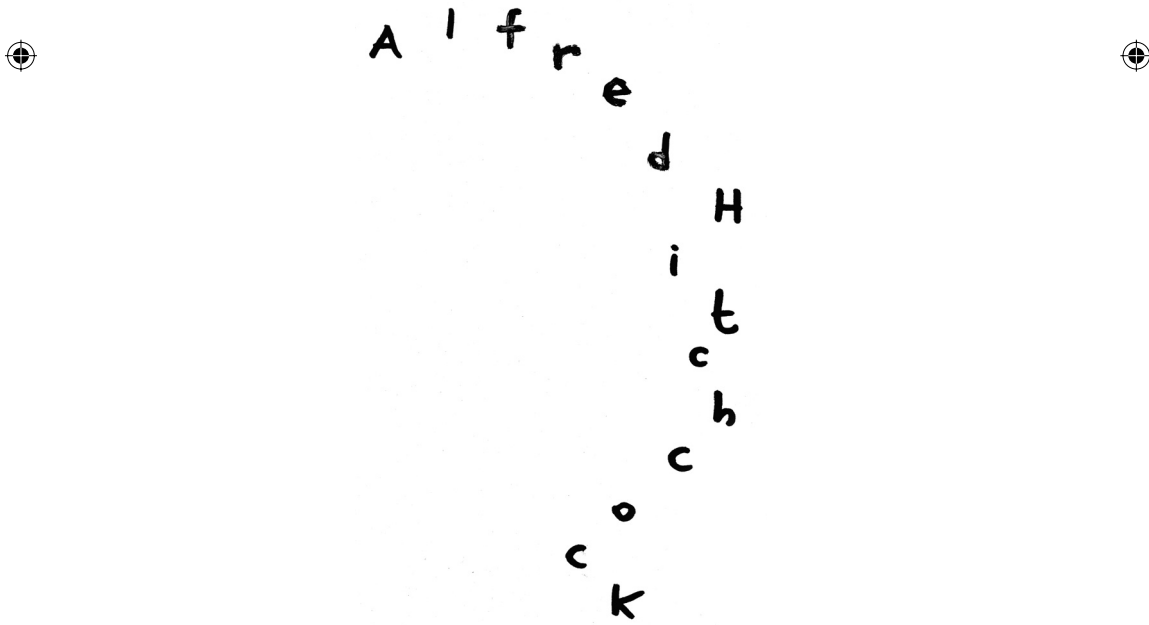

Figure 9.1   The name 'Alfred Hitchcock' written in a depictive form

PROOF

Consider moreover a case in which the pictorial character of a picture suddenly comes out of what was previously perceived as a mere assemblage of patches of color, as in the example of a picture of a dalmatian suddenly noticed in a cluster of black-and-white patches.[24] In this "dawning" case, the whole item one is faced with turns into a picture of a dalmatian once one groups some of the points in a "dalmanesque" way. As this kind of experience occurs in many other cases of picture recognition, such as experiences of line-tracing, of infant sketches, of primitive or sophisticated drawings (compare the case of the Nazca lines drawn on the Peruvian soil, whose pictorially representational character can be appreciated only when they are appropriately seen from above),[25] I can well conjecture that it always grounds picture recognition.

fixes /?

4. More on grouping properties

As we have seen, grouping properties have a fundamental role in the syncretistic theory. Grasping them both in the picture's image and in its subject enables an image to play its pictorial role. Yet one might immediately wonder whether appealing to such properties *eo ipso* re-evaluates the objective resemblance theory of depiction. For aren't these properties *subjective* properties – that is, properties of the experience one has when facing a picture – rather than *objective* properties of the material part of the picture, the image, hence of the picture's subject, which also is a material (kind) of being?[26]

Yet that grouping properties are objective rather than subjective can be argued for by appealing to several evidences. First of all, note that in the simplest case in which grouping properties are appealed to – that is, when a two-dimensional array of units is organized in a mere two-dimensional way – a certain organized two-dimensional whole disappears once the array on which it lies basically changes. In a famous case pointed out by Kanizsa (1979), we no longer grasp a hexagon in a certain array of lines once these lines are put into a different jumble of lines that forms a new array. This case shows that not all theoretically imaginable ways of grouping units in a certain array are really available, but only those that the actual location of such units really allows: that is, the groupings that are *actually graspable* in one's experience of the array.

To be sure, one might still wonder whether in the case of pictures grouping properties are really objective properties of something. For, as ambiguous pictures notoriously show, one and the same image may be such that, depending on the way one sees it, its units are differently

grouped so as to provide different icons – compare the famous duck-rabbit case, which one can see both as (a picture of) a duck and as (a picture of) a rabbit, or a typical painting by Arcimboldo, which one can see both as (a picture of) a face and as (a picture of) a bowl of fruit and vegetables.

Yet ambiguous pictures only show that grouping, which takes place along (spatial, temporal) dimensions, is *direction-dependent*, not that it is subjective or in any way perspectival. Thus, in the duck-rabbit picture, for instance, if you group the points of the image *in the left-to-right direction*, you will be led to see a rabbit, but if you group the points *in the opposite direction*, you will see a duck.[27] Since, moreover, grouping grounds the seeing-in fold of the twofold experience, which as I said may occur both with objects that are pictures of the seen-in subjects and with objects that are not such, it must be stressed that grouping may take place precisely in the same way not only with ambiguous pictures, but also with ambiguous three-dimensional objects. Once you focus on *certain* corners of the three-dimensional Necker cube, you will be led to see that three-dimensional object as a cube with a *certain* face confronting you, yet if you focus on *other* corners of that object, you will be led to see it as a cube with *another* face confronting you.

Of course, being direction-dependent makes grouping properties *relational* properties – they are relations to an orienting point of view – but this does not make them less objective[28] and not even perspectival, if perspectivality is the hallmark of subjective properties. In fact, once you have fixed a particular grouping of an ambiguous picture, or of an ambiguous three-dimensional object for what matters, you can still see the image /the object as looking bigger or smaller, depending on where you are located with respect to it, in the very same way as you can see a tree as looking bigger or smaller depending or your location with respect to it, or even a coin as looking round or elliptical, depending on how it is located with respect to you. Thus, direction dependence does not make a grouping property perspectival. Which is as it should be. For perspectives regard the ways in which the object we actually face, the image, is perceived, not the procedures that can be perceptually operated on by means of grasping its grouping properties.

One might still rejoin that the case of reversible ambiguous pictures is a counterexample to the objective account of grouping properties. Consider the case of a picture of Che Guevara which is seen as a picture of Lenin once it is turned upside down. One might argue that what here counts for differently grouping one and the same array of units is the perspective change – a subjective matter. Once again, however,

remember that grouping properties are direction-dependent. The pictorial change occurring in the case of a reversible ambiguous picture can easily be explained by saying that, if I arrange a certain array of units *from upwards to downwards* – that is, from a *certain* point of origin – then I see a certain face (Che's face) in it; yet if I arrange the very same array *from downwards to upwards* – from *another* point of origin – I see another face (Lenin's face) in it.

5. Old and new objections against invoking objective resemblance for depiction

By mobilizing resemblance in grouping properties between the picture and its subject, the syncretistic theory appeals to objective resemblance in order to account for depiction. Yet as I said before, many philosophers today believe that theories of depiction appealing to objective resemblance are inexorably doomed to fail. In this section, I will try to defend those theories, at least partially – that is, only insofar as the appeal to an objective resemblance is embedded within the framework of a syncretistic theory – from old and new objections.

In (1968), Goodman notoriously launched a powerful attack against objective resemblance theories. One can single out at least four Goodmanian objections against such theories. To begin with, Goodman remarks that while resembling is a both reflexive and symmetric relation, representing is not.[29] Goodman leaves somehow open whether by "representing" he means merely *being derivatively about* or rather *depicting*, but in either case Goodman is correct. A verbal sign is derivatively about something, but that very something is (normally)[30] not the sign itself, and so too for a picture. A verbal sign is derivatively about something else and yet that very something is not derivatively about the sign, and so too for a picture. Moreover, a picture does not depict itself, nor its subject depicts it either. But since in the syncretistic account depicting entails being derivatively about something, this objection is rather a welcome result. Insofar as being derivatively about something is a necessary condition for depicting, the latter inherits from the former its non-reflexivity and non-symmetry. Yet this does not mean that resemblance has nothing to do with depiction, but that it rather affects only the necessary condition of depiction centered on the experience of aware misrecognition, by grounding this experiential factor.

On this concern, note that (SSR) does not say that something depicts a subject iff i) it is turned into an entity-*cum*-meaning and ii) it resembles that subject. For if it said that, it would be quite easy to find

does a subject depict itself /?

counterexamples to this idea, as in all cases of self-referential expressions, that not only represent but also resemble themselves.[31] Rather, its second condition concerns the conscious experience of misrecognition, which is moreover grounded by appealing to similarity in grouping properties between the picture and the picture's subject. In other words, similarity in grouping properties is a necessary condition not directly of depiction, but only of the twofold experience that turns out to be an aware misrecognition of the picture's subject while awarely seeing the picture's image.

Please provide an alternative

The above welcome result is confirmed by the scrutiny of the second criticism that Goodman addresses to objective resemblance theories, namely that resemblance is ubiquitous and therefore it is not a sufficient condition for depiction. According to Goodman, since everything may well resemble everything else in a certain respect, there is no point in saying that a picture depicts its subject insofar as the former resembles the latter. For in that case one might well say for example that a picture depicts another picture insofar as the former resembles the latter in being a picture.[32]

Now, the only thing that this criticism really points out is that resemblance is a *relative* notion: speaking of resemblance *per se* is nonsense, for an item's resemblance to an(other) item is always resemblance *in a certain respect*. To be sure, this conceptual analysis of resemblance would make an appeal to resemblance for the purpose of depiction vacuous if the theorist said that any picture resembles its subject *in some respect or other*: a certain picture resembles its subject in color, another resembles its subject in shape, and so on. Yet my appeal to grouping properties says that a picture resembles its subject in a *specific* respect, namely in some of its grouping properties.

A third criticism raised by Goodman says that since one can depict something which does not exist, yet resemblance is always a relation to existent items, then depicting a subject does not consist in resembling that subject.[33] If this criticism were right, it would show that resemblance is not even a necessary condition (albeit indirectly) of depiction.[34]

Here matters are delicate. First of all, Goodman assimilates cases of depictions of non-existents to generic depictions, namely pictures of something or other of a certain kind (for example a depiction of Pegasus is for him nothing but a generic depiction of a winged horse).[35] If this were the case, however, nothing particularly devastating for an appeal to objective resemblance in depiction would follow. As I have already claimed, although a *generic* picture does not depict anything in particular, it is a depiction only if its generic subject, *something or other*

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of a certain kind, can be seen in it when facing the picture insofar as the picture resembles it in certain of their grouping properties. That is, the picture has some grouping properties such that there is something or other of a certain kind that can be seen in the picture insofar as it roughly has those properties.[36]

So, generic pictures, such as a picture of a romantic landscape, are not put into question by this objection. What is put into question is the idea that a putatively singular pictorial representation whose supposed particular subject does not exist (in some sense or other of the term "to exist") can be a picture insofar as it depicts that subject: for example, not only a picture of Superman, the famous superhero, but also a picture of Vulcan, the actually nonexistent scientific posit which was supposed by the astronomer Leverrier to lie between Mercury and the Sun, and even a picture of Whack, the necessary nonexistent horse which is all black and all white at one and the same time.[37] In a nutshell, pictures of fictional individuals, of possible individuals, and of impossible individuals, all of which (in some sense or other) do not exist.

Now, Goodman's criticism assumes without argument not only that there are no such things as nonexistent entities of each of the previous three kinds but also that, even if there were such entities, they could not be tied by a resemblance relation to an actually existing object such as a picture. As anyone involved in ontological debates about *ficta*, *possibilia* and *impossibilia* well knows, the first assumption is quite disputable. Many people nowadays believe that there are fictional entities, some believe that there are possible entities, while others (albeit a very few) believe that there are impossible entities. But even the second assumption is controversial. Should it turn out that there are (at least some of) the above nonexistent entities, in order for his criticism to be legitimate Goodman should also prove that resemblance is an existence-entailing relation (like catching, kicking) rather than a non-existence entailing relation (like thinking, imagining).[38]

Thus, a real assessment of Goodman's third criticism would involve a careful scrutiny of the options here involved. I cannot deal with all of the details here, but it is quite likely that in the end the syncretistic theory will achieve the two following contrasting results. First, some putative pictures of non-existents are really such – typically, pictures of fictional entities, for i) there are such things as fictional entities, although they do not (in some sense or other) exist and ii) since *ficta* have (in some sense or other) grouping properties, then putatively pictorial representations of those entities really resemble them in this

respect, notwithstanding the fact that they do not (in some sense or other) exist. Second, some other putative pictures of non-existents are not really such – typically, pictures of impossible entities, which are such that i) it is hardly the case that there are such entities, but also ii) should it turn out that there really are such entities, they would neither actually nor possibly possess grouping properties to be shared with the relevant representations.[39]

Also the fourth, and final, criticism by Goodman suffers from a similar fate. According to this final criticism, a picture cannot resemble its subject for not only every representation is a representation-as – it is not merely derivatively about its subject but rather qualifies the subject it is derivatively about as being in a certain way, having a certain property – but also by being such a representation-as, every representation carves out the world in such a way that it is meaningless to suppose that there is already something 'out there' waiting for a picture to depict it insofar as it is resembled by the picture.[40]

Unclear, please rephrase

Again, this objection presupposes a very strong yet debatable assumption, namely Goodman's ontological constructivism. For one thing, it leads to ontological relativism. According to this position, we cannot count how many things there really are in the world. For the number of things occurring in the overall domain of what there is depends on the way we carve out the world by means of the concepts we mobilize in our representations: if we count by physical bodies, there is just an individual over there; but if we count by collections of cells, there are a lot of things over there; and if we count by persons, who knows (depending on whether your favorite theory of persons admits multiple personalities, etc.). Some may take this as a welcome result, others as a disastrous one.

All in all, therefore, with respect to Goodman's four objections against appealing to objective resemblance in accounting for depiction, the outcome is as follows. As to the second couple of objections, they rely on too many disputable assumptions in order to raise a real problem for depiction theories in terms of objective resemblance. Granted, the first couple of objections are the most problematic ones. Yet as to these objections, the syncretistic theory can globally reply that they only show that objective resemblance is not a sufficient condition for depiction. For those objections well allow objective resemblance between the picture and its subject in a *particular* respect, namely, in some grouping properties, to be an indirectly necessary condition for depiction. Resemblance in grouping properties is indeed a necessary condition of the relevant necessary condition for depiction, that accounting for the

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pictoriality of a picture, that is, the twofold experience of aware misrecognition of the subject's image while awarely seeing the image itself.

This is definitely a good outcome for the syncretistic theory. For by embedding objective resemblance merely in the experience constraint for depiction, the theory precisely shows that objective resemblance can play only a necessary but not a sufficient role for depiction. According to the syncretistic theory, one has to take out of the experience constraint whatever accounts for the mere *representational* value of a depiction and put it in a different constraint, the intentionality constraint, as another independent necessary condition for depiction.[41]

The above considerations also suggest how the syncretistic theory can deal with another problem that recently Lopes (1996) raised against accounting for depiction by appealing to objective resemblance. For Lopes, there are two further constraints that an objective resemblance theory has to fulfill, namely *diversity* and *independence*. Yet it turns out that one such a theory cannot fulfill those constraints at one and the same time: it fulfils one at the expense of the other.

On the one hand, according to the *diversity constraint*, since in point of fact there are many different pictorial styles, the respects according to which a picture's image must resemble the picture's subject have to be different. Depending on which different pictorial style is at issue, color vs. shape vs. other factors are the different respects under which a picture and its subject have to be respectively similar.[42] On the other hand, according to the *independence constraint* a picture must resemble its subject independently of its intentionality: that is, you don't have to know what a picture is derivatively about – what its subject is – in order to know that the first resembles the second.[43] Yet for Lopes an objective resemblance theory cannot fulfill both constraints at one and the same time. If it fulfils the first, the second cannot be satisfied: that is, you have to know what the picture is derivatively about in order to know under which respect the picture resembles its subject.[44]

How does the syncretistic theory fare with these two further constraints? Well, precisely because it is a syncretistic theory that just embeds the relevant resemblance factor as an (indirect) necessary condition for depiction, it can avail itself of altogether failing to satisfy both constraints. On the one hand, there is just one respect under which all pictures resemble their subjects, which is precisely the "grouping properties" respect. For what already holds of rough sketches also holds of caricatures as well as of any picture in any matter which non-realistic style (an *avant-garde* style as well as a "primitive" one) is painted. In order for the relevant picture to be an icon of its subject, it must be such

that one consciously misrecognizes that subject in consciously seeing the image; one can have such a misrecognition only insofar as the image resembles that subject in some of its grouping properties. So, there is no need for the syncretistic theory to satisfy the diversity constraint.

On the other hand, there is no need for the theory to satisfy the independence constraint either. You may recall that grouping properties are direction dependent, so that, in the case of ambiguous pictures, different ways of putting together one and the same array of units according to a different direction amount to different grouping properties. Now, as I have remarked before, the grouping switch may well happen independently of any pictorial matter, namely when there is only *one* thing, either two- or three-dimensional, to be faced and no twofold experience leading to the grasping of a pictorial representation is involved. For example, in grouping four two-dimensional points either by linking each of them with its adjacent one or by connecting the top one and the bottom one via a vertical line and the left one and the right one via a horizontal line, one can see either a square or a cross; as one may put it, one can see the array of points one is facing either *as* a square or *as* a cross – analogously with the 3-D Necker cube. Yet once pictorial matters are at issue, we have at our disposal items that involve a twofold experience of two things, that is, of both the picture's image and the picture's subject, different intentionality ascriptions, that is, ascriptions to one and the same picture of *different* subjects, may well prompt an individual to see respectively those subjects in one and the same image. For those different intentionality ascriptions prompt that individual to grasp different grouping properties of the very same units of that image.

Take again the duck-rabbit figure. Seeing the image *as* (*a picture of*) *a duck* involves grouping the image's units in such a way that leads one to see a duck. Yet seeing the image *as* (*a picture of*) *a rabbit* involves looking to *differently* group the very same image's units in such a way that leads one to see a rabbit.[45]

To put things more precisely, one may see one and the same image as a certain something – once one groups its units in a certain way – or as another something – once one groups its units in another way. These different seeings-as may well correspond to different seeings-in, for example seeing a duck in the image rather than seeing a rabbit in it. Yet those different seeings-as, hence these different seeings-in, are made manifest by the different intentionality attributions one gives to the image by treating it as an ambiguous picture. This is why we describe the experiential situation at stake as the seeing of the image

because of those /?

now as a certain *picture of Y* now as a certain *picture of Z* rather than simply saying that the image is seen now *as Y* now *as Z*. If further different intentionality attributions were given to the image, further different seeings-in the image would be mobilized, *provided that* these *new* seeings-in were again compatible with the *original* different seeings-as; that is, the original different ways of grouping the image's units that such intentionality attributions again elicit. So for example, one might see the duck-rabbit image either as a picture of a goose or as a picture of a hare. These different intentionality attributions would prompt one to see either a goose or a hare in the image, insofar as these new seeings-in are respectively compatible with the original different ways of grouping the image's units that again the new intentionality attributions elicit. These are indeed the ways that, given the previous intentionality attributions, made one originally see the image either as a picture of a duck or as a picture of a rabbit.

In this respect, consider the following interesting case proposed by Kennedy (1993).[46] In this example, three images are lined up in such a way that, due to the different way the foreground/background contrast is pointed out by different distributions of black and white within the same contours, one definitely takes the first but not the third image as (a picture of) a face, with some uncertainties as regards the second one. But, one may go on reflecting, those images are also such that one can definitely take the third but not the first one as (a picture of) an arcipelagus, with some uncertainties as regards the second one. One may thus say that the second image is an ambiguous picture, insofar as one can see it both as (a picture of) a face and as (a picture of) an arcipelagus.

For the syncretistic theory, the situation at stake is pretty clear. The different black-and-white distribution in the three yet similar images makes it the case that certain different ways of arranging the very same units according to direction can be differently seen in the three images: only one way – involving a grouping of some points as parts of one and the same whole – can be easily seen in the first image, only another way – involving a grouping of some points as different wholes – can be easily seen in the third image, and both ways can be seen in the second image. Now, ascribing a *certain* intentionality to the *first* drawing, namely taking the image as a picture *of a face*, justifies the perceptual grasping of the *first* way, hence a certain seeing-in; correspondingly, ascribing *another* intentionality to the *third* drawing, namely taking the image as a picture of an *arcipelagus*, justifies the perceptual grasping of the *second* way, hence another seeing-in; and taking the second picture

What's an arcipelagus /?

as an ambiguous picture, that is, either as a picture of a face or as a picture of an arcipelagus, elicits either seeings-in, insofar as it justifies the perceptual grasping of those two ways respectively.

Thus, knowing what the picture is of leads one to mobilize those grouping properties that make its image close to the picture's subject and thereby contribute that representation to be an icon of that subject. In a nutshell, what would be a drawback in a mere objective resemblance theory of depiction turns out to be an advantage for syncretism.

6. Gesturing toward a conclusion

From the role intentionality plays in order to grasp the perceptual grouping properties enabling one to see the picture's subject in an image, I can draw the following morale. One may well think that what a theory of depiction has to focus on is what accounts for the picture's *pictoriality*, namely what makes it a pictorial representation over and above its generically being a representation. In this respect, the stress of the syncretistic theory should be on condition i) only of (SSR), which precisely accounts for a picture's pictoriality. Yet the above cases show that ascribing a certain derivative intentionality to a picture is not irrelevant for singling out what makes it a picture. In this sense, the above cases show that for the syncretistic theory there is a sort of reflexive equilibrium between the two necessary and merely jointly sufficient conditions for depiction. Syncretism is not simply a two-tiered theory of depiction, for what accounts for the intentionality of the picture also enables one to see what accounts for its pictoriality.

On the one hand, let me recap that ascribing intentionality to something obviously suffices in order for that something to turn into an entity-*cum*-meaning, but it does not suffice in order for that very something to depict. What is also required is that one can see its subject in that something, in the above-explained sense: one can consciously misrecognize that subject while consciously seeing the image, by grasping some of the image's grouping properties which are similar to those of the subject itself.

This means that, theoretically speaking, there are a lot of candidates that may be the picture's subject, that is, all those things that can be seen in the picture's image by grasping the close grouping properties of the image. Yet only one of these candidates becomes (at least at a time) the picture's subject; namely, the candidate which is conventionally so chosen by ascribing to the picture a certain intentionality. In this sense, one may draw a distinction between the *pictorial content* of the

[margin note: moral/conclusion /?]

picture – whatever can be seen in its image – and its *intentional content* – what can not only be seen in the image but it is also conventionally chosen as the picture's subject – so that the first type of content has definitely a broader extension than the second.[47]

Let me give some examples. Take a picture of Madonna. Definitely, this could not have been the picture of a dinosaur, for no dinosaur can be seen in it: in fact, no grouping properties of its can be grasped that are similar to those of a dinosaur. Yet it could have been a picture not only of Madonna, but also of many other individuals, for example Marylin Monroe or Evita Peron, namely of all subjects that can be seen in it and which taken together constitute the pictorial content of that picture. All those people indeed approximately share the very same grouping properties with those relevant in the picture. Yet none of these individuals but Madonna herself is the intentional content of the picture, for there is a convention to the effect that that picture is a picture of Madonna. Of course the convention can change, if only temporarily. As a result, what was before a picture of Madonna may well become a picture of some other member of the pictorial content, for example, Evita Peron. This is precisely what happens when we see the movie *Evita*, where the character of Evita is played by Madonna. The (social) outcome of watching that movie is that, at least in the context of watching the movie, a convention arises to the effect that the picture is no longer a picture of Madonna but of Evita, which as I just said was one of the things one could already see in it. Analogously with Raphael's portrait of Plato in *The School of Athens* whose model has notoriously been Leonardo da Vinci. Definitely, the picture is a picture of Plato, but it might have well been a picture of Leonardo insofar as Leonardo can be seen in it as well (and for some purposes, it could even temporarily become such a picture – just imagine that Raphael, in desperately looking for Leonardo, had shown his painting to someone by asking her whether she knew where he could have found *that man*).

On the other hand, however, consider again the case of ambiguous pictures. Here one starts from a certain intentional content, a specific subject of the picture, in order to grasp its pictorial content, the classes of the things that can be seen in it. As a result, if one changes the former content the second content also changes; another class of things is focused on, for *different* grouping properties of the very same units in one and the same image turn out to be mobilized. As I said before, in the duck-rabbit picture one starts from seeing the picture as a picture *of a duck* in order to consider the class of things that constitute its pictorial

content – ducks, but also twin-ducks, geese and so on. Yet once one sees the picture as a picture *of a rabbit*, then the pictorial content of the picture changes – one can see in it rabbits, but also twin-rabbits, hares and so on – insofar as different grouping properties of the very same units of the image are mobilized. Analogously with the case of the second image in Kennedy's previously considered experiment involving the picture of a face which, by means of certain modifications of its black-and-white patches, turns into a picture of an arcipelagus. Depending on whether it is seen either as a picture of a face or a picture of an arcipelagus, that image is such that a different pictorial content is mobilized, different class of things can be seen in it, insofar as different grouping properties of the very same units of that image are mobilized.

In point of fact, one might even say that all pictures are *potentially ambiguous*.[48] For a different intentionality ascription to a picture may not only turn that picture into a picture of something else, but makes it such that a different pictorial content is thereby mobilized, by grouping the picture's units in another way.[49]

Notes

1. In the literature on depiction, three-dimensional representations are usually ruled out of consideration. For reasons to be explained below, I take this as a mistake. For syncretism, three-dimensional iconic representations are prototypical cases of depictions, on which two-dimensional depictions have to be matched.
2. Taking depictions as a kind of representations, as I do, rules out the idea that the problem of depiction is that of explaining what is depicting *tout court*, that is, independently of whether depicting is a kind of representing. For the distinction between these two approaches to the issue of depiction, compare Abell (2009). The former approach draws a distinction between the *vehicle* and the *content* of a representation and claims that the problem of depiction has to be accounted at the "vehicle"-level, by pointing either to features of the vehicle itself or to the way we grasp it. It seems to me hard to deny that it is essential for depictions to have content. For they either are about something or are anyway assessable as to their correctness. This is why in my opinion the former account is the correct one.
3. Peirce's (1960) doctrine of icons as signs that signify by resembling their subjects is a modern version of these theories. For contemporary attempts in this direction compare Abell (2009), Blumson (2008), Hyman (2006).
4. For which, compare Gombrich (1960), although the idea notoriously traces back to Plato.
5. As Walton himself (1990, p. 303) underlies.
6. For a passionate defence of the phenomenological position, compare Spinicci (2008).

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7. In the perceptualist front, one often replies to this semioticist claim by saying that there are at least certain pictures, the so-called *transparent* pictures, that are such that one can "read off" its subject from the picture itself; photographs, whose subject stand in a causal relation with the picture itself, are normally taken as the paradigmatic case of such pictures. Compare on this Walton (1984). Yet, as Davies (2006, pp. 185–8) has rightly noted, it is not really the case that there are two kinds of pictures, transparent and non-transparent ones. Transparent pictures are just those pictures whose subject is hitherto ascribed to them on a causal basis. Yet such pictures are pictures in the very same sense as non-transparent pictures. In point of fact, take the famous case of the Holy Shroud of Turin. If recent studies on it are correct, it is a footprint produced by the causal impact on the linen of the corpse wrapped in it, which the Christian tradition pretends to be Jesus' corpse. But suppose that it turned out that the Shroud is a fake, as many have suspected. It would nevertheless remain a picture of Jesus, even if the link between it and Jesus would no longer be (as believers pretend) causal, but conventional.

8. Compare for example Dretske (1995), Searle (1983).

9. Someone may object that, although they are quite immaterial, holograms or mirror-images are also pictures. Compare for example Casati (1991, p. 8). Yet by "material" I do not mean anything too substantive – even holograms and mirror-images, if they have pictorially representational value, have something which can be considered a material part of a picture in my sense. As we will see later, in order for something to work as a picture, it must allow for a twofold experience in which its subject is seen in it while seeing it in an aware manner. In order for this experience to occur, picture and subject must obviously be *distinct* items.

10. It is rather unfortunate that Wollheim reserved one and the same label, "seeing-in", both to the complex experience of a picture and to the component of that experience involving the picture's subject. From now on, I will use the label only for that component and I will speak of the complex experience as the twofold experience.

11. Compare for example Levinson (1998, p. 228), Lopes (1996, p. 49).

12. This reply is envisaged by Levinson (1998, p. 228). Compare also Wollheim himself (1987, p. 62).

13. Compare Lopes (1996, p. 50).

14. Insofar as the "no success" aspect of the mis-recognitional experience of a certain subject reveals that that experience goes along with the perception of another object (the image), that aspect is basically what makes the mis-recognitional experience different from a successful recognitional experience. This underlies the fact that people untrained to pictures can react to pictures in the very same way as they react to their subjects. Compare on this Prinz (1993).

15. For a close formulation of the sophisticated version, compare Schier (1986, pp. 10–11).

16. Compare Dretske (1969), Mulligan (1988, p. 142).

17. Newall (2009) maintains that this embedment holds only in cases of most pictures but not in cases of *trompe l'œils* or similar pictures, in which pictorial experience amounts just to the aware perceptual illusion in question.

PROOF

Yet as I said above, insofar as they are pictures *trompe l'œils* are no exception, they involve the same kind of twofold experience as ordinary pictures do. More about this soon below.

18. This assimilation of "as-if" seeing-as – to use a label originally provided by Hermerén (1969, pp. 34–8) – to the seeing-in fold of the twofold experience we have when facing pictures makes "as-if" seeing-as different from another kind of seeing-as. This is the seeing-as grounding that seeing-in fold and consisting in grouping items of a sensorially sensitive field into a certain whole. On *this* seeing-as, see immediately later in the text. Yet the fact that seeing-as has to be modulated variously should not surprise anyone. As Wittgenstein noticed, as far as seeing-as is concerned "there are here hugely many interrelated phenomena and possible concepts" (1953, p. 199). Or, says Walton, "the problem of the nature of depiction is, at bottom, the problem of the nature of the relevant variety of seeing-as" (1990, p. 300). To my knowledge, Levinson (1998) has first defended the idea that the seeing-in fold of the twofold experience amounts to an "as-if" seeing-as. Yet he fails to ground this seeing-as in the second kind of seeing-as that has to do with a perceptual grouping operation. See on this immediately below.

19. Compare Newall (2009).

20. Compare Lopes (2005a, p. 161).

21. As regards ii), (SSR) has some consonance with what Davies (2006, pp. 171–3) writes on this topic. Kennedy, Juricevic, and Bai (2003) also stress the importance of grouping properties in depiction. Yet they do not explicitly appeal to resemblance in grouping properties between the picture and its subject in order to account for the pictoriality of the former. To account for some cases of depiction, Blumson (2010) appeals to resemblance in b/f properties, which he conceives to be centered properties (that is, properties instantiated in centered possible worlds). Yet he also describes these properties as perspectival properties, which they are not (see later).

22. In this chapter, I am focusing on visual pictures. But note that the very same account may be provided for pictures affecting any other sensorial modality. An auditory picture, for instance, is such only if someone consciously mishears its subject in hearing its sounding image, insofar as he or she perceives some of the grouping properties of the latter resembling certain grouping properties of the former.

23. True enough, one may note that the similarity here occurs between the image and the face's *profile*, so that one may also wonder whether this is not always the case as far as pictures and their subjects are concerned. For this would explain the sense according to which, independently of the ways from which the picture's image is perceived, the picture's subject is always *aspectual*, in the sense that one of the subject's aspects has been so to speak crystallized into the picture. Compare Casati (1991). I am quite happy to accept the two suggestions that in point of fact the subject is always an aspect, or a facet, of an individual and that similarity subsists between the image and that individual's facet. Yet it remains that, as the "name-logo" example shows, the similarity at issue is always a similarity in the grouping properties of the image and of the individual's facet.

24. This case is pointed out by Lopes (2005a, pp. 167–8).

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25. Saying that the Nazca lines can be perceived in their pictorially representational value only from above does not have to lead one astray. The "from above" point of view serves only in order for one to "cut" the right objects to be faced with, so that she can see in them the various subjects (birds, lizards, monkeys...). Once that "cutting" operation is performed, everything goes as always: independently on whether that object looks bigger or smaller depending on the perceiver's location, the perceiver sees the relevant subject in it by grasping in it the relevant grouping properties. For more on the distinction between perspectival properties and grouping properties, see below.

26. For an account of grouping properties as subjective properties, compare Peacocke (1983, pp. 24–6). See also MacPherson (2006).

27. For an account of ambiguous pictures appealing to such a difference in grouping properties, compare Chisholm (1993). On direction-dependence of these properties, see Kennedy, Juricevic, and Bai (2003, p. 349).

28. Many other people have claimed that being relational does not transform a perceptual property into a subjective property; compare for example Hopkins (1998) on outline shape (the solid angle to be traced from one's eyes to the contours of the perceived object) or Schellenberg (2008) on situation-dependent properties (the properties a thing has for the fact of being located in a certain environment with respect to the perceiver). I do not however want to push this comparison with these authors further. For appealing both to outline shape and to situation-dependent properties are *objective* accounts of perspectival properties, which many take as the paradigm case of subjective properties. Noë's (2002) reconstruction of perspectival properties as occlusion properties is an explicit attempt in this direction. Yet independently of whether such accounts are correct, perspectival properties are not grouping properties. See immediately below.

29. Compare Goodman (1968, pp. 3–4).

30. That is, if one puts aside cases of self-reference.

31. I owe this point to Blumson (2008).

32. Compare Goodman (1968, p. 5).

33. Compare Goodman (1968, p. 25).

34. As Goodman explicitly says for "representing" meaning *being derivatively about*: "nor is resemblance *necessary* for reference; almost anything may stand for almost anything else" (1968, p. 5).

35. Compare Goodman (1968, pp. 21–3).

36. *Pace* Hopkins (1998, pp. 10–11), there is no problem in (partially) accounting for generic depiction in terms of objective resemblance. Granted, this way of putting things raises a problem for generic depictions of *non-instantiated kinds*, such as a purported picture of a unicorn. But this is just a particular case of the problem concerning depictions of non-existents, for which see immediately below. One might certainly say that in all such cases of depiction "resembling" does not express a relational property (compare Hyman (2006, p. 65)), but since objective resemblance *is* a relation, appealing to a *different* monadic property of resemblance would hardly involve objective resemblance in accounting for such cases.

37. For this example, compare originally Twardowski (1982, p.106).
38. As, for instance, Chisholm (1967) claims. For a brief discussion of this point, compare Blumson (2009); Hyman (2006, p. 66 fn. 12).
39. On this compare also Sorensen (2002). For a believer in objective resemblance, a traditional way of dealing with the problem of depiction of *possible* entities precisely consists in appealing to a possible, or counterfactual, resemblance between the picture and its subject. Compare Abell (2009).
40. Compare Goodman (1968, pp. 9, 27–33).
41. On behalf of an objective resemblance theory, one may think that it is better to unitarily account both for the experience constraint and for the intentionality constraint, by providing a theory of depiction that appeals to Gricean successful communicative intentions of resemblance. For proposals along these lines, compare Abell (2009) and Blumson (2008). To be sure, these theories focus on depictions as *sui generis* symbolic items over and above their being representations, a standpoint that I have explicitly ruled out at the beginning of this chapter. Nevertheless, the risk for those theories is that, even if they managed to yield acceptable necessary conditions for depiction, they would not be able to yield convincing sufficient conditions. Explicit fakes which are successfully and intentionally produced to resemble originals, in order for an audience to (indirectly) recognize that they were so intentionally produced – for example, fake Dolce & Gabbana underwear – appear as counter-examples to those theories, for they are not pictures of those originals.
42. Compare Lopes (1996, p. 32).
43. Compare Lopes (1996, pp. 17–18).
44. Compare Lopes (1996, p. 35).
45. As Wollheim (19802, p. 220) noted, unlike the cross-square example, the duck-rabbit case can be described as a case in which one switches from seeing the image as a picture of a duck to seeing the image as a picture of a rabbit. Somehow analogously Wittgenstein described this case in terms of a switch between seeing a duck-image and seeing a rabbit-image (1953, II, xi, pp. 194–5). Yet those descriptions depend on the fact that one has already doubly *interpreted* the image so as to get two different icons. If one limited oneself to ascribe pictoriality but not intentionality to an image one might equivalently describe the case as a case in which one switches from seeing the figure as a duck to seeing it as a rabbit or as a case in which one switches from seeing a duck in the image to seeing a rabbit in it.
46. This case is again pointed out by Lopes (2005b, pp. 165–7).
47. This distinction between pictorial content and intentional content of a picture is close to Haugeland's (1998) distinction between the *bare bones content* and the *fleshed out content* of a picture. For a recent discussion of it, compare Kulvicki (2006b, pp. 538–40).
48. A point originally stressed by Gombrich (1960).
49. Preliminary versions of this chapter were presented at the Gargnano conference: *The Crooked Oar, The Illusion of Outer and Inner Perception*, Department of Philosophy, University of Milan; at *Brains, Persons, and Society, VII National Conference of the Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy*, S. Raffaele University, Milan (September 2006); and at seminars at the Department of

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