

Final Assignment

QUESTION 1.

The aesthetic appreciation of nature and appreciation of art have both similarities and differences. In this article, I will firstly discuss the similarities briefly (just for completeness) and then focus on the relevant differences between these two appreciative practices.

When we think about the appreciation of nature, the thought that beauty takes center stage naturally comes to mind. As for art, in many cases, the appreciation of art engages in appreciation of beauty. From this point of view, both aesthetic appreciation of nature and appreciation of art take aesthetic value into account.

Now, let's turn to the relevant differences between the two appreciative practices. In my opinion, there are three differences between them, including the importance of aesthetic value, the object, and the degree of directness.

The first difference lies in the varying importance placed on aesthetic value. Although the appreciation of art takes beauty into consideration, as mentioned above, it is only one among things we value. In other words, artworks have other characteristics and values besides aesthetic value. For example, Duchamp's famous *Fountain* lacks aesthetic value, yet this does not prevent it from being recognized as a work of art. Additionally, aesthetic value is not exclusive to artworks and artworks cannot be defined by possessing aesthetic value, because some non-artworks also possess aesthetic value. Unlike artworks, the aesthetic appreciation of nature places primary focus on aesthetic value, though it is not the sole consideration.

The second difference involves the object of appreciation. When it comes to art, the objects of appreciation is always obvious. "They are artworks." (Stecker 2010, 16) We also appreciate the performance if the artwork is performed. However, the natural environment is not readily subdivided into objects of appreciation. People propose different models to explain the object of the aesthetic appreciation of nature. The impressionist model focuses on fleeting sensations like colors and shapes, the object model focuses on individual objects, and the landscape model focuses on views and vistas. These models select different things as the object of the appreciation.

Last but not least, these two appreciations differ in degree of directness. Intuitively speaking, appreciation of nature is, somehow, straightforward, which means beauty and ugliness in nature are directly received by people. According to Stecker, people are not required to bring a lot of scientific knowledge to nature to properly appreciate it (Stecker 2010, 34). All people need is the portion of science that has already entered common knowledge and aligns with observational understanding. As for art, the situation is different. The appreciation of art requires individuals to possess some background knowledge or context in addition to perceiving the artworks themselves, making the process of appreciation more indirect. For example, in Carroll's opinion, contextualization helps critics to understand the artist's creative intention in artworks and evaluate the success value of the artworks.

In summary, the differences between the aesthetic appreciation of nature and the appreciation of art lies in the importance of aesthetic value, the object, and the degree of directness of appreciation.

QUESTION 4.

Before delving into twofoldness, we must first examine the concept of depiction. In philosophy of art, “depiction is representation by means of picturing: pictorial representation” (Stecker 2010, 185).

Intuitively, people might believe that depictions represent objects because they resemble them. For instance, when people see *A Woman Weighing Gold*, they may believe the painting represents a woman because it resembles a woman. However, they are mistaken. Actually, it is the person they see in *A Woman Weighing Gold*, rather than the picture itself, that resembles a woman.

To explore the nature of this phenomenon, Richard Wollheim proposed the expression “seeing-in”. Seeing-in is contrast with ordinary seeing. The latter means that when you look at a painting, you merely see a canvas covered by paint, while the former means that you see something more in the painting (if it is representational), like a woman in the case of *A Woman Weighing Gold*.

Twofoldness refers to the phenomenon where you are simultaneously aware of seeing A and its features, while also seeing-in A something that is B.

Twofoldness suggests that we are simultaneously aware of two folds when experiencing depictions. On the one hand, we are aware of the configurational aspect of the experience; on the other hand, we are conscious of the recognitional aspect. The former indicates the material support of the depiction, like a canvas of oil paintings, while the latter indicates the pictorial content of the picture, or the object it depicts, like Henry VIII in *Portrait of Henry VIII* by Hans Holbein the Younger.

Twofoldness is considered important to our experience of pictures because it applies to a wide range of pictorial art forms. For example, seeing-in phenomenon does occur in photography. When we see a photo of Bruce, we see Bruce in the photo, exemplifying the property of twofoldness. We can see a photograph of Bruce and see the physical surface and other features of the photo at the same time. What’s more, the concept of twofoldness is also applicable to some visual experiences that are non-arts. Imagine we look up at a cloud and notice it looks like something, say a dog. In this case, we simultaneously see a dog and the cloud and some of its features (colors, shapes, etc.). However, it is important to note that the cloud is not a depiction, as it lacks the intention of an artist.

Twofoldness has inspired a deeper understanding of the experience of viewing pictures and enriched the appreciation of pictorial art forms. The concept of twofoldness encourages people to consider both the material support and the pictorial content, enabling a more comprehensive evaluation of the artwork.

In summary, twofoldness is the key feature of seeing-in experiences. The two folds refer to a configurational fold and a recognitional fold. Twofoldness applies to a wide range of pictorial art forms (and some other visual experiences). It helps us better understand the essence of our experience of pictures.