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8 Inflection and Representation

Jérôme Pelletier

Some still figurative pictures apparently allow one to see in them objects or scenes whose properties belong to different realms. Some of these properties are ordinary properties like being a horse, properties of objects one may encounter “face-to-face”. “Face-to-face” means here “without the mediation of representational vehicles”, or “in the flesh”. Other properties are related somehow to the picture surface, like being painted with delicate strokes, that is, pictorial properties, properties of pictorial or representational vehicles. Thanks to these pictorial representational vehicles, objects and scenes bearing ordinary properties may be represented. “Inflection” refers to the moment when different ranges of properties—non-pictorial and pictorial—coalesce in pictorial experience and give rise to an experience of objects or scenes unseeable “face-to-face”.¹ Among paintings, drawing and sketches—that is among still pictures with a surface marked either with paint samples, chalk, pen or ink—some are said to exhibit this feature and others apparently do not. And one may surmise that, if there really are inflected pictures, appreciating these pictures requires, on the side of the viewer, a minimal awareness of the dual nature of properties amalgamated in pictorial experience, while at the same time recognizing that this amalgamation is mandated.

Two criteria of inflection emerge from the philosophical discussion on inflection (Podro 1998; Lopes 2005; Hopkins 2010; Nanay 2010). The first criterion “Coalescence” (C) refers to the amalgamation of surface and ordinary properties in objects or scenes seen in inflected pictures. And “Face-to-Face Unseeability” (FFU), the second criterion of inflection, refers to the kind of objects or scenes seen in inflected pictorial experiences. As it happens, (C) is an explanans of (FFU): the face-to-face unseeability of the object or scene seen in an inflected pictorial experience is explained by the coalescence of surface and ordinary properties in this object or scene. But what are we really saying when we say that (C) and (FFU) are realized in certain pictures? Are we saying that properties of a dual nature *really* belong to the objects or scenes seen in inflected pictures and that face-to-face unseeable objects are *really* seen in inflected pictorial experience?

Discussing, after Podro (1998: 16–17), a drawing by Rembrandt of Jan Cornelisz Sylvius, Hopkins uses the vocabulary of seeming to describe Sylvius’s hand: “the hand itself seems to be both body part and rising splash of ink” (2010: 161). I suggest using fictionalist sentences to describe (C). “It is fictional in Rembrandt’s drawing that the hand is both body part and rising splash of ink”. The advantage of using fictionalist sentences is that it allows to set aside the ontological worries elicited by ways of talking which mention objects or scenes of a dual ontological nature, while preserving talk of objects of a dual nature as a useful fiction. Fictionalist sentences are also apt to describe the second criterion of inflection (FFU), which says in this particular case: “It is fictional in Rembrandt’s drawing that a face-to-face unseeable hand is seen”.

An extra motivation to use fictionalist sentences in the philosophical discussion on inflection is that a problem in the philosophy of fiction comes out again in philosophical discussions on inflection. This is the problem of the limitations on representational correspondence. Most philosophers of fiction accept that there are, in fiction, “limitations on representational correspondence” (Currie 2010: 58). While “Othello, bluff man of war, produces spontaneously poetic statements of surpassing beauty” (Walton 1990, sect 4.5.), it is acknowledged that: “[I]n the world of the story, Othello is not an outstanding poet: none of the characters in the play is, despite the fact that the words they utter actually constitute beautiful poetry” (Currie 2010: 59). In the same way, it is said by philosophers of pictures either that “when West Arnhem Land aborigines painted stick figures, they were not representing humans who were as thin as sticks”. (Wollheim 2003a: 143) or that

While a black and white picture of Marlene Dietrich does in fact depict her (inter alia) as being black and white . . . we do not pay attention to this semantic ‘noise’; using common sense, we filter out the noise and heed only the obviously intended or accented bits of the picture.

(Schier 1986: 172)

It is often acknowledged that, due to (C) and to (FFU), inflected pictorial experience has no representational role. There is a Separation, in Hopkins’s vocabulary, between what is appropriately seen in a picture and what this picture depicts. I suggest to label this view “Style Separatism”. In his contribution to this volume, Hopkins claims:

When our experience of pictures is inflected, we are presented with items that are very strange. What we see in the picture combines features of the non-pictorial world—the sorts of object and property that we might, at least in principle, see face-to-face—with features drawn from the surface in which it is seen. The result crosses levels,

mingling the level of vehicle with that of content as nothing encountered beyond the pictorial realm could do. It is not very plausible that such strange objects are what these pictures depict. Rembrandt did not represent pastor Sylvius as a trans-level, impossible object. So, it is fortunate that we have the notion of Separation at our disposal. For all that the drawing depicts Sylvius as an ordinary, if impressive, man, what we see in it goes beyond that, in various interesting, indeed deeply exotic, ways.

(Hopkins 2018, 207)

Among the many pressing questions that arise concerning inflection, one would like to know why inflection should not contribute, if one endorses Wollheim's claim on aborigenes's stick figures or Hopkins's claim on Sylvius's drawing, to the representational power of pictures. In what follows, a case will be made for the representational power of inflection. In the course of the explanation, the view called "Style Separatism" is discussed. Since one faces in both domains—the philosophy of fiction and of inflection—particular versions of the same problem of representational correspondence, the use of the fiction vocabulary in the philosophy of inflection may help to see connections between both domains. In particular, if Style Separatism is a view inadequate in the philosophy of inflection, it may also be inappropriate in the philosophy of fiction.

FFU Subjects Without Inflection

Let's consider one of the two criteria of inflection: face-to-face unseeability (FFU). There is a variety of pictures which may be understood as presenting FFU objects or scenes in pictorial experience without satisfying the second criterion of inflection (C).

Wollheim claims that two Manet paintings *La Prune* and *Un Bar aux Folies Bergère* let us see in them non-particular women. Since non-particular women cannot be seen face-to-face—"We cannot see face-to-face women (. . .) of which we may not ask, Which woman?" (Wollheim 1998: 223)—these paintings may be said to satisfy the first criterion of inflection (FFU). In the explanation provided by Wollheim of the face-to-face unseeability of the women in the Manet paintings, (C)—the coalescence of surface and ordinary properties—plays no part. As a matter of fact, Wollheim does not mention the configurational features of the paintings, the marks left by Manet on the paintings' surfaces to explain the face-to-face unseeability of their subjects. As I understand Wollheim's explanation, what matters is the fact that the perception of the paintings is not structured by the concept of the particularity of these women. And this is attested, according to Wollheim, by the fact that a natural report of our experience of both paintings would take the form of "I see merely

a woman in that picture” not the form of “I see a particular woman in that picture” (cf. Wollheim 2003b: 10–13). In my interpretation of Wollheim’s point, a relational sentence such as “I see a particular woman in that picture” would be misplaced to describe our experience of the Manet paintings. Our experiences of the Manet paintings have qualitative properties devoid of perceptual particularity. It does not seem to the paintings’ viewers that particular women are to be seen in them.

One may go one step further in the explanation and distinguish the non-particularity of the women seen in the Manet paintings from their indeterminacy. This distinction matters since, some paintings—*The Madonna with the Long Neck* by Parmigianino—may be said to let us see particular indeterminate subjects in them. This is what may be inferred from Wollheim’s following claim:

When Parmigianino painted the Madonna with a long neck, the Madonna whom he represented is not, despite the title given to his picture, a long-necked Madonna.

(Wollheim 2003a: 143)

In my interpretation of Wollheim’s point, the length of the Madonna’s neck in Parmigianino’s *Madonna* is intentionally left indeterminate. Due to the curious but intentional length of the Madonna, one ought not to see a long-necked Madonna in the painting but a Madonna with a neck of an unspecified length. It is not that the length of the Madonna is not represented at all in the painting or that the painting is incomplete: it is that it is represented as longer than it is. In that sense, the particular woman correctly seen in the painting² is indeterminate with respect to her neck length. A correct pictorial experience of the painting is an experience of a Madonna with a neck of no determinate length.

This is another instance of a pictorial experience of a FFU subject, this time of a particular indeterminate woman, an experience laden with referential thought contrary to the pictorial experiences of the Manet paintings mentioned above. The Manet and the Parmigianino paintings illustrate a variety of ways in which what can be seen in a painting is, according to Wollheim, not limited to what can be seen face-to-face. In my construal of Wollheim’s proposal, some determinate non-particular women are correctly seen in the Manet paintings. Each Manet painting let us see some determinate woman in it without letting us see a particular determinate woman to whom one would refer to as this particular determinate woman. By contrast, one correctly sees a particular indeterminate woman in the Parmigianino painting.

In both explanations, Wollheim does not mention (C) as an explanations of the face-to-face unseeability either of the women seen in the Manet paintings or of the Madonna seen in the Parmigianino painting. Whatever one thinks of Wollheim’s explanation, one lesson to be drawn

is that a painting's power of representing FFU objects or scenes is not sufficient to elicit an inflected pictorial experience of these objects or scenes.

A question arises. If paintings have a distinctive power to represent FFU objects or scenes, objects or scenes which possess special characteristics such as non-particularity or indeterminacy, why should paintings have no power to represent objects or scenes which amalgamate properties of a pictorial and non-pictorial nature? Once one accepts, with Wollheim, that FFU objects or scenes may be seen correctly in a marked surface, one may be tempted to go one step further and claim that objects or scenes endowed of pictorial and non-pictorial properties may be correctly seen in a marked surface. How to explain this limitation of the representational power of paintings?

FFU, Style Separatism and Style Inflectionism

What may be called a Style Separatism is at work in Wollheim's limitation of the representational power of the Parmigianino's painting. The pictorial style of Parmigianino which is aesthetically relevant in a pictorial experience of the Parmigianino painting must be separated from what is representationally relevant in this painting. Though seeing the long neck of the Madonna in the painting contributes to an aesthetic appreciation of the painting, it is not part of a correct pictorial experience of the painting and does not contribute to the painting's representational content.

The long neck of Parmigianino's Madonna can be seen in his picture, but it cannot be correctly seen in it, only so it should be allowed only to bring about how the Madonna is perceived.

(Wollheim 2003a: 144)

The Madonna's long neck belongs to what Wollheim calls the "Presentational how" of the painting. After having distinguished the 'what' and the 'how' of representation, Wollheim elucidates different ways of thinking of the how of representation which he calls the "Material how", the "Representational how" and the "Presentational how":

The Material how "(. . .) relates to the representing surface, and how it is marked. (. . .) it is through it that the other two hows are realized (. . .) the Representational how corresponds to a property of the what of representation, possessed either permanently or transiently, whereas the Presentational how does not qualify the what at all. It may reflect a range of things from the expressive vision of the artist, through the artistic pressures of the day, to the artist's technical limitations.

(2003a: 143)

One may surmise, from what Wollheim says about the “Presentational how”, that in the Parmigianino painting, the Presentational how reflects the expressive vision of the artist. In this particular case, the abnormal proportions of the Madonna’s neck, fingers and shoulders, as well as of the Christ child are expressive of Parmigianino’s vision of these creatures as, maybe, unearthly creatures, not quite like us. The painter relies on the beholder’s capacity to perceive the painting as expressing his vision. But the expressive vision of the artist has no power to represent external objects, it does not qualify the what of representation, only how the beholder sees it.

Wollheim mentions a skill that enables the right kind of spectator, by being attuned to the intentions of the artist, to shape and to control the content of his visual experience. How? The right kind of spectator lets:

certain parts of the Material how affect what he sees in the picture, and other parts affect only how he sees it. What is to be seen in a picture embraces the Representational how, but the Presentational how is initially excluded, and then let in only to modify how the what is seen.

(Ibid.: 144)

As I understand this skill, it is a cognitive skill or a know-how which enables the spectator to separate “in thought” among the manifest features of the painting the subclass of features which affect what is to be seen in the painting. How may a spectator manage to do this selection? By being attuned to the artist’s intentions when he painted the canvas. In this particular case, the right kind of spectator understands that there is no requirement to see a woman with a long neck in the picture or to experience the long neck of the woman in the painting.

The right kind of spectator sees in the painting a Madonna and a Christ child with body parts of indeterminate length whereas the naive or inappropriate spectator, not being attuned to Parmigianino’s creative intentions, would see in the painting a Madonna with a long neck and a Christ child with an elongated body. In other words, the naive spectator does not separate matters of style and matters of representation and lets the stylistic properties of the painting contaminate what is to be seen in the painting. Since stylistic properties are pictorial properties, the naive spectator sees in the painting inflected objects and scenes, that is objects and scenes which amalgamate pictorial properties like “having an elongated neck” and non-pictorial properties like “being a woman”.

Appreciation of the painting includes the detection of both kinds of properties, but the mistake is to take one’s inflected experience of a Madonna with a Child Christ at truth value, that is to see in the painting a Madonna or a Christ child bearing pictorial or stylistic properties like having elongated body parts. By contrast, the right kind of spectator experiences the elongation of the neck as a property of the manner or style of representation chosen by the artist, not as a property of

the Madonna. This is Style Separatism, a claim endorsed by Wollheim, a claim that could be summarized in the following words: “in many cases, stylistic properties are non-representational properties”. Once one endorses Style Separatism, one may conclude that what are represented and seen correctly in Parmigianino’s painting are non-stylistic particulars Madonna and Christ child, that is particulars with many indeterminate body parts sizes.

The artistic choices made by Parmigianino when he made the *Madonna with the Long Neck* are such that many manifest features of the painting are not attributable to the objects and scenes represented, something that the right kind of spectator understands. A cognitive skill enables this spectator to be sensitive to the fact that the painting’s appearance has many differences with the objects and scenes represented and with the real appearances of these objects and scenes. As a consequence, the Parmigianino painting brings in the mind of the right kind of spectator a visual awareness of objects and scenes indeterminate in many respects. By contrast, a non-vigilant spectator would let the stylistic manifest features contaminate the objects and scenes represented. He will not be in a position to see in the painting indeterminate objects or scenes. The non-vigilant spectator will not resist a naive perceptual disposition to see in the Parmigianino painting objects and scenes endowed with properties some of which will match the manifest stylistic features of the paintings, objects which amalgamate properties of the pictorial style (elongation) with non-pictorial properties (neck). This is Style Inflectionism, a view rejected by Wollheim.

Walton’s Style Separatism Without FFU

In a way different from Wollheim, Walton defends a form of Style Separatism. Walton and Wollheim agree that there is a prescribed manner of experiencing a painting. But they disagree on the nature of this experience: a perceptual experience for Wollheim and an imaginative experience for Walton. They also disagree on what supplies the criterion of correction of the pictorial experience: for Wollheim, the artist’s intentions (the thoughts, beliefs, memories, emotions and feelings that the artist had and caused him to paint as he did, cf. Wollheim 1988: 86); for Walton a priori principles: the Reality Principle and the Mutual Belief Principle (cf. Walton 1990: 144).

Walton (1990) conceives of representational artworks as prescribing particular imaginings about states of affairs. This is the reason why a work’s representational aspect is said, by Walton, to be related to its fictional aspect. Artworks, from many different genres, prescribe the imaginings of propositions. And the propositions to be imagined are the propositions fictional in a given work. These imaginative prescriptions are modulated by principles such as the Reality Principle on which fictional worlds are “as much like the real one as the core of primary

[i.e., explicitly stipulated] fictional truths permits” (1990: 144). We must assume that fictional worlds established by works of art are as much like the real world, except if it is explicit that it is not the case. This is why Walton’s “right kind of spectator”, by being sensitive to the Reality Principle, will not see in the Manet and Parmigianino paintings discussed above FFU objects and scenes. These paintings do not satisfy the FFU criterion of inflection. Walton’s “right kind of spectator” will imagine seeing perfectly ordinary real objects and scenes in these paintings. Commenting on *La Prune* by Manet Walton claims that:

We imagine seeing a woman whom we imagine to be there
 [T]he seeing that I merely imagine being engaged in is perfectly ordinary, face-to-face seeing, . . . There is no need to recognize a seeing of a special kind, directed on a peculiar and otherwise unseeable object?

(2002: 28)

But isn’t it the case that many paintings prescribe the imaginings of propositions which contravene the Reality Principle? What will a viewer of Leonardo da Vinci’s *L’Ultima Cena* imagine seeing? Will the viewer imagine seeing all the diners seated on one side of the table, a proposition which deviates from standard real-world assumptions? Walton believes that such questions are illegitimate and ‘silly’ since there are no answers to them in the fictional world established by the painting. The answer to this question lies outside the fictional world. For instance, one may say that the disciples are seated on the same side in order to let the viewer imagine seeing and knowing what the disciples faces look like (Walton 1990, sect 4.5.). An application of the Reality Principle enables the viewer to understand that this element of the stylistic composition of the painting has no representational role. This is a first example of Walton’s endorsement of Style Separatism.

‘Silly’ questions, in the Waltonian sense, may be asked concerning most works of art. Othello, bluff man of war, produces spontaneously poetic statements of surpassing beauty (Walton 1990, sect 4.5.). But in the world of the story, Othello is not an outstanding poet but rather rude of tongue. So how does Othello speak? In this case it is said in the play that Othello is rude of tongue. So there is an answer to this question in the fictional world of the play. The silly question to ask is “How come Othello seems to speak great verse?” Here again the only answer lies outside the fictional world established by the play. The poetry of Othello’s language is only part of the stylistic features of the work, not part of its representational features. This is a second example of Walton’s endorsement of Style Separatism. And the stylistic features of the play are here to please the spectators of the play, to let them appreciate it aesthetically, not to play a representational role. Walton’s Style Separatism led him to admit that there is a gap between the imaginings prescribed by a work and the propositions fictionally true in the work’s world. *L’Ultima*

Cena and *Othello* are two works of art which lead to imagine certain propositions—that the diners are seated on the same side of the table, that Othello speaks great verse—which are not fictionally true in the worlds established by these works. Many artworks, from many different genres, prescribe the imaginings of propositions which are not fictional in the worlds established by these works (Walton 2013).

Besides their important differences in their approach of pictorial experience, both Wollheim and Walton, in the end, seem to endorse a form of Style Separatism. Features of style have to be detached from the representational content of paintings: they are not representationally or semantically productive. And this stylistic detachment from the content requires a skill for Wollheim or the application of *a priori* principles for Walton. It follows for both philosophers that the representational content of a painting does not depend in a systematic way on the artist's marks on its surface: there is no systematic correspondence between parts of the surface and parts of the painting's semantic content, no semantic compositionality in painting, and this is explained by the presence of stylistic features.

The first upshot of Style Separatism for Walton, as with Wollheim, is that the fictional worlds established by a painting or a play contain significant indeterminacies. It is indeterminate how exactly the diners are really seated in *L'Ultima Cena* and how Othello really speaks. It is fictional that there are diners and it is fictionally indeterminate how they are seated. It is fictional that Othello is speaking but it is fictionally indeterminate how he is speaking.³ Style Separatism creates for Walton, as for Wollheim, massive indeterminacies. And these indeterminacies are independent of whether objects and scenes seen in a painting are FFU objects or scenes or not since for Walton and *pace* Wollheim, no FFU objects or scenes are imagined being seen in works of art.

Though the stylistic features of a painting or a play have no semantic productivity, they have for both philosophers of art an aesthetic productivity. And this is the second upshot of Style Separatism: the risk of endorsing a non-representationalist aesthetics. What explains the aesthetic appreciation of a painting or of a play, in a Style Separatism framework, would be a special sensitivity toward features of a work that do not themselves represent anything, a special sensitivity toward stylistic properties conceived as non-representational properties of the work. In the Waltonian framework, the stylistic features of the work are those which make the representation of the fictional world established by the work possible, they are vehicles of representation. There is the poetic Othello and the rude Othello. Walton's Style Separatism is the claim that in the fictional world of the play, there is room only for one Othello, the rude one. The poetic Othello is only a vehicle to reach the rude Othello, and other poetic Othellos could have done the same work. In this respect, features of style appear only contingently associated with the work's content.

Style Inflectionism

It is certainly intuitive that many marks on a painting's surface have no representational function: many lines or hatchings or dots have a decorative or expressive function, not a representational one. And Style Separatism, in the manner of Wollheim or of Walton, is a way to generalize this intuition. But there is a risk of overgeneralization. Some paintings are made in such a way that they resist Style Separatism. The best candidates are paintings which meet the two criteria of inflection mentioned above. I see in Magritte's painting entitled *Le Blanc-Seing* (1965) a candidate of this kind (Figure 8.1).



Figure 8.1 Magritte, *Le blanc-seing* (1965).

Source: Copyright général: © Adagp, Paris, [2018].

If one tries to apply Style Separatism to Magritte's painting *Le Blanc-Seing*, no stylistic features of the painting should affect what is represented and correctly seen in the painting by the "right kind of spectator". In a description along Wollheim's lines, for a spectator of the right kind, the scene correctly seen in the painting and represented by it will be of a non-particular woman riding a non-particular horse in a landscape in indeterminate ways.

In this description of the pictorial experience of the right kind of spectator, a central element of the pictorial experience of a naive viewer of the Magritte painting is missing. A naive viewer of Magritte's *Le Blanc-Seing* cannot but see in this painting a curved landscape. The pictorial experience of, e.g., the curvature of the space in front of the horse imposes itself on its naive viewer. In what way does this pictorial experience impose itself on a naive viewer?

In the Magritte painting, the deformation of the greenish landscape passing from behind the horse to the front and then back again appears as a vertical stripe of landscape enveloping the horse. This stripe of greenish landscape may be compared to the vertical green line in Matisse's *Portrait of Mme Matisse* (1905). Matisse's portrait features a stroke of green on the face of Mme Matisse. Wollheim comments:

When Matisse painted a stroke of green down his wife's face, he was not representing a woman who had a green line down her face.

(Wollheim 2003a: 143)

Since Matisse painted a stroke of green on his wife's face, Matisse was nonetheless somehow representing a green line. But he did that in such a way that the "right kind of spectator" understands that the woman had no green line on her face. The green line is part of Wollheim's "Presentational how". In the fictional idiom, Matisse's painting mandates its viewer to imagine seeing a woman with a green line on her face; it is fictional in Matisse's painting that there is a woman with a green line down her face without it be fictionally true in the painting's world that there is a woman with a green line on her face.

Is the curvature of the space in Magritte's painting part of Wollheim's "Presentational how", thus representing, e.g., the expressive vision of the artist? Above all, the curvature of the landscape may be said to be a property of the "Representational how", that is, a property of the what of representation. The viewer should be convinced that Magritte intended him to take what he sees in the painting, that is, an anomalous landscape, to be what is depicted by the painting. In the fictional idiom, the painting mandates its viewer to imagine seeing a curved landscape and it is fictionally true that there is a curved landscape in the world established by the painting.

How to explain this difference between the pictorial experiences of these paintings? Why is the greenish landscape in front of the horse

part, in my construal, of Wollheim's "Representational how", while the green stripe on the woman's face is only part of the "Presentational how"? My hypothesis is, whereas a naive pictorial experience of the Matisse portrait in which the green line is seen as a part of Madame Matisse's face is incorrect or not merited, a naive pictorial experience of the Magritte painting in which the greenish landscape curves and envelopes the horse is correct and merited. And because the latter pictorial experience is a seeing-in experience for Wollheim or an imaginative experience for Walton that is merited or appropriate, it possesses a representational power which the former pictorial experience lacks. By 'merited', I mean that the very pictorial experience of a curved landscape is itself valuable or optimal. By 'appropriate', I mean that it is a pictorial experience in response to an artistic unique achievement. And by 'representational power', I mean that it is an experience of representational properties, such as 'being a curved landscape' or 'being a landscape enveloping the horse'. Finally, I suggest that, while in the Matisse portrait, a correct pictorial experience of the painting is an experience whose content is reframed on the basis of an appeal to the artist's intentions or to a Reality Principle, such a reframing would be misplaced with the Magritte painting. It would be misplaced because it would somehow block the pleasure and value of the pictorial experience itself. Somehow the only guide in our pictorial experience of the Magritte painting is a search of an optimal pictorial experience, not a search to avoid inconsistency, contradiction and paradox. It is because the painting has the representational properties it has: because it manages to represent the space as curved that the painting is valuable. Was it also part of Magritte's artistic intentions in making *Le Blanc-Seing* to attempt to represent the space as curved? Probably, but the aim of a viewer's pictorial experience of Magritte's painting is not to retrieve Magritte's creative intentions. The viewer's aim is to optimize his pictorial experience by making the most of Magritte's compositional achievement in representing the spatial relations between the horse and the landscape.

The 'artistic unique achievement' of the Magritte painting mentioned above is related to the phenomenon of inflection. The face of Madame Matisse with its green line is not such that an inflected pictorial experience of her face would be a merited pictorial experience. By contrast, the landscape in the Magritte painting is represented in such a way that an inflected pictorial experience of this landscape is merited. A 'merited' pictorial experience of the Magritte painting will amalgamate stylistic compositional features of the painting with non-pictorial features in such a way that the space will curve in front of the horse. Viewing the Magritte painting, we are aware of its stylistic compositional properties. We see compositional discontinuities in the marks

on the canvas that depict the horse; we see the horse's shoulder and elbow as not painted in certain areas. And what we see in the painting is a mixt of pictorial properties like 'being painted in certain parts' and non-pictorial properties like 'being a horse'. There is coalescence of properties of different kinds in our pictorial experience of a horse painted with missing parts. This coalescence makes it that we do not see in the painting a horse transparent in certain of its body parts but that we see in the painting a whole horse painted with missing pictorial body parts. And this pictorial inflected experience of the horse is part of a wider pictorial experience, a pictorial experience of a curved landscape which passes somehow in front of the horse body parts which are pictorially missing. The upshot is an optimal pictorial experience of the Magritte painting.

This pictorial experience is optimal relatively to another possible pictorial experience of the same painting, a pictorial experience in which the horse would not be inflected and would be represented as being transparent. In that non-optimal pictorial experience, the landscape in this part of the painting would not curve and would remain at the background of the painting, behind the horse seen as transparent at the shoulder. Why is the latter pictorial experience less optimal than the former in which a whole non-transparent horse is seen in the painting? Because the pictorial experience of a transparent horse has a very limited local relevance: it cannot take into account the other parts of the painting in which no body parts of the horse are missing and the landscape is still curved. Only the pictorial experience in which the horse is not represented as transparent is a merited response to the overall artistic achievement of Magritte in this painting and to its unity. What I call the optimal pictorial experience of the Magritte painting represents a woman riding a horse in a curved landscape. This experience manages to absorb the compositional properties of the painting within its representational content. There is no Style Separatism in this pictorial experience. The composition of the painting, a stylistic feature of the painting, despite its incongruities, is integrated by the optimal viewer in his pictorial experience and representation in such a way that the painting will represent a woman riding a horse in a curved space. This is Style Inflectionism.

A consequence of Style Inflectionism will be a reduction of indeterminacies. For a viewer of Magritte's *Le Blanc-Seing* who endorses Style Separatism, the scene correctly seen in the painting and represented by it will be of a non-particular woman riding a non-particular horse in a landscape in indeterminate ways. Where this viewer will see indeterminacies, what I call the 'optimal spectator' will see determinate weird curvatures in the landscape. These differences will not prevent both spectators—the optimal and the separatist spectator of a Wollheimian kind—from both seeing FFU objects and scenes in the painting. But for

the optimal spectator, the FFU scene will be determinate in many respects while for the separatist spectator, the FFU scene will be indeterminate in some respects.

Conclusion

The subtle distortions of Parmigianino's painting, the unexpected composition of Magritte's painting, are pictorial features noticed by non-expert viewers because they disrupt their perceptual habits. Due to these pictorial features, the perception of these paintings tends to elicit intense arousing seeing-in experiences (Wollheim) or imaginative experiences (Walton). Do we engage in these seeing-in or imaginative experiences somehow off-line, for the sake of enjoying these experiences, or do we engage in these experiences on-line, as a means of delivering the representational content of these paintings? These distortions and unexpected compositions are the stylistic signatures of an artistic agency. Their occurrences raise the question of the interaction of matters of style and matters of content in our experience of art.

To this question, philosophers of art such as Wollheim and Walton tend to reply with a view I label "Style Separatism", according to which style and content should not mingle. What I suggest is that certain paintings aim at triggering pictorial experiences which connect features of style and of content inseparably. These paintings have distinctive features which make it that one sees in them (or imagines seeing) objects or scenes which amalgamate pictorial and non-pictorial properties. These paintings are said to merit inflected pictorial experiences and manifest a form of a view I label "Style Inflectionism". These inflected pictorial experiences are said to be optimal experiences.

There are no rules for optimality, as there are no rules for creating paintings which merit inflected pictorial experiences. Should Parmigianino's painting merit an inflected pictorial experience? Should Parmigianino's style interact with the painting's content in such a way that, when the painting invites a viewer to imagine seeing a Madonna with a long neck, the painting should be said to depict a Madonna with a long neck? The elongation of the neck and of the body of Christ child, I suggest, merits an inflected pictorial experience which amalgamates this stylistic feature of elongation to the Madonna and Christ. This pictorial experience is merited in the sense that it is an appropriate response to the unity of the painting and to the achievement of the artist in this painting. Such a representational experience is not so much an experience of reverence toward the Madonna and Christ as an experience of reverence toward the artist's compositional innovation, as it is the case with the proper pictorial experience of the Magritte painting discussed above. In both cases, with the Magritte's painting and with the Parmigianino's painting,

inflected pictorial experiences are appropriate responses to the compositional structures of these works.

One sees in the beginning of abstract painting a retreat of figurative elements, but not a hasty retreat, a slow and progressive one. At the same time the pictorial means of representation—the colors and lines—are foregrounded. This moment of balance between a figurative retreat and an exhibition of the means of representation is manifest in a painting such as Kandinsky *Composition VI* (1913). The painting's experience is an experience of the coalescence of the pictorial and the figurative, an experience in which the viewer cannot tell whether, e.g., a snake is to be seen in some part of the surface or just colors and lines. The viewer's interrogation is legitimate since both elements are to be seen in this part of the canvas and an inflected experience is a proper response to the compositional work of Kandinsky. Another example of Style Inflectionism is Fontana's *Concetto spaziale New York 10* (1962). Here, the viewer's experience amalgamates the two-dimensional vertical perforations of the surface and, in the third dimension, the skyscrapers of New York. The skyscrapers are vertical lacerations, both buildings and jagged cuts in the metal.

It is a consequence of this view that a given pictorial experience of a painting may be more or less right or wrong, more or less correct or incorrect. Since optimality does not follow logical laws, it is often left open to the viewer "to get" the painting one way or another. Many paintings elicit pictorial experiences which abide by the rules of Style Separatism. In the fictional idiom, these paintings invite their viewers to imagine propositions—that Madame Matisse has a green line on her face, that the diners are seated on the same side of the table—which are not fictionally true in the worlds established by these works. One may say that these imaginings make fictional certain propositions—that Madame Matisse has a green line on her face, that the diners are seated on the same side of the table—without making these propositions fictionally true in the work's worlds. This way of speaking takes into account the representational role of these deviant imaginings. It is not the case that these imaginings, though mandated in order to appreciate the work, have no representational role. True, in one sense, they have no representational role insofar as they do not represent the worlds established by the works as being one way rather than another. In that sense, they are imaginings without representation. But in a more trivial sense, they have a representational role insofar as they represent stylistic features of the works. These imaginings render fictional certain propositions: that the diners are seated on the same side of the table or that Madame Matisse has a green line on her face. These imaginings have correction conditions: they can be shown to be correct or incorrect by holding them up against the stylistic properties of the work. But they can be shown to be incorrect by holding them against the world established by the work, they

misrepresent the world established by the work. Style Separatism, though being a view inadequate for inflected pictures, remains a view relevant for many non-inflected pictures. Vermeer's blurred effects on the figures in his paintings should not let us conclude that the men and women represented by Vermeer's paintings are soft and blurred. The blurred contours are configurational items which do not claim to be part of the painting's content, Style Separatism is effective for Vermeer's paintings. Nonetheless, the blurred quality of Vermeer's brushstrokes are invitations for the viewer to imagine a world slightly out-of-focus in some of its parts. These imaginings without representation have a precious aesthetic value.

Notes

- 1 This is not to say that those objects and scenes are unseeable "tout court". Somehow these objects or scenes are "seeable" since they belong to the visual content of the perceptual experiences of these paintings.
- 2 In my construal, Wollheim classifies Parmigianino's *Madonna with the Long Neck* in the category of pictures of a particular woman. This is because what Wollheim says of *Jupiter and Thetis* applies to the *The Madonna with the Long Neck*. Wollheim claims "that we should put Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Jupiter and Thetis* in the same category as *Madame Brunet* even though Jupiter and Thetis are not real persons" (Wollheim 2003b: 11). For Wollheim, there is no sense in asking "Which woman is represented?" in *La Prune*, whereas it matters to understand that the particular Jupiter is represented in the Ingres painting. The distinction is at the level of what is seen in these pictures. Both paintings are to be classified with *Madame Brunet* in the category of paintings of particular women. Ditto for *The Madonna with the Long Neck*. As for *Madame Brunet*, on the basis of the linguistic test mentioned above, when one asks about Manet's *Portrait of Madame Brunet* "What woman is it of?", since there is an answer to this question, Wollheim classifies *Madame Brunet* as a picture of a particular woman.
- 3 It remains fictionally indeterminate how Othello is *really* speaking, since we have only been told that he is rude of tongue.

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