

PLEASURE AND ITS MODIFICATIONS:
STEPHAN WITASEK AND THE AESTHETICS
OF THE GRAZER SCHULE¹

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1. Introduction

The ontology of the Graz school must be seen as part of a larger Brentano-inspired project in descriptive psychology, the project of describing the different kinds of perceptual, intellectual and emotional acts and states which constitute our mental experience. It was above all because Meinong wanted this descriptive theory to be as complete and as free of prejudice as possible that he refused to make the fact that mental phenomena have or lack existing objects a principle of division in his taxonomy of acts and states. All acts, he insisted, have objects. It is simply that, as we know from our experiences of frustrated expectation, some objects prove not to exist.

The thesis that all acts have objects is of course nothing other than Brentano's thesis of the intentionality of the mental. Meinong gave this thesis a peculiarly strong interpretation, however; for where Brentano understood intentionality as a pseudo-relation, characterised precisely by the fact that one of its relata may be lacking, Meinong conceived intentionality as a relation in the strict and proper sense. Meinong's classification of different types of existing and non-existing objects is thus a by-product of his equally elaborate and no less all-embracing classification of the types of mental phenomena.

One highly conspicuous crop of examples of mental phenomena related to the non-existent is of course yielded by our experience of works of art. It is therefore somewhat surprising that Meinong himself does not apply his theory of non-existent objects to the working out of a detailed theory of the ontology and psychology of aesthetic phenomena. This task was however carried out by one of his most prominent disciples, Stephan Witasek, in his masterly *Grundzüge der allgemeinen Ästhetik* of 1904. What follows is an attempt to make sense of the Witasekian aesthetics, particularly as put forward in this work.

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Witasek was born in Vienna on 17 May 1870. Little is known of his background, though the name 'Witasek' suggests Croatian origins. He studied in Graz, obtaining his Ph.D. in 1895 and his habilitation – on the nature of optical illusions – in 1899. In the following years, during which he worked selflessly as an unpaid assistant in Meinong's laboratory of experimental psychology, he was employed as a librarian in the University of Graz. Only in 1913 was he appointed to the position of extraordinary professor; and only in 1914 was he appointed as Meinong's successor to the position of director of the psychology laboratory. He enjoyed this position for only six months, dying on 18 April 1915.²

Witasek is described as having been particularly musical and is reported to have spent many hours playing music together with Meinong. It was indeed his passion for music which first brought him to study in Graz: he had been provoked by Stumpf's *Tonpsychologie* to take an interest in the psychology of music and was attracted by the possibilities promised by the experimental psychology laboratory which had been so recently established by Meinong. At that stage the future of the laboratory was still uncertain, and it is Witasek – who was already the effective head of the laboratory long before 1914 – whom Meinong credits with having done the work that was needed to set it on a secure footing.

Witasek's earliest philosophical paper is on the question of the possibility of our influencing our presentations through acts of will [1896]. How, he asks, is it possible deliberately to have something given in presentation, to *will* that something be presented, given that the act of will is itself such as to include an act of presentation? He deals with this problem by means of a distinction between intuitive and non-intuitive presentations, turning his attention to the processes involved in passing deliberately from the latter to the former, e.g. when instructed to imagine a square or to sing the sequence C-E-G. Intuitive and non-intuitive contents bear a specific sort of relation to each other, and this relation, too, Witasek argues, must be brought to presentation if the will is to be brought into play – in contrast to those cases where one presentation is followed by another purely through the workings of association.

Another paper from this period [1897a] is an investigation of the dispositions which serve as the presuppositions of the presentation of complexes. What, for example, is the ground of our capacity to reproduce a melody in memory? How is it possible to account for the vast range of differences in power of imagination in relation to objects of this sort, and is it possible to intensify this power through practice? Witasek argues that imagination or phantasy involves a new and special sort of disposition, but one standing in a relation of dependence to the disposition to reproduce in memory,

² See [Ameseder 1916], [Mally 1915], [Meinong 1915].

so that imagination is, in effect, a matter of spinning new webs out of old associational material.

In his habilitation thesis of 1899, Witasek defends the view that optical illusions, for example of the Mueller-Lyer type, cannot be illusions of judgment, since the same illusion can be present even when we deliberately do not allow our judgments to be misled by the appearances. Witasek therefore attempts to give an account of the phenomena in question purely on the level of sensations and to separate carefully the contributions of psychology and of physiology in our experience of illusions.

In addition to his work of 1904 on the foundations of aesthetics, Witasek published two other books: a textbook of psychology from the Meinongian standpoint [1908], and a classic study of the psychology of visual perception [1910]. He made important contributions also to experimental psychology, for example to the psychology of music, and even his contributions to philosophical aesthetics are rooted always in a consistently psychological – nowadays one would say ‘cognitive’ – approach, one which takes seriously the role of the experiencing subject, though without reducing aesthetic value to something that would have a merely subjective status. His last work, on aesthetic objectivity [1915], still seeks an exclusively psychological legitimation of aesthetic judgments – as contrasted with Meinong’s newly developed Platonistic theory according to which our valuing acts would be related to special objective and impersonal value-entities entirely divorced from the psychological domain.

As will become clear in what follows, a central role is played in Witasek’s work by the notion of Gestalt structure. The ‘Austrian’ Gestalt psychology of Ehrenfels, Meinong and Witasek, particularly as this was developed by Vittorio Benussi, was indeed for a time a serious rival to the Berlin school of Wertheimer, Köhler and Koffka, and played a not insignificant role in the early development of the latter.³ Common to all members of the Austrian Gestalt tradition is a two-storey conception of experience according to which experienced objects are partitioned into objects of *lower* and *higher* order: the former are for example colours and tones (which are given immediately in sensation), the latter are for example shapes and melodies (which are founded on the former and require special, intellectual ‘acts of production’ in order to come into being).⁴

³ See e.g. [Heider 1970] (by Meinong’s last doctoral student in Graz). See also [Ash 1982] and [Smith 1988a].

⁴ [Benussi 1914]; see also [Meinong 1891], [Meinong 1899], [Witasek 1910]. It was above all around this opposition that criticism of the Meinongian Gestalt psychology from the side of the Berlin school was concentrated: see especially [Koffka 1915]. As [Stucchi 1988] shows Benussi himself later came to reject the simple two-storey

Witasek's aesthetics may therefore be seen also as a contribution to the Gestaltist tradition of aesthetic value-theory, from Ehrenfels and Rausch to Robert Nozick.⁵ Here, however, I shall be interested not in this value-theoretical aspect of Witasek's work but rather in the implications of his ideas for the understanding of the structures of aesthetic experience. In particular, I shall be interested in his account of the way in which a play of substitute emotions such as is generated by, for example, a dramatic work, is able to give rise to genuinely pleasurable experiences of aesthetic enjoyment.

2. The Elementary Aesthetic Objects

By 'aesthetic experience' in what follows I shall understand all experiences involved in the apprehension of objects typically classified either as works of art or as objects of natural beauty. In particular, I shall have in mind those genuinely pleasurable experiences which we call aesthetic enjoyment. The meaning of the term 'aesthetic object' will become clear only in the course of what follows. The usage here adopted is in many respects similar to that of Ingarden in his [1960], though Witasek, who as a psychologically-minded philosopher was interested exclusively in the immediate intentional objects of our experiences, did not lay stress on the distinction between aesthetic object and work of art.

It is not possible to produce an adequate aesthetic theory by considering aesthetic experiences and aesthetic objects as if they belonged to independent domains. This is true first of all because, on some accounts at least, qualities such as beauty and ugliness inhere in aesthetic objects only to the extent that they stand in certain specific relations, both causal and intentional, to experiencing subjects (a thesis which does not amount to the claim that aesthetic qualities are 'merely subjective'). Further, aesthetic experiences can be directed towards other experiences as their objects: our feelings themselves can be beautiful or ugly or (otherwise aesthetically relevant in a number of different ways), and we can appreciate these qualities in yet further aesthetic experiences of higher order.

Our task in what follows will be to understand precisely how aesthetic experiences relate to aesthetic objects, but in such a way as to allow that experiences and objects may intervolve or determine each other mutually.

Witasek's approach to aesthetics is a constructive one, building up gradually from simple cases – from experiences and objects of the most primitive sort – to the point where he is in a position to deal also with those more complicated aesthetic structures which are characteristic of works of art. He begins by

conception, preferring instead to think in terms of a spectrum of cases between the two extremes.

⁵ See [Ehrenfels 1916], [Rausch 1966], [Nozick 1981], 5.I (on 'Organic Unity').

setting forth the most basic ingredients of our aesthetic experiences, which he classifies, provisionally, into five broad classes, as follows:

1. *Pleasure in what is sensuous,*
2. *Pleasure in what is harmonious or organically structured,*
3. *Pleasure in perfection, in what is well-made or fitting,*
4. *Pleasure in expression, mood, atmosphere, and so on.*
5. *Pleasure in objectives or states of affairs.*

Corresponding to this rough and ready classification of experiences we can construct also a preliminary classification of the 'elementary aesthetic objects' toward which these elementary experiences would be directed:

1. *Simple objects of sensation:* individual colours, tones, tastes, smells (objects of outer sensation), and also the constituent qualitative elements of feelings and emotions (objects of inner sensation). Clearly, such objects of sensation can themselves be aesthetically pleasing to different degrees, and their power to please is in some sense basic, not capable of being accounted for in terms of other, more primitive phenomena. They will therefore constitute the first class of elementary aesthetic objects in Witasek's taxonomy.⁶

2. *Gestalt structures of purely formal beauty.* Objects of sensation manifest themselves very rarely, if ever, in isolation. They normally occur in combination with each other in such a way as to manifest Gestalt structures of different types, and such structures, too, may be beautiful or ugly. Thus melodies, tones, geometrical patterns, blends of perfumes or of tastes, rhythms, colour-harmonies, tactile feelings, etc., will constitute Witasek's second class of elementary aesthetic objects (pp. 39ff.). Note that structures of this sort are important even where we have to deal with aesthetic pleasure (or displeasure) in what is fragmentary or discordant, since such pleasure presupposes the ability to recognise what is harmonious. As Husserl points out, chaos and fragmentation themselves depend on form and order.⁷

3. *Gestalt structures in conformity with norms, Gestalt structures of purposefulness or typicality.* The examples listed under category 2 are all Gestalt structures which possess a purely formal or structural beauty. Some varieties of Gestalten, however, possess aesthetic qualities which are not formal but material. These are the Gestalten of objects which are peculiarly purposeful or efficient, or peculiarly perfect examples of their type (what Witasek calls *normgemässe Gegenstände*):

⁶ Cf. [Witasek 1904], 36ff. All page references are to this work unless otherwise indicated.

⁷ *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §§34f. See also [Rausch 1966] and the discussion of Rausch in my [1988], 50-58.

The Gestalt of a well-built horse has special aesthetic qualities not as a Gestalt *as such*, but rather merely as the Gestalt *of a horse*. Here it is more a matter of what kind of object the Gestalt belongs to than of how it is itself constructed. And this can be shown, too, in many other examples. The beauty of the female form lies in its softness and in the swing of its lines, where the same lines in a male body have a non-beautiful effect (p. 47).⁸

4. *Gestalt structures of expression*. The fourth and most problematic category of elementary aesthetic objects is constituted by what Witasek calls Gestalten of expression, of atmosphere, and of mood (also called the class of "objects of inner beauty"). What gives us pleasure in a piece of music, for example, is typically not just the sound-formations we hear or imagine. We are wont to say that the music *expresses* something, that it points beyond itself in a manner at least analogous to the expression of feelings and emotions e.g. in facial gestures. The sound-Gestalten of the musical work are, Witasek says, "the carriers of expression; the expression is not something perceivable with the senses, as it were side by side with the sound-Gestalten, but it is something to be grasped only in and with them" (pp. 50f). Thus when I hear a piece of music I in fact experience two Gestalten: the sound-Gestalt as such, which may or may not be beautiful, and the expressive Gestalt, which will turn out to have quite peculiar aesthetic qualities of its own. The same double Gestalt structure makes itself felt also for example in the fact that there are two essentially different types of beauty in the human face: beauty of form, and beauty of expression.

It is not, then, the stone or the canvas in the gallery that is beautiful, according to Witasek, but associated objects of sense and higher-order Gestalt structures of different sorts, which stone and canvas help to constitute.⁹ Witasek's aesthetics seeks to do justice to the total content of our experiences of works of art purely in terms of combinations of experiences directed towards structures of these given sorts.

5. *States of affairs or 'objectives'*: There are of course many works of art whose adequate appreciation requires that we go beyond the level of light, colour, shadow and sound, and of the Gestalten of formal, typical and expressive beauty founded thereon, and apprehend also what they signify or represent. The narrative entities of states of affairs, entities which constitute the plot of a work of literature, for example, thus serve to form the fifth class of elementary aesthetic objects in Witasek's theory.

⁸ Compare the use of the notions of standard and non-standard instances of kinds in the aesthetic theory of [Wolterstorff 1980] and also the discussion of the 'normal' in [Smith 1995].

⁹ This is Ingarden's view in his *Literary Work of Art* [1931]. See also the discussions of the physical foundation of the aesthetic object in [Ingarden 1985].

3. *Aesthetic Experiences*

Witasek's aesthetics rests on the classification of mental phenomena developed by his teacher Meinong on the basis of Brentano's work. This divides mental phenomena into three broad classes of:

- I. *presentations (Vorstellungen)*, which are directed towards *objects* in the narrower sense,
- II. *judgments and assumptions (Annahmen)*, which are directed towards *states of affairs*,
- III. *feelings* and emotional phenomena in general, including acts of will.¹⁰

Class III phenomena are dependent in every case upon either presentations or judgments/assumptions, which provide them with their objects. Such phenomena are accordingly directed either towards objects or states of affairs. Thus if I am happy about the arrival of a friend, then the presupposition of this feeling is the judgment *that the friend has arrived* and the object of the feeling is the corresponding state of affairs.¹¹ If I take pleasure in a nice sound, then the presupposition of this pleasure-feeling is the intuitive (perceptual) presentation of the sound and the object of the feeling is the sound itself.

Brentano, too, embraces effectively the same three categories of mental phenomena. There are, however, important differences between the Brentanian and the Meinongian classifications. In the first place Brentano does not accept the category of states of affairs, preferring to see judgment as a matter of the acceptance or rejection of objects in the narrower sense (of 'thing' or 'concre-tum'). Meinong, too, sees judgment as a matter of acceptance and rejection, but for him it is not objects but states of affairs which are accepted or rejected. Further, the Meinongian judgment comprehends in addition to acceptance or rejection an extra feature: the moment of *conviction*. When this moment is lacking we have, importantly, not a judgment but an *assumption*.¹²

Brentano and Meinong differ further in their respective accounts of the interrelations between the given categories. For while both see judgments as presupposing, i.e. as being dependent on, associated presentations, the Meinongian framework allows also a presupposition or dependence in the opposite

¹⁰ For the sake of simplicity I have ignored here both Meinong's treatment of phenomena of will and also the details of his account of experiences of value. See e.g. [Findlay 1963], chapters 9 and 10.

¹¹ Note the ambiguity in our use of the term 'object' here. On the one hand it can mean: that towards which an act is directed, whether this be an individual thing, event or process or a state of affairs. On the other hand it can mean, more narrowly, that towards which a presentation is directed, i.e. an object of sense, an event or condition and the like, but not a state of affairs.

¹² [Meinong 1910]. See also [Witasek 1908], 308, and [Heller 1929].

direction: a presentation, too, may be dependent on a moment of conviction in the sense that it is associated with the disposition to make judgments of a given type.¹³ Moreover, where in standard Brentanian psychology emotional phenomena are founded immediately upon judgments and thereby mediately upon associated presentations (we are sad or happy *that* such and such exists or does not exist), Meinong allows class III phenomena to be founded immediately either on presentations – giving rise to ‘presentation-feelings’ – or on judgments – giving rise to ‘judgment-feelings’.¹⁴

Let us look more closely at the phenomena of presentation. A presentation is, very roughly, an act of mental directedness towards an object – for example in a simple perception or in memory, or merely in going through a list in which the object is mentioned – in abstraction from any associated judgments or intellectual or emotional attitudes. As will be clear, this is far from being a homogeneous category. Above all, presentations can be divided into *outer* and *inner*, according to whether the objects presented are external objects or further presentations, judgments, feelings or other mental acts or states of the presenting subject. Presentations can be divided secondly into *intuitive* and *non-intuitive* or *intellectual*, a division which corresponds broadly to Russell’s opposition between ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ and ‘knowledge by description’ [1913], or to Husserl’s opposition between ‘fulfilled’ and ‘signitive’ or ‘empty’ intentions as propounded in the *Logische Untersuchungen*.¹⁵ An intuitive presentation occurs above all in an act of perception, or in my act of inner presentation of my own present feeling or emotion. An intellectual presentation occurs when I present to myself an object purely in the sense that I run through a description of the object in my mind. Witasek’s aesthetic theory proper, now, begins with the claim that, of the two sorts of presentation,

it is only intuitive presentations that come into consideration as the presupposition of aesthetic feelings. The shape of the ellipse is aesthetically pleasing to look at; the equation in which analytic geometry presents the same shape to the grasp of the intellect does not excite aesthetic feelings at all (p. 77, my emphasis).

¹³ This was the view adopted by Meinong at the time of the first edition of his *Über Annahmen* (1902). See [1910], §36, Eng. p. 166f. In the second edition a presentation is seen as being a still incomplete intending of an object; this intending becomes complete only when it is bound up with the apprehension of an *objective* in a judgment or assumption.

¹⁴ See [Meinong 1905], [Baley 1916].

¹⁵ See also [Rollinger 1993], 60ff. As already noted, the opposition between intuitive and non-intuitive presentations forms the subject-matter of Witasek’s earliest paper of 1896.

Expressing the thesis in terms of our earlier terminology of *presentation-feelings* and *judgment-feelings*, we can now assert, somewhat more pompously, that *aesthetic pleasure is a matter of positive intuitive presentation-feelings*. That is, the feeling of aesthetic pleasure has as its presupposition in every case certain intuitive presentations of objects, the constituent parts or moments of which belong to one or other of the five classes of elementary aesthetic objects distinguished above.¹⁶

4. *Aesthetic Pleasure in what is Real*

There is no denying that feelings of aesthetic pleasure as we have just described them may exist, indeed that they do exist. The problem is to see where they come from. Matters are, at least from the philosophical point of view, still relatively simple where we have to deal with feelings of aesthetic pleasure directed towards aesthetic objects in the first two categories of simple sensations and purely formal Gestalten. For here we have to deal with real (indeed with what seem to be principally *causal*) relations between perceiving subjects on the one hand and material objects, events or processes on the other. Thus the fact that colours, tones and formal Gestalten such as melodies or rhythms may give rise to feelings of pleasure is easy to understand: what is harmonious without is reflected, in some way – which it would be a matter for psychology to investigate – by harmonious and therefore pleasurable experiences within.

Not all sensations, and not even all harmonious sensations, are however aesthetic. Witasek holds, it is true, that all *aesthetic* feelings presuppose (are founded on) intuitive presentations; but he nevertheless draws a clear line between aesthetic experiences on the one hand, even those relating to objects of sense and to simple Gestalten, and merely *sensory feelings* – for example my feeling of pleasure in the warmth of a wood fire. To follow his reasoning here we must introduce yet another distinction in the realm of mental phenomena between *acts* and *contents*. This distinction was common to many Austrian philosophers and psychologists, having been worked out most thoroughly by Twardowski, Husserl and Stumpf. Roughly speaking, the *act* is that component in an experience which characterises that experience as, say, a memory as opposed to a perception, as a phantasy as opposed to a presumption, as a judgment as opposed to an assumption, and so on. The *content*, on the other hand, is that component of an experience which a perception and a memory of the same object may have in common and in virtue of which they are then of

¹⁶ That aesthetic feelings are *presentation-feelings* is Meinong's view in his [1894]; in *Über Annahmen* he came to hold that aesthetic feelings are *Annahmefühle*, i.e. feelings founded on assumptions. An aesthetics based on Meinong's concept of *Annahme* is canvassed also by Möller in his [1903].

the same object from the same point of view, and so on. Equally, the content is that real moment which a judgment and an assumption may have in common and in virtue of which they are then directed towards one and the same state of affairs.

The distinction between act and content now gives rise to a corresponding distinction in the class of feelings between what Witasek calls *act-feelings* and *content-feelings*:

in every presenting we can distinguish act and content. A feeling that has a sensing or a presenting P as its presupposition can either be determined primarily by the act in P and be relatively independent of its content, or it can depend essentially on the content of P and be such that the act is largely irrelevant to it. In the first case it is an act-feeling, in the second a content-feeling (pp. 195f.).¹⁷

As an example of a content-feeling consider what happens when I hear a melody played on a violin:

I have a *perceptual* presentation of the melody mediated by sensation; when I now reproduce it for myself in my mind, after the violin has fallen silent, it appears to me in a memory-presentation. The perceptual presentation and the memory-presentation have the same content, that which distinguishes them so much lies in their act. And the feeling of well-being I experience in relation to the melody arises whether I hear it or merely reproduce it in my mind (p. 196).

Act-feelings and content-feelings may in certain circumstances come into conflict with each other. Thus I may take pleasure in the content *bright light* while at the same time experiencing pain in the act of looking into the sun. Normally however the two sorts of feeling are fused together, or the one disappears because it is insignificant in relation to the other.

Aesthetic feelings are distinguished from sensory feelings, now, by the fact that the former are related to the content of a presentation, the latter to the act itself.¹⁸ Thus sensory feelings, but not aesthetic feelings, are directly sensitive to the quality and intensity of the act, and all sensations are, above a certain intensity, painful. Further, the sensory feeling disappears or is at least reduced to an almost unnoticeable intensity in the passage from sensation (perception) to a reproduced presentation in memory. A melody, in contrast, is coloured by pleasure whether I hear it or merely present it to myself [in imagination or in memory]. For melody is already a matter of *content* and need not be affected by the passage from perception to reproduction (p. 199).

¹⁷ Cf. also [Husserl 1979], 293.

¹⁸ There are however content-feelings which fall outside the domain of aesthetics. An example would be, say, pleasure in the victory of a good cause: see [Duncker 1941].

What applies to aesthetic feelings in the presentation of objects of sense and of simple Gestalten will be seen to apply no less to other, more sophisticated aesthetic feelings. Thus we can imagine a habitué of art galleries whose pleasure is derived purely from the repetition of the *act* of seeing, regardless of its content. Or we can imagine the lover of difficult Irish poetry, who is interested solely in the bracing mental exercise involved in coming to grips with the grammar of the verses in question, not in any sense with the content of his reading acts. Both are missing precisely what is aesthetic in the objects in question, and we can now indeed assert quite generally that *aesthetic pleasure is a variety of concrete consciousness-state which we can call a presentation-content-feeling (Vorstellungsinhaltsgefühl)* (p. 214).

Our over-brief account of aesthetic experiences directed towards objects in categories 1 and 2 was confined, in effect, to the thesis that each involves a certain real relation between two terms, both of which *exist* in a straightforward way. Thus they can give rise to no problems of the sort which were the peculiar concern of Meinong and Witasek. But the same sort of treatment can be made to work also in relation to objects in category 3, i.e. to what is 'normal' or *gattungsmässig*, for here again we have to do with what is straightforwardly real. Thus, according to Witasek, on perceiving certain objects – for example a healthy horse or a healthy human body – we register a value of, say, purposefulness or of perfection, and then our pleasure in the fact that this valuable object *exists* becomes bound up with our intuitive presentation of the object in such a way as to give rise to that positively modulated intuitive presentation-feeling which is a feeling of aesthetic pleasure. For this reason Witasek calls the aesthetic value of the normal object 'value beauty' (*Wertschönheit*) (p. 97). It is aesthetic beauty connected, through our real relations to the object, with some non-aesthetic value of healthfulness, vitality, cleanliness, efficiency, economy and so on.

5. *The Phantasy-Modification*

When we move to the more problematic examples of aesthetic objects comprehended in category 4, then it is no longer the case that the subject must be connected in a real relation to some real existing object. Thus his aesthetic pleasure may no longer be conceived as flowing – more or less as a matter of course (i.e. causally) – from his perceptual experiences of the object's parts or moments and of their more or less harmonious interrelations.

Consider the pleasure we experience in watching, say, a silent film. Here the *real thing* with which we are in relational contact – a screen upon which light is projected – is simply not the sort of thing which of itself could give rise to complex aesthetically pleasurable experiences of the relevant sort. For such experiences involve (in some sense) fear, hope, expectation, disappointment, pity, disgust and a wide range of other, more complex phenomena on our part,

and such phenomena cannot be induced in any straightforward (i.e. causal) way by a mere play of light.

It will not help to say that the difference is made up, in some way, by *imagination*; the problem before us is precisely that of determining in what such 'imagination' might consist. Following Witasek we can begin by remarking that our talk of 'presentation', 'hope', 'fear', etc., is here subject to a peculiar sort of *modification*: these words are used in such a way that their meanings are shifted, systematically, from what they would ordinarily be.¹⁹ As Twardowski puts it:

A determination is called attributive or determining if it completes, enlarges – be it in a positive or in a negative direction – the meaning of the expression to which it is attached. A determination is modifying if it completely changes the original meaning of the name to which it is attached. Thus in 'good man' the determination 'good' is a truly attributive one; if one says 'dead man', one uses a modifying adjective, since a dead man is not a man (pp. 12f., Eng. tr. p. 11).

But talk of modification of meanings may be translated also into the ontological mode, wherever there are what might be called 'modified objects' to which the modified meanings refer. And indeed, according to Meinong and Witasek, such is the case in the domain of 'presentations' and other psychic phenomena. That which I experience when I 'see' the sheriff on the screen is not strictly speaking, a *presentation* at all, for when I present to myself the sheriff in the throes of death, there is no (existing) object which is presented to me (and here it is irrelevant whether a certain person – an actor – was involved at an early stage in the creation of the play of light which gives rise to my current experience or whether I am related, for example, to a computer simulation). What we have is, rather, a *modified presentation*, which stands to a presentation in the strict sense in something like the relation of a forged to a genuine signature or of a sham to a genuine outburst of temper. A modified presentation is a pseudo-presentation: to imagine something is, we might crudely say, to pretend to oneself that one is perceiving.²⁰

¹⁹ Anton Marty argues that such modification of linguistic meaning arises from the need for economy in the use of signs, as for example when one talks of a burned down house, a dead king, a painted horse, a merely imagined castle, a possible inheritance, a four-sided triangle (see his [1908], 60, 345n). See also Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, V §§ 34, 39. For a survey of theories of modification see my [1994].

²⁰ This account is crude since it is not clear that one can coherently 'pretend to oneself' at all: pretending seems to be associated not with mental acts, but with actions taking place in the public domain. Thus in order to pretend it is necessary that one do something, where an act of imagination can take place even where the subject does nothing at all. There seems nevertheless to be some connection between imagination on the one hand and that modification of actions which occurs, for example, in games of

Witasek's own explanation of what he calls the phantasy-modification is formulated in terms of the Meinongian theory of judgments and assumptions. Every non-modified presentation is bound up with a moment of conviction in the existence of its object (that is, with a disposition to make judgments of a certain sort). In a modified presentation this moment is cancelled. Where the conviction associated with a genuine or authentic presentation invokes on behalf of this presentation an actual or at least a seriously intended *relational contact with reality*, in the case of the modified presentation this intention towards reality has been put out of action.²¹

The sham presentation is thereby cut loose from the constraints reality itself would normally impose, and this implies that *modified presentations are subject to our will to a much greater extent than are real or genuine presentations*. Where reality normally has us in *its* control, the phantasy-modification gives us a freedom of movement, which is exploited in different ways in different sorts of aesthetic enjoyment.

But now, this same phantasy-modification applies not merely to presentations but to *all* mental phenomena: the opposition between genuine mental phenomena and 'phantasy-material' (*Phantasietatbestände*) is all-pervasive. The phantasy-modification of a *judgment* is just the Meinongian

make-believe or in the behaviour of actors on the stage. Both pretence and imagination are for example subject to the will. A theory of imagination in terms of pretence or make-believe, for example of the sort that is canvassed by [Walton 1973], [Walton 1978], [Walton 1990] (cf. also [Lange 1907]), seems however to put the behavioural cart before the psychological horse. For it seems that pretence and make-believe can themselves be understood only if we already have a prior theory of the acts of imagination that each involves.

²¹ The thesis that an act manifests an 'intended contact with reality' or, as Witasek puts it, '*betrifft die Wirklichkeit*' (p. 116) can be understood in two distinct ways. On the one hand it can imply that the act relates to an actually existing real object in the strong sense that there is some object which is such that the act manifests an *intentio* towards it. On the other hand it can imply merely that the act rests on a conviction in the existence of an object in reality – a conviction which may or may not be well-founded. These two readings capture two fundamentally distinct approaches to the problems of the phantasy-modification and of reference to the non-existent. The first approach, which has been worked out in detail by [Evans 1982], ch.10 and [Walton 1973] (cf. also [Smith 1984] and [Smith 1984a]), has the advantage that it need appeal only to what exists in a straightforward way. On the other hand it has the disadvantage that it implies, perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, that a subject may not be aware in a given case that he is in fact imagining (that his acts are subject to the phantasy-modification). Unfortunately Meinong and Witasek are themselves insensitive to differences of this sort, in part because they treat existent and non-existent objects as if they had equal ontological rights.

assumption itself.²² The phantasy-modification of a *feeling* is what Meinong and Witasek call a phantasy-feeling. The phantasy-modification of a desire is a phantasy-desire, and so on.²³

The notion of a phantasy-feeling enables us to throw further light on the distinction between act- and content-feelings introduced above. For as Witasek notes,

There are no, or only uncommonly weak, sensory phantasy-feelings': a pinprick or a toothache which I experience merely in phantasy does not hurt me, and he who is hungry is not helped by the experiencing in phantasy of his being satisfied (p. 199; cf. also [Duncker 1941]).

This is in contrast to the relatively high intensity of those phantasy-feelings – a matter of the *content* of presentation – that are peculiar to the aesthetic domain.

It is important to avoid confusion when dealing with modified psychic phenomena. A phantasy-feeling is a modified *feeling*: it is not to be identified with an imagining (a modified presentation) of a genuine feeling. A phantasy-judgment is a modified *judgment*: it is not to be identified with the imagining of a genuine judgment. Moreover, even a sham or modified psychic phenomenon is also 'real' or 'genuine' in the sense that it is a real occurrence in the mental life of a given subject. Phantasy-phenomena are sham or spurious only in the technical sense expounded above. The Meinongian terminology of 'genuine feelings' (*Ernstgefühle*), etc., does however have the advantage that it captures the sense in which the feeling of pleasure we have in a kindly act or in a sunset is more genuine than a feeling of pleasure e.g. in the fictional apprehension of a fictional murderer.

There is a sense, now, in which what one might call the purely qualitative factor in phantasy-feelings is the same as that of real feelings. But phantasy-feelings nevertheless differentiate themselves totally from genuine or serious feelings. The difference is a matter of their presuppositions.²⁴ In the case of genuine feeling-material this is a judgment; in the case of phantasy-material it is a mere assumption, a 'fiction', which has and wants to have nothing to do with reality (p. 116).

²² Compare the theory of quasi-judgments developed by [Ingarden 1931], §§ 25ff., where Ingarden talks of quasi-judgments as being characterised by the 'absence of a matching-intention'.

²³ [Saxinger 1904], puts forward an account of phantasy-desire as characterised by the absence of a 'tendency towards realisation'. For an overview of types of phantasy-material see the table in [Krug 1929], 241.

²⁴ Witasek's view that the difference between phantasy-feelings and genuine feelings is located entirely in their respective psychological presuppositions (115, see also [Witasek 1908], 330f.) is attacked by Meinong in his [1910], 255.

Like phantasy-presentations, phantasy-judgments and phantasy-feelings, too, are moreover to a significant extent *in our control*. It is this underlying freedom which distinguishes aesthetic pleasure from, say, pleasure in discovering the truth:

The attitude we take to *true* stories is different from the attitude we take towards the merely *invented*, and when one learns of a story one had taken to be true that it was merely thought out with an artistic intention, then one can positively feel how one's inner attitude is turned upside down and gradually replaced by a (partially) different, aesthetic attitude. The judgments which the hearer in believing the story had made his own (*nachgeurteilt*) are replaced by assumptions, the serious feelings are replaced by phantasy-feelings and gradually there is directed towards the whole the attitude of aesthetic regard (pp. 222f.)

Phantasy-material is not merely subject to our will, it also has the peculiar property that it can *stand in for* genuine psychic phenomena in different ways (as assumptions can stand in for judgments for example in deductive arguments). Thus when a genuine feeling is excluded by external circumstances or by the psychic constitution of the subject, then the corresponding modified feeling can take its place (p. 119). These two properties of phantasy-phenomena – the fact that they are subject to our will and that they are able to represent, to go proxy for, the corresponding genuine psychic phenomena – are of crucial importance to the understanding of the place of aesthetic experience in our mental lives. The fact that we have phantasy-material at our disposal enables us to extend our otherwise reality-bound experiences in determinate ways, and Witasek goes so far as to assert that

the job of the aesthetic object, whether it is a work of art or a product of nature, is precisely to excite and to support the actualisation of phantasy-material in the experiencing subject (p. 120).

6. Art and Illusion

Consider a simple drawing of a ball. Our appreciation of the drawing might be said to rest on the following four presuppositions (*fundamenta*):

- I. the *perceptual presentation* of the piece of paper with its marks: an intuitive, complex Gestalt-presentation,
- II. the *assumption* 'here is a ball', a phantasy-judgment in which the represented object is recognised and named,
- III. the *judgment* that it is a drawing and not a ball that lies before us,
- IV. the *judgment* that the drawing represents (*darstellt*) a ball.

There are a number of problems generated by this analysis. Thus we can ask what, precisely, is the *object* of our feeling of pleasurable appreciation in the given case, recalling that the object of a feeling, according to the Brentano-Meinong-Witasek conception, is supplied by its presupposition. Because none of the given partial presuppositions alone can supply an object for the feeling, it is necessary to understand the latter as being directed to a complex state of affairs to which all the individual constituents make their separate contribution, the state of affairs that *what is seen appears as a ball, but is only a piece of paper treated with artistic means* (p. 249). But how are the various constituents (i.-iv.) then related together in this total experience? According to the so-called 'illusionistic theory of art' advanced by Witasek's contemporary Konrad Lange [1895], this question is to be answered in terms of a rapid alternation on the part of the observer between his judging that he sees a real ball, suddenly remembering that he has before him only a drawing, suddenly judging once more that he sees a ball, and so on. Aesthetic pleasure, according to Lange, is rooted in such a to-ing and fro-ing of psychic phenomena, and the work of art is essentially a vehicle for the production of that peculiar "feeling of freedom, completely independent of specific content" which is bound up with our recognition of successful imitation.

Witasek's theory also recognises superficially incompatible elements in experiences of the given sort. The two analyses are nevertheless entirely different, and this is true even when they are considered simply as analyses of the consciousness of imitation, i.e. when we leave out of account Lange's wider claims as to the nature of art as such [1907]. For according to Lange both of the phenomena between which our consciousness oscillates are *actual judgments*: the first asserts that what is seen is a real object (a ball) existing in nature; the second that what is seen is a mere imitation (a drawing of a ball). Now not both of these judgments can be true. Thus if Lange is right, the appreciation of successful imitation rests essentially on our repeatedly getting things wrong, on our repeatedly allowing ourselves to be misled by the object, and this account is phenomenologically absurd. Witasek's analysis, in contrast, avoids the psychological impossibility of an arbitrary to-ing and fro-ing between two mutually opposed yet equally genuine convictions (judgments), by recognising one of the two thoughts not as an actual judgment but as a mere assumption. This analysis is therefore relieved of the necessity of all further construction – designed, like the idea of a to-ing and fro-ing, to explain why the end-result is not really a delusion. The subject does not in truth believe even for a moment that there is a real ball there, he merely produces the corresponding assumption (phantasy-judgment, fiction). That such a phantasy-judgment is just as much an original, unified psychic act as the real judgment is precisely what Lange has overlooked (p. 253; cf. also [Odebrecht 1927], 191ff.).

7. *Gestalt and Expression*

In the examples of aesthetic objects treated so far, our pleasure rested in each case on an intuitive presentation of something external (on the presentation of 'physical phenomena' in Brentano's sense). We have now, however, reached a point where we must turn inward and consider the feelings of higher-order aesthetic pleasure which are provoked by our presentations of mental, and particularly emotional, phenomena themselves. That is we must turn to those aesthetic experiences which are provoked by what Brentano, Meinong and Witasek called the 'inner perception' of psychic phenomena and by the peculiar modifications to which this inner perception is susceptible.

Inner perception is first of all itself subject to that modification which yields inner imagination. I can either perceive my present brooding over the outcome of the Franco-Prussian war, or I can merely imagine (what would be) my present brooding (if it existed). But now in this case the judgments and feelings and other mental phenomena which serve as the objects of inner perception are also themselves subject to an identical modification: my brooding over the Franco-Prussian war may itself be either a genuine brooding or a phantasy-brooding. This gives rise to at least four distinct cases:

- the genuine inner presentation of genuine psychic material (as when I present to myself my feeling of pleasure awakened by my pleasant surroundings);
- the genuine inner presentation of phantasy-material (as when I present to myself my phantasy-judgment that the sheriff (in the film) is about to die);
- the modified inner presentation of what would be genuine psychic material, if it existed (as when I imagine the feeling of pleasure I would feel if I were in pleasant surroundings);
- the modified inner presentation of what would be phantasy-material, if it existed (as when I imagine the (phantasy-)feeling of fear I would experience if the sheriff were about to die).

Matters are complicated still further by the fact that given psychic material may be presented as belonging either to oneself or to some other psychic subject, whether real or imaginary, and by the fact that various different sorts of interplay can be set in train as between one's own feelings and the psychic material of other (real or apparent) subjects that is given in presentation. It is at this point that we encounter once more the 'Gestalt structures of expression' which make up category 4 of aesthetic objects in Witasek's original taxonomy. We are now, however, in a position to state more precisely in what such 'expression' consists.

Consider the spectator of a drama. Clearly, if he is to appreciate the drama in the full sense, then he needs in a certain sense to experience the feelings

expressed in the actions on the stage. But he does not need to experience the *genuine* material; this will be impossible, if not always, then at least in most cases:

Nobody would go into the theatre to watch a tragedy if the shock, concern, sympathy, fear, and all the other often intensive pain-feelings awakened by our involvement in what is going on on the stage, were genuine. (p. 115)

It is sufficient, however, if the spectator experiences in himself the expressed psychic phenomena as phantasy-material – which “does not after all do us any real harm” (p. 115). The aesthetic enjoyment of expression then rests on a genuine intuitive inner presentation of the phantasy-material generated in the experiencing subject when echoes of the emotions of external subjects are set in train within him.

8. *Empathy and Sympathy*

These ‘echoes’ are of two sorts. On the one hand they are what Witasek calls *empathy-feelings*. An empathy-feeling consists in the subject’s experiencing in a modified way feelings which he grasps as having been *expressed* by a work of art. The normal target of an empathy-feeling is a personal subject:

Whoever takes to himself the feeling-content of the scene ‘Gretchen im Kerker’... will feel *along with the maid* what she experiences in torment, faith, pious humility and despair (p. 149).

The Gestalt structures of expression are in this case entirely determinate; but as we shall see, we can also feel *along with* for example a piece of music, when the structures of expression are to a much greater extent indeterminate.

But we not only feel *with* Gretchen, we also feel sympathy and compassion *for* the maid, we experience what Witasek calls feelings of involvement (*Anteilsgefühle*). The status of such sympathy-feelings is perhaps relatively easy to understand, at least in the case where they are directed towards existing objects: they are genuine feelings which the subject himself genuinely has when he presents to himself a given object. Empathy-feelings, in contrast, are experienced in such a way that they are one’s own feelings only in phantasy, though sometimes (where we are dealing with expressive objects having the characteristics of persons) they are presented as corresponding to genuine feelings of the objects which invoke them.

Clearly, we shall not enjoy such feelings of involvement in the face of an object if our attitude in relation to this object is entirely neutral. Sympathy-feelings are in fact distinguished by the fact that they presuppose some

primitive relation of fellow-feeling between us and the object which evokes them. "For those whom we neither value nor love, neither hate nor abhor, we have no pleasure when they are happy, no pity when they are unhappy, and no concern for their fate" (p. 155).

Thus there are no sympathy-feelings (no real feelings of involvement) in relation to what is 'meaningless' (for example in relation to music, or to ornamental art). Conversely, however, wherever we do have sympathy for an object, it follows that we register in that object some kind of value – and indeed value in just the sense of category 3 above. All objects giving rise to sympathy-feelings are to that extent 'objects of value-beauty' in Witasek's sense.

How, now, are these remarks to be applied in such a way as to yield an account of our aesthetic pleasure in some more sophisticated aesthetic object such as a dramatic work? We are confronted, first of all, by a manifold of actions on the stage. These provoke involvement: the aesthetic enjoyment of a drama would seem indeed to rest on a peculiar sort of 'comfortable sympathy' with the characters we perceive (cf. p. 151). And they provoke also empathy-feelings. These two sorts of phantasy-feelings then serve as the presupposition of a further *genuine* feeling, a feeling of aesthetic pleasure which is induced by the drama.

Empathy- and sympathy-feelings cannot however make up the whole psychic presupposition of such a feeling of pleasure. It would be wrong to suppose – as does Aristotle in his doctrine of catharsis – that one emotional arousal in a subject can in itself and without further ado be the cause of a second emotional arousal in the same subject, that a feeling of empathetic displeasure, e.g. pain at the downfall of the hero, already and only because it is there, could trigger the pleasure-feeling of aesthetic enjoyment (pp. 150f.).

Witasek insists, rather, that since aesthetic enjoyment is a genuine pleasure, it must be related to some genuine object of an appropriate sort. But what could this object be, in cases where our aesthetic pleasure is related to Gestalt structures of expression? Note, first of all, that here the genuine feeling of aesthetic pleasure as it unfolds through time manifests a dependence on and a sensitivity to the empathetic-sympathetic emotional arousal with which it is associated. Now the latter is a real phenomenon, which also manifests a real temporal unfolding. Witasek therefore suggests that aesthetic pleasure in fact be conceived as pleasure in such (modified) emotional arousal. A new layer of acts of presentation is however required, which would be directed toward this play of phantasy-material within oneself. This is because it is not one's being emotionally affected in this or that way by the content of a drama or of a poem which is the cause of aesthetic pleasure; rather – according to Witasek – it is one's becoming *aware* of this affect and as it were relishing one's own mental excitation. Sympathy- and empathy-feelings are presuppositions of aesthetic pleasure, then, only insofar as they are *consciously experienced* in intuitive presentation, and enjoyment in the drama on the stage or in the poem on the

page is bound up inextricably with a following with the inner eye of the drama which it sets loose within oneself (p. 152).²⁵

We can now see how aesthetic pleasure in what we called narrative entities (events, actions, states of affairs, etc.) can be conceived as being related exclusively to objects of the same sort as is pleasure in expression, i.e. to empathy- and sympathy-feelings within oneself. For the aesthetic relevance of the events, actions and processes represented in a painting or novel is seen to be confined exclusively to the feeling-material in the spectator to which they give rise. The suffering of Gretchen is aesthetically relevant only to the extent that it is capable of giving rise to our feeling for and with the maid (a modified pseudo-suffering on our own behalf). And the skill of the artist in moulding the narrative elements in his work is an aesthetic skill to the extent that the feelings that are yielded by these elements constitute rich and harmonious feeling-Gestalten giving rise to different varieties of more or less subtle aesthetic pleasures on the part of the perceiving subject.

We can see also why Witasek suggested the term 'objects of inner beauty' for his category 4 of aesthetic objects – and we can note in passing that our initial determination of the nature of aesthetic pleasure as a positive intuitive presentation-feeling has proved itself adequate to our experiences of objects in this category also. For 'presentation' includes both outer *and* inner presentation, and the play of pseudo-emotions is aesthetically relevant only in so far as it is experienced in inner presentation in an intuitive rather than in an intellectual way. Of course normally other material is present alongside aesthetic pleasure, in addition to feelings and presentations. In particular, a large amount of 'judgment- and assumption-material' (*Urteils- und Annahmetatbestände*) is associated with our presentations (pp. 181f.). This plays a role, for example, in establishing the relations between the different objects before our mind, and constitutes a kind of supporting fabric for our presentations and feelings. But a support of this kind is present always and everywhere in the mental life and thus it is not in any way characteristic of the aesthetic attitude.

9. *On the Modifications of Feeling in the Experience of Music*

Considerations of a similar sort can be applied also in relation to our experience of music. Here, too, it is phantasy-feelings which are involved as the presupposition of our (genuine) feelings of aesthetic pleasure. But the phantasy-feelings that are evoked by absolute music dispense with all presuppositions similar to those which one would find in a corresponding serious feeling: such phantasy-feelings are in this sense meaningless (are, as one might say, a matter

²⁵ This intuitive presentation of feeling-states is, according to Witasek, just what, in the traditional (Kantian) aesthetics, was called 'contemplation'.

of 'pure will' – or of pure intoxication).²⁶ Whoever is sad knows what he is sad *about*, and it is the thought of this which is the presupposition of his feeling of sadness. But when a piece of music 'expresses sadness' then the music itself says nothing about the cause of this sadness. And if the hearer sinks into this feeling-content, immerses himself in sadness, however intensely, then it is not the thought of a sad, painful event which awakens this phantasy-feeling in him, for such a thought is normally not present in his consciousness at all.

The hearing of tones, or more precisely the intuitive presentation of tones and tone-formations, is certainly not a normal, adequate presupposition of [feelings of pain, sadness, longing, etc.]. *Sadness, for example, is felt in relation to a loss, an unhappy event, not in relation to tones or melodies and certainly not in relation to those tones and melodies which give rise to aesthetic pleasure*; it is the actual knowledge of a loss which is the normal presupposition of sadness, not the presentation of tones (p. 135, my emphasis).

The cases where genuine feelings do come about on hearing tones – e.g. on hearing the tones which constitute a funeral march – are not of an aesthetic nature at all, according to Witasek. The feelings in question are typically founded in personal memories of the hearer or in other non-aesthetic features of the given context. Some individuals may even seek to intensify their experience of music by associating their listening with thoughts of death, or with images of sadness; but still, Witasek insists, those critics are usually moving in completely the wrong direction who take it to be their primary task to facilitate the understanding of a musical work by listing and more or less exactly describing the outer experiences and events which it 'depicts' (*schildert*) and which are therefore to be read out of it (usually struggle, death, victory, triumph, decline, conflict, etc.) (p. 143).

A composer *may*, certainly, have been brought by certain experiences into a given mood which he then reproduces in his work. But it is then the mood that is reproduced – precisely as it is reproduced – that is important to the aesthetic experience of the work, not the external experiences which were the incidental cause of its being composed.

But how are we able to experience phantasy-feelings in listening to music at all? This is first of all a consequence of the fact that phantasy-material is subject to the dictates of the will. Indeed, as Witasek notes, we are already in a position to generate within ourselves phantasy-feelings of the most varied sorts, even without any kind of external aid, though normally we succeed thereby in producing only experiences having a relatively low degree of intensity (p. 136).

Music serves to intensify, to crystallise, such induced phantasy-feelings; it serves as a pump for the production and intensification of the inner play of

²⁶ See my [1986] for further consideration of this aspect of the Meinongian-Witasekian aesthetic.

phantasy. But it is not as if our own contribution would thereby be merely passive:

the cooperation of the will in the releasing of phantasy- feelings... is in practice indispensable. Where it is lacking, where the good will fails to immerse itself in the expressive content of the music, then the latter will be able to bring about only a minimal effect. The hearer must meet the music half way, must, as one says, open his heart to it (p. 137).

The aesthetic enjoyment we have in music and in the phantasy-feelings to which it gives rise reflects further, however, a special functional relationship between the sound-Gestalten and the feelings we experience: the nature or quality of a given phantasy-feeling depends at least in part on the character of the music which provokes it. As Mach and James, Ehrenfels and Witasek all in different ways recognised, there is a certain *similarity* between sound-Gestalten on the one hand and the psychical states to which they give rise, a fact which opens up the much wider theme of the role of *physical resonance* in the life of feeling and the relationship between feelings proper and what Mach called '*Muskelgeföhle*'.²⁷ For it is not as if, at each turning point in a piece of music, one would need to consult a repertoire of feelings before setting loose the appropriate reactions within oneself by means of a deliberate conscious effort, as it were in time to the accompanying notes. Rather it is as if the music gets under one's skin, in such a way that there occurs an automatic reproduction of physical resonances correlated with what one hears, giving rise in turn to a flow of (phantasy-)feelings of an appropriate sort. This power of sound to let loose feelings within oneself is illustrated precisely by the way in which music is used on occasions such as funerals, religious services, battles, fairs, etc.:

this is done not just as an insignificant convention but in part because those present are thereby set in a mood appropriate to the occasion. The phantasy-feelings awakened by the music go easily over into the corresponding serious-feelings, wherever reality furnishes even partially appropriate presuppositions (p. 166).

And powerful physical resonances are capable of being set in train also in the opposite direction, as is illustrated in the art of the actor, who fulfils his task of bringing to expression the inner life of the character he is playing not by consciously mastering the play of mimicry and directing his expressive muscles according to goal and intention, but by immersing himself in the mental and emotional state of his character, i.e. by calling forth in himself, *through his will*, and of course always only as phantasy-material, the affects, wishes and

²⁷ See [Witasek 1904], 137, [Mach 1886] and [Mach 1903], [Schulzki 1980], [Mulligan and Smith 1985].

thoughts which are to show themselves in this person, so that he himself experiences them (as phantasy-material) and then the appropriate gestures follow of themselves. Thus the actor has a quite special control of his phantasy life (p. 136; cf. also [Meinong 1910], §16).

10. *Characteristica Universalis*

Can we now put the above pieces of theory together in such a way as to produce an overall view of the Witasekian aesthetic? Ideally, what we should like is a means of dividing complex aesthetic experiences and aesthetic objects into simple constituents in such a way that we could see precisely how each would be related to its fellows in the original, unanalysed whole. Witasek has in fact provided just such a *combinatorics* of aesthetic elements. He distinguishes – along the lines sketched already above – the following combinatory elements which go to make up those complex objects which give rise to aesthetic feelings, both pleasurable and displeasurable:²⁸

1. objects of simple sensation
2. formal or structural *Gestalt*-objects (*Gestalten* founded on objects in 1.)
3. objects of value-beauty
4. objects of inner beauty
 - (a) evoking pleasurable empathy-feelings
 - (b) evoking painful empathy-feelings
 - (c) evoking pleasurable sympathy-feelings
 - (d) evoking painful sympathy-feelings

Each combinatory element can be associated with an aesthetic feeling-moment which is either genuinely positive or pleasurable: (+), or genuinely negative or displeasurable: (–). Full combination-elements are therefore (1), (2), (3), etc. – though we shall assume that the elements in 4, insofar as they give rise to *genuine* feelings, are always carriers of (+): the moment of displeasure in 4b and 4d – for example our sadness that the heroine has died – exists only as phantasy-material. This yields 10 combinatory elements, or letters (distinctive features), of the aesthetic alphabet.²⁹

Certain combination-possibilities can be ignored because they lack all significance. These are ruled out by the following laws:

²⁸ The account which follows is somewhat simplified and leaves Witasek's fifth category of aesthetic objects out of account.

²⁹ Compare Brentano's conception of descriptive psychology as having the task of 'disclosing the ultimate psychic constituents, whose combination would yield the totality of psychical phenomena as letters yield words' ([Brentano 1982], p. X). Cf. also [Mulligan and Smith 1985a].

- Every combination-product must contain an element belonging to category 1 (because all aesthetic experiences rest ultimately on intuitive presentations).
- Every combination product that contains 3 or an element from 4 must also contain 2 (because value beauty and expressive beauty arise only in connection with complex objects of sensation).
- Every combination-product that contains 4c or 4d must contain also 3 (because sympathy-feelings are possible only where some ulterior value is apprehended).
- The elements 4a and 4b exclude each other mutually within any given combination-product, as do the elements 4c and 4d (or at least, as Witasek argues, if we suspend this rule, then no new characteristic cases present themselves).
- In a combination-product containing a 3 the differentiation of 1 into (+) and (-) is of no aesthetic consequence, as, in a combination-product containing a 4c or a 4d, is the corresponding differentiation of 2.

This generates, at this level of generality, 30 possible combination-products that are capable of being manifested in actual experience (cf. p. 276):

[(1+)], [(1-)]
 [(1+)(2+)], [(1+)(2-)], [(1-)(2+)], [(1-)(2-)]
 [(1)(2+)(3+)], [(1)(2+)(3-)], [(1)(2-)(3+)], [(1)(2-)(3-)]
 [(1)(2+)(4a)], [(1)(2+)(4b)]
 [(1)(2-)(4a)], [(1)(2-)(4b)]
 [(1)(2)(3+)(4a)(4c)], [(1)(2)(3+)(4b)(4c)]
 [(1)(2)(3-)(4a)(4c)], [(1)(2)(3-)(4b)(4c)]
 [(1)(2)(3+)(4a)(4d)], [(1)(2)(3+)(4b)(4d)]
 [(1)(2)(3-)(4a)(4d)], [(1)(2)(3-)(4b)(4d)]
 [(1)(2)(3+)(4a)], [(1)(2)(3+)(4b)], [(1)(2)(3+)(4c)], [(1)(2)(3+)(4d)]
 [(1)(2)(3-)(4a)], [(1)(2)(3-)(4b)], [(1)(2)(3-)(4c)], [(1)(2)(3-)(4d)]

Examples of some *uses of words* in this aesthetic language, now, are:
 an illuminated spectral colour: [(1+)],
 simple ornaments and melodies: [(1+)(2+)],
 a beautiful melody sung by a bad voice: [(1-)(2+)],
 ornaments and melodies which in addition to their 'formal' beauty also have some kind of expressive content: [(1)(2+)(4a)], [(1)(2+)(4b)],
 the Ode to Joy of the 9th Symphony: [(1)(2+)(4a)],
 Iphigenie at the close of Goethe's drama: [(1)(2)(3+)(4a)(4c)],
 Wagner's Mime: [(1)(2)(3-)(4b)(4c)],

the mother of Christ riddled with pain on an Italian painting of the burial of Christ: [(1)(2)(3+)(4b)(4d)].

Works of art, in conclusion, are inscribed by the artist on the surface of reality not for their own sake. They are created in order to produce in the spectator those precisely modulated feelings whose constituent elements are represented by the letters, words and sentences of the aesthetic alphabet as exemplified above. We go out of our way to experience such modified feelings, both positive and negative, because they can stand in for genuine phenomena in such a way that, in being contemplated, they give rise to genuine and subtle pleasure. This pleasure has the advantage that it is in a certain sense cut off from reality; it has none of the possibly painful consequences that pleasures founded on genuine, non-aesthetic experiences may sometimes bring. And it has the further advantage that it is subject to our will, and to the will of the artist, so that there are in principle no limits which can be set to the forms and varieties of pleasurable experience to which it might lead.

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