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The Philosophy of Sculpture

A thesis submitted in application for the Degree of Ph.D.

Department of Moral Philosophy

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31 July 2000

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Declarations

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Abstract

My purposes in this thesis are: firstly to identify a space for philosophical enquiry about sculpture; secondly, to provide an account of the nature of sculpture and the sculptural; and thirdly, to apply this account to an understanding of sculptural representation. I begin by arguing that questions of philosophical interest concerning the nature and functioning of sculpture are best focused on differences at the level of the art practices within which works are produced. Looking at some examples of critical writing about sculpture and painting I draw out some characteristic thematic differences in the ways we treat works of these kinds: in terms of the ways in which they exist for appreciators as objects; and in terms of the activities (physical and other) in which appreciators engage. Taking a critical look at some of the key recent philosophical accounts of the nature of sculpture, which seek to account for the nature of sculpture in terms of a distinction between sculptural and non-sculptural physical and perceptual features considered at the level of material and mechanism, I develop an alternative account of the nature of the sculptural which focuses on the use of features of material and mechanisms as a medium within the context of sculptural art practice. I argue that an artwork is sculptural in so far as the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium for the work, implying that the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art object is necessarily relevant to appreciating sculptural works. Drawing a distinction between sculpture and the sculptural, I claim that the category of “sculpture” refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard. I then bring this account to bear on the question of sculptural representation, arguing that some key accounts representation (the “resemblance” theory, the “seeing-in” theory, and the “make-believe” theory), nor their analogues, can provide a wholly satisfactory account of sculptural representation. Claiming that features such as three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe have a role in sculptural representation only contingently and within the limits circumscribed by the intentional context of the particular work’s production, I propose an integrated intentionalist account of sculptural appreciation which suggests that the kinds

of processes and activities of judgement involved in appreciating sculptures are intimately connected both with the way such judgements are mandated and with the way such facts are determined. This incorporates an intentionalist account of the determination of a representational work's sculptural status, a content-independent and intentionalist account of representationality in sculpture, a content-independent and intentionalist account of the determination of the object of sculptural representations, and an intentionalist account of the determination of representational content in sculpture.

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Chapter One

The space for a philosophy of sculpture

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Independence

1.3 Autonomy

1.4 Difference: artworks and art-practices

1.5 Appreciation and the space for philosophical inquiry

1.6 Two characteristic differences

1.7 Entering the space of sculpture

1.1 Introduction

If the art of sculpture has seldom been the specific focus of philosophers, this is perhaps because it generally has not been taken to be of any distinctive philosophical interest. A great deal of theory concerning painting and architecture is taken implicitly to apply to sculpture, and when sculpture does give rise to philosophical questions these tend to be thought of as “loose ends”. It seems certain that if there are no non-trivial differences with arts such as painting and architecture, then sculpture will not be of any distinctive philosophical interest. Of course, we know that there are some differences between sculpture and the other arts. The question is whether sculpture differs from the other arts in a way which opens a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry. The answer to this question depends first of all upon what features, in general, could be taken to open a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning an art form, and secondly, upon whether sculpture is characterised by features of the appropriate kind.

Herbert Read's *The Art of Sculpture*¹ and F David Martin's *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*² stand out as rare examples of sustained philosophical enquiry

¹ Faber and Faber Ltd: London, 1956

² The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1981

concerning sculpture, although Read's book, as primarily a work of historical aesthetics, has less of a philosophical emphasis than Martin's. In arguing that sculpture is of distinctive rather than simply derivative interest, Read and Martin make substantive general claims about when an art will be of distinctive interest: Read suggests that an art will be of distinctive philosophical interest in so far as it is an "independent" art; and Martin in so far as it is an "autonomous" art. They also make substantive particular claims about what it is about sculpture in virtue of which the art is independent or autonomous respectively, and hence where the distinctive space for philosophical enquiry lies. Both hold that latter is primarily occupied by issues concerning the physical nature of sculpture and features of our perception of sculpture.

In this chapter I will not much be concerned with assessing whether the particular properties attributed by Read and Martin to works of sculpture are correctly attributed - this issue will be taken up in later chapters. Instead, my interest in Read's and Martin's theses will focus on the role given to claims about the physical and perceptual properties of sculptural works in their arguments concerning the independence or autonomy of the art form, and on the notions of independence and autonomy themselves. I will argue that both Read and Martin's analyses inappropriately conflate art-objects and art-practices in arguing for the independence or autonomy of the art of sculpture, and that the issue of the independence or autonomy of sculpture is, in any case, largely a red herring with respect to the question of the space for philosophical enquiry. Nevertheless, there are parts of Read's and Martin's respective arguments which point towards an alternative, and I believe more fruitful, approach which focuses on *difference* rather than independence or autonomy.

My discussion of Read's and Martin's approaches to this issue is aimed at providing a way into an alternative conception of the space for a philosophy of sculpture. I argue that where as their analyses focus on the properties of individual sculptural art works, all be it considered collectively, answers to questions of philosophical interest concerning the nature and functioning of sculpture belong more appropriately at the level of the art practices within which works are produced. Of particular relevance, in this regard, is a consideration of the mode of appreciation, considered as a way of using

materials, which is appropriate to and partially definitive of an art practice. My suggestion is that in so far as there are significant and distinctive differences in the mode of appreciation internal to an art practice, then to that extent at least there will also be a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry. One way of establishing whether there is a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning the art of sculpture is to establish whether there is a distinctive mode of appreciation belonging to it. I suggest that an analysis of the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation and criticism provides a way, first of locating this space, and secondly of giving our philosophical enquiry an orientation within it.

1.2 Independence

Read suggests that the relative lack of philosophical attention paid to sculpture is the result of an historical “difficulty in establishing its independence as an art, and this has been in some measure due to the lack of any clear formulation of the requisite autonomous laws.”³ Read draws a distinction between two aspects of sculpture’s independence as an art: its physical independence, which consists in physical separation from its setting; and its aesthetic independence, which consists in its having its “own creative principles, its own standards of appreciation”.⁴

Read sees the physical independence of sculpture as an art as both historically and logically prior to its aesthetic independence. It is only when sculpture is physically independent from its original architectural context that it acquires aesthetic independence. According to Read, sculpture’s physical “emancipation” from an original unity with architecture originated in the early Renaissance with the development of the free-standing statue.⁵ Historically, he claims that there was “a time lag between the conception of a free-standing statue and the discovery of an aesthetic appropriate to such sculpture.”⁶ Logically, Read claims that “architectural sculpture, by its very *raison d’être*, cannot

³ *The Art of Sculpture*, p. ix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60

⁶ *Ibid.*

acquire independent sculptural values; it is an applied art, sacrificing its integrity to a superior unity.”⁷ Read agrees with Ruskin’s claim that ““no perfect piece either of painting or sculpture is an architectural ornament at all” because “the especial condition of true ornament is, that it be beautiful in its place, and nowhere else””⁸ and takes this to imply that the “perfection of form in one art is incompatible with perfection in form of another art ...for the premises of every art are distinct....”⁹

Read’s claim is not just about the priority of the physical independence of works of sculpture over the aesthetic independence of the art of sculpture, but a claim about historical difficulties for thinkers about sculpture in coming up with “any clear formulation of the requisite autonomous laws”. On Read’s view both the development of independent creative principles and standards of appreciation appropriate to free-standing sculpture, and the development of sculpture as an independent art form, have been impeded by the historical difficulty in clearly formulating such an aesthetic and, in particular, grasping how this aesthetic diverges from those appropriate to architecture and, especially, painting. It was, according to Read, the lack of any such clear formulation which held back artists like Donatello and Michelangelo from the development of a truly “free sculpture” until the time of Rodin. Read’s account of the historical difficulty in giving a clear formulation of independent creative principles and standards of appreciation for sculpture and his claim about the impact of this on the development of sculptural practice, incorporates a substantive thesis concerning the nature of sculpture (as an art) and the content of its appropriate aesthetic.

On Read’s view the difficulty in giving such a formulation had a largely psychological origin. He says that “a very real confusion has always existed between the arts of sculpture and painting ... a confusion due to the psychological fact that no clear separation is made in experience between the faculties of sight and touch.”¹⁰ Read

⁷ Ibid., p.106.

⁸ Ibid., p. 24

⁹ Ibid., p. 24

¹⁰ Ibid., p.85

couples this with a general claim about the relationship between the aesthetic independence of art forms and our perception of artworks. Read holds that

“to each particular co-ordination of the senses there corresponds an appropriate art with its aesthetic laws. If we give prominence to vision and subordinate all other sensations to its law of maximum aesthetic effect, then we get one kind of art; if we give prominence to touch and subordinate all other sensations to its law of maximum aesthetic effect, then we get another kind of art.”¹¹

Read further claims that sculpture “is to be distinguished from painting as the plastic art which gives preference to tactile sensations as against visual sensations”¹² because sculpture as an art, unlike painting, “creates a three-dimensional object *in space*”¹³, making sculpture “primarily an art of “touch-space” ... whereas painting is primarily an art of “sight-space”.”¹⁴ However, the lack of a clear separation in experience between sight and touch of the sort we find between sound and other sensations contributed to a failure to recognise that the co-ordination of the senses (which Read calls a “sensibility”¹⁵) appropriate to sculpture differed from that appropriate to painting, leading to the dominance of a painterly conception of sculpture which tended to thwart the development within art-practice of an independent sculptural aesthetic. By contrast, says Read, “sound is so distinctive as a sensation that the aesthetics of music has its separate vocabulary”¹⁶

According to Read, an art is independent to the extent that it has its own independent creative principles and standards of appreciation, which he equates with the laws of maximum aesthetic effect on the co-ordination of the senses (sensibility) uniquely

¹¹ Ibid., p.116-117

¹² Ibid., p.70.

¹³ Ibid., p. 46

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 48

¹⁵ Ibid., p.71.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.69

appropriate to the physical characteristics of the artworks of that art form. In the case of sculpture, the claim was that sculpture's independence lies in its being governed by the laws of maximum aesthetic effect on a tactile sensibility appropriate to the three-dimensionality of the sculptural object. An issue requiring clarification concerns the kinds of aesthetic principles which Read sees as being necessary and sufficient for the independence of an art. Read discusses aesthetic independence in terms of an art having its "own creative principles, its own standards of appreciation", but it is not clear, however, how Read sees these two kinds of principles as being related. Are creative principles and standards of appreciation principles of different kinds, so that creative principles apply to the activities of artists without also being employed interpretively or evaluatively by appreciators? Or are they the same principles with different artistic roles, so that the activity of the artist in creating a work is governed by the same standards of appreciation, since the artist is also an appreciator, only in a creative context?¹⁷ If they are different kinds of principles it is not clear why, in order to be an independent art, an art requires both independent creative principles and independent standards of appreciation, rather than just one or the other kind. This is at least so in the absence of an argument showing that the independence of one variety of principle entails the independence of both. Given that the principles concerned are aesthetic rather than, for example, technical principles, it is hard to see how this could be done without favouring the alternative possibility that what we have are different roles played by the same principles.

Read's claim that an art will be independent, or have independent aesthetic principles, to the extent that the "sensibility" from which those laws derive is uniquely appropriate to objects of that art, seems to raise an obvious difficulty. Although we normally do think of arts such as poetry and the novel as distinct arts, and although such arts are governed by significantly divergent aesthetic principles, there does not on the face of things seem to be any clear or significant difference in the co-ordination of our perceptual faculties involved in either writing or reading works of this kind, and nor for

¹⁷ There may on this model still be creative principles which are not also standards of appreciation, e.g. technical or practical principles of creation.

that matter does there seem to be any relevant difference in the physical characteristics of the texts. One response would be to claim that although they may be distinct arts, poetry and the novel are nevertheless not independent arts. But this response does not sit well with Read's central claim that independence is a matter of an art having its own independent aesthetic for the example is one in which there is significant difference in aesthetic principles but no corresponding difference in perception, which tends to undermine also the connection posited by Read between aesthetic principles and modes of perception. An alternative response would be to point out a difference between the non-perceptual arts, in which our perceptual faculties are a mode of access to the work rather than part of experiencing and appreciating the work, and perceptual arts like sculpture and painting. This would mean, however, that Read's account of independence could not function as a general theory of art-independence but at best as an account of independence in the perceptual arts.

The central claim, that the independence of an art is a matter of its having its own aesthetic principles, seems promising, but there are two further things to note about it. Firstly, there seem to be a number of ways in which art forms might be independent from one another, of which being governed by independent aesthetic principles is only one. For example, different arts might be independent in so far as they have independent historical origins or histories of development, or because they utilise different techniques or materials of production. On this basis, even if it turned out to be true that painting and sculpture are governed by the same aesthetic principles, they could nevertheless still be considered to be independent arts. Read could simply agree and stress that he is concerned with aesthetic rather than historical, technical or material independence, and that it is aesthetic rather than other varieties or sources of independence which will open a distinctive space for philosophical (as opposed to historical or technical) interest.

Secondly, it is not clear just what independence means. If aesthetic independence means simply that an art has its own aesthetic principles, then all arts will be independent since whatever aesthetic principles they have will in one sense be their own. If what matters is that an art is governed by a given set of aesthetic principles irrespective of those principles being held or not by other arts, then this suggests a model which

seriously underestimates existing interrelationships between the arts, and it is doubtful whether sculpture or any other art could satisfy this criterion. If, on the other hand, aesthetic independence is for an art to be governed by aesthetic principles which differ from those of other arts so that arts for which this is the case are independent in this sense, then what degree of difference in aesthetic principles is necessary or sufficient for an art to be independent? It could be argued, for example, that works such as Antony Gormley's *Learning to Think* [fig.1], with its lead encased male figures, their heads hidden, concealed in a private space distinct from the public space of the body in which we are all visible and very much the same, are governed by aesthetic principles which differ dramatically from those of works like Alexander Calder's abstract *Red Polygons* [fig.2], its metal sails contrasting in substance with the paper-like mobile construction, and yet we normally both sculptures. We might think the same of works which we normally consider to be paintings, such as Jan van Eyck's *Wedding Portrait (Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride)* [fig.3], with its subtle lighting and rich symbolic content, and the abstract expressionism of Barnett Newman's *Onement I* [fig.4], with its imprecisely worked vertical contrasting with the otherwise rigid minimalistic formal composition and the smoothly blending tones of the red expanse. One might wonder, for example, about genre distinctions in so far as different genres may be governed by different aesthetic principles. Would this mean that different genres are different arts, or just that some genres are independent with respect to other genres? Of course, there may be other conditions required for something to qualify as an art, but this just underscores the fact that having different aesthetic principles cannot be sufficient for independence as an art. But even considering art forms rather than genres, there seems to be a very high degree of aesthetic similarity between some arts, such as for example film and video, which we might maintain are nevertheless different arts. Read might respond that film and video are not sufficiently different (at least aesthetically) to be independent arts, even if they are distinct arts. But then there are some arts which are less similar than film and video, for example prose and poetry, but which nevertheless share some aesthetic principles - are these independent on Read's account? There are in fact very few, if any, arts which do not share at least some aesthetic principles in common with others. The appropriate

response to this point would be for Read simply to agree that although arts are seldom completely independent of other arts, they may nevertheless be more or less aesthetically independent depending upon the degree of difference, and that an art will be of distinctive philosophical interest to the extent that it is aesthetically independent. This seems reasonable but it does make one wonder why the emphasis is on the concept of independence rather than simply difference.

1.3 Autonomy

Martin suggests that there have been two closely related reasons for philosophy's historical silence about sculpture, both of which he rejects. The first reason is that

“the vast range and complexity of sculpture discourages investigation. The basic questions about the art of sculpture are rarely raised because it is so difficult to define sculpture or even to delimit its scope. [...] And if we are unable to arrive at a definition as the basis for bringing together these manifold exemplifications, then any aesthetics of sculpture would seem to be impossible: we would not know what we are talking about. [...] Apparently sculpture is not a kind of thing which differs from all other kinds of things in any one essential way.”¹⁸

Secondly, and consequently:

“sculpture appears to lack autonomy. It has been assumed generally since ancient times that painting, sculpture, and architecture are species of visual art, since in all three vision is the primary sense of perception. The traditional view of the visual arts, furthermore, almost invariably regards painting as the basic art. [...] In turn, if questions about the aesthetics of painting are answered, then we have the keys to answering the questions about the aesthetics of sculpture.”¹⁹

¹⁸ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, pp. 4-5

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5

Two conditions for the autonomy of an art are implicit in Martin's analysis here: firstly, it is a necessary condition for the autonomy of an art that there be some distinctive essential characteristic or characteristics common to all works of that art; and secondly, it is a necessary condition for the autonomy of an art that at least some basic questions about the aesthetics of that art have answers which differ from those appropriate to other arts. Although he is nowhere explicit about this, Martin seems to hold that the second of these necessary conditions both follows from and depends upon the first obtaining: if there is some difference between the essential characteristics of art forms, then there will be different answers to aesthetic questions concerning them; and the possibility of different answers to such questions, and hence of a different aesthetic, only arises if there is some difference in essential characteristics. Although again Martin is nowhere explicit, he seems to imply that the first necessary condition is also sufficient for the autonomy of an art: if there is some difference in the essential characteristics of the works of respective arts, then those arts will be autonomous with respect to each other.

In explaining the historical lack of a theoretical account of sculpture's autonomy, Martin, like Read, appeals to a substantive thesis concerning the nature of sculpture and the essential features of works of sculpture in virtue of which sculpture is an autonomous art. According to Martin, the historical non-recognition of these essential features, and hence of sculpture's autonomy as an art, was due to a painterly conception of sculpture of partly psychological and partly theoretical origin. Martin claims that since

“it is not obvious that something different is happening to us when we are perceiving a sculpture as contrasted with our perceiving a painting. It seems to follow that if the perception of painting is adequately explained, then the perception of sculpture is also adequately explained”.²⁰

Martin contends that “the explanation of [sculpture's] autonomy has been weakened by reliance on the traditional theory of perception, with its key presupposition of the

²⁰ Ibid., p10

eminence of the eye.”²¹ Because the “differences between painting and sculpture, especially in the way they are perceived, seem superficial. ... sight seems, as the tradition has always maintained, to be the completely dominant sense.”²² According to Martin, the lack of an obvious psychological difference in our perception of sculpture and painting, together with the “traditional theory of perception”, favoured a painterly conception of sculpture which functioned to obscure both the distinctive perceptual phenomena of sculptural works and the “instinctual and essential need”²³ which ultimately motivates our production and appreciation of them.

Despite the putative lack of obvious differences in the perception of painting and sculpture, Martin holds that phenomenological description can “bring out the distinguishing characteristics of sculpture”²⁴ and provide “strong *prima facie* evidence that the perceptual dynamics of sculpture and painting are significantly different and, therefore, sculpture and painting are autonomous arts”²⁵. Martin holds that “the autonomy of sculpture follows from the distinctive way sculpture manifests itself in our perceptions, and this distinctiveness is determined especially by the most distinctive feature of sculpture: its impact into surrounding space”²⁶, “its activation of its surrounding space – its enlivened space or “impacting between”.”²⁷

In obscuring the distinctive phenomenal characteristics of sculptural works, the painterly conception of sculpture also obscured sculpture’s “origin” (in the Heideggerian sense of the generative power or forces which “impel us to create, cherish, and preserve”

²¹ Ibid., p.32

²² Ibid., p. 8.

²³ Ibid., p.135

²⁴ Ibid., p.11

²⁵ Ibid., p.13

²⁶ Ibid., p.62

²⁷ Ibid., p.14. Although Martin leaves the concept imprecise, “impacting between” seems to be a matter of the phenomenal ‘filling’ or ‘energising’ of the space between the sculpture and the appreciator. I say more about Martin’s idea of “impacting between” in Chapter 4 when I discuss phenomenally based accounts of the nature of sculpture.

sculpture), since “the origin of sculpture cannot be convincingly located and understood until the autonomy of sculpture is established.”²⁸ According to Martin, “sculpture more than any other art reveals the primal foundations of our perceptual experience: that is why sculpture is an autonomous art.”²⁹

“The origin of sculpture – the essential motivation that has moved human beings most basically to create and treasure sculpture – lies in the instinctual and essential need it satisfies: vivifying and clarifying our physical witness with things. That is the ultimate cause of the existence of sculpture. In turn, sculpture is an autonomous art because sculpture, by means of its special ways of enlivening space, reveals with special and informing vividness the spatial witness basic to being-in-the-world, to being the kind of beings we are.”³⁰

This “togetherness with things” is taken by Martin to be the “distinctive, underlying, and all-pervasive subject matter of sculpture”.³¹

Unlike Read’s account of independence, which centres on a claim about aesthetic principles, Martin’s account claims that distinctive essential characteristics of artworks are necessary and sufficient for the autonomy of an art. The characteristics Martin proposes are distinctive perceptual phenomena and distinctive motivation, but it is not clear how either of these can be either necessary or sufficient. If a distinctive variety of perceptual phenomena were necessary for an art to be autonomous, then on Martin’s account arts such as poetry and the novel, or film and video, cannot be autonomous arts. If distinctive phenomena were sufficient, then it seems firstly that any set of objects which happened to share distinctive phenomenal qualities be classed as products of an autonomous art, even if they are the product of what we normally think of as distinct arts. For example, some sculptures and paintings seem to share some distinctive

²⁸ Ibid., p.13

²⁹ Ibid., p.80

³⁰ Ibid., p.135

³¹ Ibid., p.14

phenomenal characteristics, such as the effect of fragmentation of perspectives we find both in Pablo Picasso's *Head of a Woman* [fig.5] and his *Head and Shoulders of a Woman* [fig.6]. Secondly, it seems that what we think of as distinct genres of sculpture must qualify as distinct arts - think again of the works of Gormley [fig.1] and Calder [fig.2]. Of course, Martin avoids this particular consequence with respect to sculpture by specifying "enlivened space" as the relevant distinct phenomenal quality, but it is unclear in general both why it is phenomenal qualities which are relevant to autonomy and what kind of phenomenal differences are relevant. Even in the case of sculpture it is not clear why this rather than some other sort of phenomenal quality should be the sort that counts for its autonomy as an art.

With respect to the necessity of a distinctive motivation, it is again not clear that there is any general underlying difference in basic motivation between arts such as poetry and the novel, film and video, photography and painting. According to Martin the basic motivation of sculpture is the desire to satisfy our need to vivify and clarify our physical witness with things. But it is neither clear why a psychological motivation of this sort is the relevant sort of motivation (even if it were plausible to suppose that such a need genuinely exists and that it actually motivates sculptors and appreciators of sculpture), nor what equivalent motivation could be posited for the other arts. In addition to the question of the kind of distinctive motivation which is relevant, we can doubt the sufficiency for autonomy of distinctive motivation for the further reason that there seems to be no non-arbitrary way of deciding what degree of difference in motivation, both within and between what we normally think of as art forms, is sufficient for autonomy. One could of course admit this and maintain sufficiency if one held that degrees of autonomy go together with degrees of difference in motivation. Similarly one could hold that degrees of phenomenological difference went together with degrees of autonomy. But then, as I suggested was the case with Read's account of independence, we would be left wondering what could be the relevance of autonomy of an art as opposed to simply differences between arts in various aspects. What work could the concept of autonomy be doing in Martin's account that the concept of difference could not do just as, if not more, effectively?

1.4 Difference: Art Works and Art Practices

As we have seen, Read and Martin introduce the concepts of independence and autonomy to explain why it is that sculpture is of distinctive philosophical interest. According to Martin it is only because sculpture is autonomous from painting and architecture that the answers to philosophical questions about the aesthetics of sculpture will not be answered by accounts of the aesthetics of painting or architecture. Similarly, Read suggests that it is sculpture's independence which gives rise to philosophical questions about the art which are distinct from those which arise in relation to arts like painting and sculpture. I argued above that Read and Martin fail to provide an adequate accounts of independence and autonomy, and might better be replaced by the more familiar notion of difference.

Earlier I said that it was not clear just what Read meant by independence, and the same is true of Martin's use of the concept of autonomy. One possibility is that what Read and Martin mean by applying the concept of independence or autonomy to an art is that the art is governed by a given set of aesthetic principles or characterised by a distinctive perceptual phenomenology or motivation *irrespective* of those principles or characteristics being true of other arts. But if this is the sense of independence/autonomy upon which Read and Martin are drawing, it is hard to see how the independence/autonomy of an art could in itself be relevant to its being of distinctive philosophical interest. This is because so interpreted, independence/autonomy does not require that the arts differ in any particular aspect, and if there were no differences between the arts it is hard to see what could give rise to distinctive issues of philosophical interest. This sense of independence/autonomy does not in any case sit well with Read's and Martin's general theses, which do focus on putative differences between the arts. This suggests an alternative which is more in accord with Read's and Martin's accounts as a whole. This possibility, which I have already discussed to some extent, is that for an art to be independent/autonomous could be for it to be governed by aesthetic principles or characterised by a distinctive perceptual phenomenology and motivation which are *unique* to that art. But as I suggested earlier, in this case independence/autonomy seems

simply to amount to difference, and the usual connotations of the concepts of independence and autonomy are eliminated.

The reduction of 'independence' and 'autonomy' to 'difference' need not, of course, be a problem. Indeed, if we are looking for a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry, then locating and identifying distinctive differences between sculpture and the other arts seems a promising place to begin. There are of course many ways in which art forms might differ from one another and in terms of which they might be individuated: techniques and materials employed by artists, the history of the art form, to name but two. What needs to be specified is the kinds of difference which give rise to a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning an art.

But the question is not just what to look for, but where to look for it, since we might identify differences between art works of one kind and another, or between one art practice and another. The question "What is (distinctive of) sculpture?", like its traditional analogue "What is (distinctive of) art?", can be interpreted in at least two quite different ways: as a question about *objects*; or as a question about *practices*.³² Until recently there has been a tendency to give accounts of art which take the form of answers to the question "What properties of objects make them artworks?" rather than to the question "What kind of practice is an art-practice?". This approach has been mirrored in accounts of sculpture which have tended to take the form of an answer to the question "What properties of objects make them sculptures?" rather than the question "What is distinctive of the art-practice of sculpture?"

This might not in itself be a problem if some appropriate set of properties could be successfully identified. I shall argue in following chapters that attempts to identify physical and perceptual properties shared distinctively by all sculptural objects as sculpture-making fail for one or some of several reasons: either they fail to pick out

³² By 'practice' I mean something similar to Alasdair MacIntyre's conception of a "coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity..." Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed., Duckworth, 1994, p.187.

properties unique to sculpture; they fail to pick out non-trivially necessary properties; they fail to pick out properties which are plausibly sufficient sculpture-making properties; or they pick out properties of sculptural works which cannot be adequately explained as distinctively sculptural except by reference to the terms of the art-practice of sculpture. My view is that the best that can be achieved on the “object” approach is to identify as sculpture-making some relational property or properties of the kind suggested by institutional and historical theories of art, such as the property of being in a certain relation to the sculpture “art world”, to earlier sculptural artworks, and so on. Such accounts are not very informative, for in so far as they provide a theory of sculpture at all, they do so recursively, defining sculpture in terms of sculpture, or rather, categorising objects as sculptures in terms of their relationship to the art of sculpture while saying little of interest about the art of sculpture. To be informative a theory must go on to say something more about the characteristic and distinctive features of the art-practice of sculpture.

Rather than the issue of whether any appropriate set of non-recursive properties could be identified, what concerns me here is whether such an account could amount to an informative account of the art of sculpture, and whether such an approach could provide an appropriate basis for an informative account of the art of sculpture. The tendency to give accounts of sculpture in the form of an answer to a question about the properties of objects rather than art-practices has been accompanied by a tendency to treat these accounts as if they were nevertheless answers to questions about sculpture as an art. In so far as there has been an attempt to give an account of sculpture as an art, rather than simply to account for what makes this object a work of sculpture, the approach has not generally been to consider sculpture as a practice, or to the extent that it has, a picture of his practice has been constructed by appealing to physical and/or perceptual commonalities of the collection of all objects selected in terms of that given set of properties. Both Read’s and Martin’s accounts of sculpture conform to this trend to the extent that their analyses of the art of sculpture are based on claims about the physical and perceptual properties of sculptural works which they take to be sculpture-making. To the extent that they attempt to characterise the art-practice of sculpture, it has been on the

basis of a generalisation from the physical and perceptual properties putatively shared by all individual works of sculpture.

But it seems clear that to give an account of the properties of individual sculptural works, even when considered collectively, is not in itself to give an account of the art-practice of sculpture. One might claim at best that the art-practice of sculpture is the practice of producing objects with a given set of physical and or perceptual properties (assuming that such a set of properties could be successfully identified), but this does not in itself tell us much about the practice. Such claims might at best provide the basis for a partial account of the practice of sculpture. If one hopes to explain and understand the practice of sculpture it is not enough to give an account of the physical and perceptual properties of sculptural works any more than to give an account of the physical moves in a given game or collection of games of chess will be enough for us to understand chess as a practice. Unless something more is said about the terms of the practice in which works are produced and appreciated, and which gives to the properties of works a certain significance, role, and artistic function, accounts such as Read's and Martin's effectively remain unpromising generalisations about the properties shared by the collection of individual works of sculpture.

Further, and in so far as Read and Martin can aptly be read as making claims about the art of sculpture rather than the collection of all works of sculpture, they seem to take the properties of sculptural works to explain the terms of the practice. According to Read the aesthetic independence of an art is a matter of it having independent creative principles and standards of appreciation which he equates with the laws of maximum aesthetic effect most appropriate to the physical properties of the sculptural objects and their corresponding perceptual properties. On Read's view it is because a sculpture is a three-dimensional object that it is to be touched³³ as well as seen and that the aesthetic principles of sculpture are therefore the principles of maximum aesthetic effect on the tactile senses. Just as Read sees sculpture's independence as an art as stemming

³³ I address this view of Read's further in Chapter 3. A point to bear in mind now is that we do not, in fact, very often touch sculptures in appreciating them. An implication of Read's view would seem to be that in such cases our actual appreciation of sculptures must to that extent be impaired.

ultimately from the three-dimensionality of sculptural objects, so too the distinctive perceptual phenomenology and distinctive origin/motivation held by Martin to be the distinctive essential features common to all works of sculpture which determine the autonomy of sculpture as an art, are founded upon the “thingliness” of sculptural objects, their having “a three-dimensionality with significant mass that is not concealed”³⁴.

Clearly there will be a relationship between the properties of individual sculptural works and the practice of producing them, but the explanatory priority I suggest lies not with the objects but with the terms of the practice. Indeed, it seems that one cannot in fact understand works of sculpture or know what significance to attach to properties possessed by them unless one treats them as objects created and appreciated as part of an art-practice, just as one cannot understand a game of chess or the moves made in it unless one understands why they are made in chess and how they are to be appreciated. Rather than being sculpture-making properties, they are properties which only have a certain significance and artistic role as the properties of works produced and appreciated in terms of the art-practice of sculpture. For example, the properties of assembled works like Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s *Wall of Oil Barrels-Iron Curtain* [fig.7] or Carl Andre’s *Equivalent VIII* [fig.8] are the properties any pile of barrels or bricks might have. It is only as the product of sculptural art practice that they acquire their particular significance as art works and as sculptures, respectively as a barricade in a time of political and social crisis drawing attention to everyday freedoms by obstructing them, and as a minimalist exploration of modular gestalt forms. An adequate account of the terms of the art-practice of sculpture explains the production of art-objects and the significance and artistic role of their properties, rather than the existence of objects with particular properties determining the terms of the practice. The properties of sculptural works have to be explained by reference to the terms of the practice of art-sculpture, and to do this it is not enough simply to describe the properties of sculptural objects, but requires some general account of the terms of sculpture as a practice.

The priority afforded to the properties of sculptural objects in giving an account of the art of sculpture causes some particular difficulties for Read which become obvious

³⁴ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p.71-2.

in his discussion of the relationship between physical and aesthetic independence. There is something very odd about Read's claim that the *art* of sculpture became physically independent of its original architectural setting with the development of the free-standing statue. While it might be appropriate to think of individual works of sculpture as being physically separate from, rather than an integral part of their setting, it does not seem appropriate to think of an art-*practice* in this way, for it is not clear what, if anything, it could be for an art-practice to be physically independent. Read's thesis about physical independence seems to conflate claims about art-objects with claims about art-practice, for while it is phrased as a claim about the historical development of an art-practice, it in fact turns out to be sensible only as a claim about material artefacts. What Read might instead more reasonably claim is that sculpture became an independent art-practice as it turned to the production of free-statues not intended to form part of an architectural whole. But then the independence attributed to the art of sculpture is not physical independence from an architectural setting, but independence from architecture as a practice. Read would then need to say more about what it is for one art-practice to be independent of another. It is hard to see how (the historical development of) sculpture's independence as a practice from architecture can be understood except by reference to the divergent principles and other terms of the practices themselves, in this case at least those governing the creation and appreciation of free-standing sculptures. There may of course be respects other than the aesthetic in terms of which we can differentiate art-practices and make claims about their relative independence, but in so far as an appeal to the divergence of the "creative principles" and "standards of appreciation" of the art of sculpture from those of architecture is required, this seems an appeal to what Read would call aesthetic independence. It is therefore hard to see how one can maintain Read's view that aesthetic independence is both historically and logically subsequent to the production of free-standing sculpture.

Furthermore, if we are concerned with the physical independence of sculptural works from architectural settings, then it is not clear in what sense this was *difficult* to establish. It is not as if there was any physical difficulty in this since the materials and technology required for the production of free-standing statues certainly pre-dates the

early Renaissance; it was just that people had not generally done so because they were working in a tradition which was yet to travel in this direction. For example, much ancient and classical although conceived as part of an architectural whole, is fully formed in the round and is physically capable of standing alone, as indeed they are commonly displayed in many museums and galleries. Consider, for example, Egyptian Old Kingdom works like the wooden *Kaaper* [fig.9] from c.2400BC, or Greek sculptures such as *Zeus* [fig.10] in the Severe Style from c.460BC, both of which most likely had architectural settings but which are nevertheless fully realised in the round and capable of free-standing. A seemingly easy point to make against Read's independence thesis would be to point out that such statues are free-standing, but although such an objection has some force against the idea of physical independence, it may just miss its target if marshalled against the idea of the independence of the arts and of aesthetic independence, given that Read's claim is not that such statues are incapable of standing alone, or that such periods were incapable of producing free standing sculpture, but that they were not conceived of, produced, or to be appreciated in isolation from their architectural setting. Nevertheless, this does demonstrate the difficulty in accounting for the significance of such a development in separation from an account of historical changes in the "creative principles" and "standards of appreciation" of the art of sculpture, changes which could make it appropriate to think of statues in separation from their physical context. So once more it is hard to see how Read's claims about the priority of physical independence (of particular works of sculpture) over aesthetic independence (of the art of sculpture) can be maintained. Changes in aesthetic principles and the terms of practices and changes in the physical and other attributes of particular objects produced within the practice seem to go hand in hand. It is not clear that in accounting for changes in practices and traditions that a priority, either logical or historical, can be attributed to one or to the other. This seems to further undermine somewhat Read's approach of affording explanatory priority to the object over the art, and hence his approach of making claims about the art of sculpture on the basis of claims about the properties of individual sculptural works as if such claims could be explanatorily informative.

Read's emphasis on aesthetic independence, which he explains in terms of principles of creation and standards of appreciation, seems more hopeful as an account of the art of sculpture considered as a practice. Aesthetic theories of art, such as Richard Eldridge's proposal that what makes something a work of art is the property of the "satisfying appropriateness" of its form to its content³⁵, fail as adequate theories of art because such criteria are neither necessary nor sufficient for an object to be an artwork.³⁶ That there is nevertheless something importantly correct about the aesthetic approach to questions about art can be seen if aesthetic theories are recast in giving an account of art-practice rather than of art-objects. Rather than suggesting that what makes something a work of art is, for example, its having this "satisfying appropriateness" of form to content, we could instead say that a central part of what makes a practice an *art*-practice is that such aesthetic qualities are "goods internal to that form of activity" or among the "standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity". If artworks are likely to have a satisfying appropriateness of form to content, then this is because they are the product of this sort of practice. The lack of such aesthetic qualities does not disqualify the products of such practices from being artworks. What makes an object a work of art is not its having a satisfying appropriateness of form to content, but rather its being a particular sort of product of a practice which aims at the production and appreciation of objects with a range of relevant such properties.

Read's reference to creative principles and standards of appreciation could be seen in this way, as a reference to the standards, etc. appropriate to, and partially definitive of the art of sculpture (rather than art in general). But then it seems that the aesthetic principles and standards of the practice explain the tendency of sculptural objects to have properties which more or less satisfy them, rather than (as Read sees it) the properties of sculptural works accounting for the fact that these, rather than some

³⁵ Drawing a distinction between form and content can have a purely heuristic purpose and need not insist that there is an actual clear and real distinction between the two.

³⁶ Many objects which we ordinarily think of as artworks, albeit poor ones, would in lacking such properties fail to count as such, while other objects which we do not ordinarily think of as artworks would qualify.

other principles, are the principles appropriate to and partially definitive of the art-practice of sculpture. Rather than the somehow inherent possession by given objects of properties which tend to satisfy these principles explaining their status as sculpture, individual works of sculpture are likely to have given properties *because* they are produced as part of a practice partially defined by such principles and which hence aims at the production of objects with properties which satisfy these principles. Read says something about the content of these principles when he claims that sculpture owes its individuality to the primacy in perception of three factors: “a sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces; a sensation of volume as denoted by plane surfaces; and a synthetic realization of the mass and ponderability of the object.” Unfortunately he says little more about these principles, treating their delineation as the culmination rather than the starting point of an explanatory theory of the art of sculpture.

Martin, like Read, bases his claims about the art of sculpture on claims about the properties possessed collectively by all individual works of sculpture. However, unlike Read who in outlining the “sensibility” appropriate to sculpture can be construed as giving something of an account of the principles and standards appropriate to and partially definitive the art-practice of sculpture, Martin makes central claims about sculpture that remain generalisations about the essential properties of the individual works of sculpture considered collectively. Martin’s claim that sculpture’s autonomy as an art lies in the distinctive phenomenology of sculptural works (“impacting between”) tells us little about sculpture as an art and hence does little to account for this distinctive phenomenology or its role in the artistic functioning of sculpture. The possession of such a property is a necessary and sufficient condition for being a sculpture on Martin’s account rather than for being a quality possessed to a greater or lesser degree by works of art which are more or less successful with respect to a certain set of values which are part and parcel of the practice in which individual works are produced and appreciated. If instead we were to claim that the art-practice of sculpture aims (at least sometimes) at the production of objects which have the property of “impacting between”³⁷, and that this is

³⁷ so that the possession of this “property” to any particular degree is neither necessary nor sufficient for being a sculpture, but rather relevant to its value as a certain sort of sculpture

part of what distinguishes sculpture from other art forms, an account of this could form the basis of an explanation of the properties of individual sculptural works and the way they function artistically as sculpture. As it stands, however, Martin treats his claim about “enlivened space” as the end rather than the beginning of a philosophical account of the art of sculpture. Martin’s second claim, that the autonomy of sculpture is largely a matter of the distinctive instinctive and essential need which individual works of sculpture satisfy, is also a generalisation about the collection of sculptural objects rather than a thesis about the art-practice of sculpture. If we were to recast this as a thesis about the art of sculpture, it would be the claim that the autonomy of sculpture as an art-practice lies in the instinctual and essential needs which products of that practice satisfy (“togetherness with things”). This seems more promising as a thesis about sculpture as an art but, as with his first claim, once recast in this way, it is an hypothesis which lies at the beginning rather than the end of an explanatory account of the art-practice of sculpture and how its products function artistically.

1.5 Appreciation and the Space for Philosophical Enquiry

I have argued that if there is a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning sculpture then it is most appropriately to be located at the level of sculpture considered as an art practice. This already gets us some of the way towards identifying the kinds of difference which might locate and identify the space for this enquiry. The primary internal end of art-practices, I suggest, is the production for appreciation of art works. The key to an account of any particular art-practice is the mode of appreciation which is appropriate to and partially definitive of that practice. Appreciation, broadly conceived, involves both the interpretation and evaluation of art works. A mode of appreciation, is a way (or set of ways) in which the materials which bear art works are made use of in the process of interpreting and evaluating art works.³⁸

³⁸ The techniques, materials, and history of an art-practice are, after all, the techniques, material, and history of the production of objects for appreciation, and we come to artworks first and foremost as appreciators. Indeed, the production of artworks within an art-practice involves the use of techniques and materials in terms of that mode of appreciation, and the history of the practice is in key part also the

At least to the extent that there are differences between the modes of appreciation appropriate to various arts then will there be any distinctive space for philosophical aesthetic inquiry concerning individual arts. So, if the mode of appreciation appropriate to and partially definitive of sculptural practice is interestingly different from the mode of appreciation appropriate to and partially definitive of other art-forms such as painting and architecture, then to that extent at least there will be a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning the art of sculpture. In order to establish whether such a space exists, we must therefore give an account of key features of this mode of appreciation and ask whether and how it differs from the mode of appreciation appropriate to painting and architecture in ways which give rise to issues of philosophical interest. One way to go about constructing such an account is to look at the way we regard sculptures and how this differs from the way we regard other works of other art forms, since there is an internal relationship between the mode of appreciation appropriate to and partially definitive of a given art-practice, and the way we appropriately regard particular art-products of that practice in coming to appreciate them. A survey and analysis of the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation as employed in particular actual regardings of works of sculpture should serve to provide some insight into the sculptural mode of appreciation. To the extent that such a survey reveals differences with the way we regard paintings, it will help us to locate the distinctive space for philosophical enquiry concerning sculpture as an art.

To this end I have chosen to consider some samples of sculpture criticism, and to contrast these with samples of painting criticism with the aim of identifying some general, characteristic themes and points of difference with respect to the kinds of things we treat sculptures as being. An art-wide survey of sculptural criticism would of course be impractical, and no limited selection of samples can cover all aspects of the range of critical approaches or the varieties of sculpture attended to. However, given that the themes and differences I will be seeking to locate are of a very general sort, and characteristic of sculpture and sculpture criticism in general, a small selection of samples

history of a mode of appreciation. I discuss the nature of appreciation further, and in some detail, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

should be both manageable and sufficient to get the ball rolling. The purpose is not to demonstrate a thesis by showing how it fits all the examples, but rather to take the examples, to extract from these some problems, and to develop solutions to these problems which will then have to face up to critical scrutiny.

Consider the following samples of criticism:

“the proportions are those of a youth who has not yet finished growing up to the size of his head, hands, and feet. And the powerful muscles, without an ounce of surplus tissue, denote a boy of the people rather than the soft and pampered child shown by the earlier sculptors. ... In profile at least, the features seem strongly Hellenized, but in full face they are far from regular. The flaring lips are asymmetrical, the left eye slightly higher than the right, the nose unevenly pinched below the bridge. The hairy eyebrows are full and shaggy, and the forehead, already lined by anxiety, unevenly compressed. Perhaps these very deviations from cold canons of perfection play a part in rendering the colossal statue accessible to observers of ordinary size. ... Throughout the statue, but especially in the head, the conflict between line and form which began in the *Rome Pietà* is intensified and deepened. The features are more deeply undercut than in any of the earlier works, possibly because of the height from which the statue was originally intended to be seen. A measurable space separates the eyeball from its enclosing lids. The enormous eyes are made especially expressive by delineating the cornea and hollowing out the pupil ...; in consequence they seem at once liquid and fiery.... The flat panes joining at determined angles ... underlie all the construction of the *David*, not only in the squared-off masses of the features but through the knotty, bony, sinewy, half-developed, and unprecedentedly beautiful torso and legs. ... The sinews of the neck seem to tense and relax, the veins of the neck, hands and wrist fill, the nostrils to pinch, the belly muscles to contract and the chest to lift with the intake

of breath, the nipples to shrink and erect, the whole proud being to quiver like a war horse that smells the battle.”³⁹ [fig.11]

“Its forms are light, lifted off the ground, and brittle as skeletons - thus insubstantial. At the same time, they are perfectly smoothly finished, as if denying change, whether growth or decay. The scene is set for action but action is suspended. Time is arrested, only the spell is fragile, itself transitory. The atmosphere ... is that sense of being cut off from the world when staying up all night, that tangible silence towards dawn when awareness is pitched high: objects appear weightless, separate, held in suspense: the world is light; the passage of time seems held in suspense; as if the present extended behind and before one. The least intimation of day will fracture everything.”⁴⁰ [fig.12]

“On the one hand, it is simply a profile in silhouette. Seen frontally it is a wedge thrusting at one. But it only remains so within a very narrow angle of vision: as soon as I move a few inches to the right or left of collision course, then becomes a profile - there is no transition. As I move around the sculpture I still seem to see the same profile. Though the shape, of course, changes somewhat, the contour does not change as that of a form fully in the round would, and, as I move through an angle, say, 120 degrees, watching it, I have the illusion that it is keeping pace with me, turning away.”⁴¹ [fig.13, fig.14]

“He has had it in his grasp, and this is very evident. He has mauled it, squeezed it, stretched it, gouged it, lacerated it, demolished it and seen it growing out of his hands over and over again, postponing the moment when it had to leave his hands, letting it go pitted and scarred with his gesture, gestures made with a kind

³⁹ Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo: the complete sculpture*, Thames and Hudson: London, 1969, writing on Michelangelo's *David* (1501-4), pp. 113-4

⁴⁰ David Sylvester, *Looking at Giacometti*, Pimlico, London, 1995, p. 102-3

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42-43, [plates pp. 205-208]

of rage as if frustration at not being able to dominate and possess the model - beyond keeping her there interminably - were vented upon her effigy. In building the effigy he could exercise omnipotence, shaping formless clay or plaster in the image of the elusive other and in the image of his own gestures. Yet the sculptures have something of the character of carvings ... he did not have the characteristic modeller's orientation, the tendency to spread out from a centre: he moved towards compactness, like the instinctive carvers ... The slenderness is not as if insufficient matter had been tentatively put there but as if an excess of matter had been fastidiously fined down. So these models seem rather as if carved, given their look of having emerged when matter was chipped away, and with their likeness to mountainous rocks, attributes which affirm a self-subsistence surviving the artist's dominance. The artist's imposition of himself, the rock-like otherness of the resultant image, are equally asserted, left in opposition."⁴² [fig.15]

"The glacial white of the tablecloth, derived from tones of blue and green, sets off the orange red of the apples. All of the rest of the colors, which have been applied in thick layers, refer back to them: the brown of the commode, the muted ochre of the table, the beige and pink of the wallpaper on the left, and the complementary green of the glazed jar. The relationships between the various objects seem simple enough, the overall structure detailed and solid. Yet, if one tries to ignore the picture surface and reconstruct the actual space depicted, much becomes unclear. The commode appears to be standing at an angle to the wall, and the floor seems to tilt forward, causing one to wonder how the table can possibly rest on it. But this is only the result of our habit of looking at things with reference to traditional laws of perspective, and does not lead us anywhere. The logic of the composition itself forces us to abandon such objections. Cézanne sought to depict things as faithfully as he could, and to that end, he chose to employ multiple points of view. Some details are seen from below,

⁴² *Looking at Giacometti*, p. 162-163

other as though from high above. here he looks from one side, there from another. It is as though he wished to surround his objects and contain them. Here, the commode – its side forming an obtuse angle to the wall and its drawers tilting slightly upward – appears at eye level, while we look down at the surface of the table from a considerable height. Further tension is created by the disorientation between the rectangular objects and the frame of the picture. The objects slope slightly downward to the left. In the interest of balance, the painter has even interrupted the line of the front edge of the table; it is lower on the left than on the right, as though the cloth masked a hidden seismic shift. To some degree, the painter's inclusion of a moving point of view in his creative process did guarantee a complex portrayal."⁴³ [fig.16]

1.6 Two characteristic differences

I will begin with two brief observations about the vocabulary of sculpture appreciation, by which I mean the way we talk and think, and also act, in appreciating sculptures. These may to some extent seem rather obvious, but the obvious seems to me to be a good place to start thinking clearly about sculpture, for in so far as they are characteristic of sculpture appreciation in general these themes and differences *prima facie* open a distinctive space for philosophical enquiry. My observations will be largely pre-theoretical - what we are to make of them, how we are to account for them, is a matter of how we are best to fill the philosophical space they open.

One striking feature of the vocabulary of sculpture appreciation is that in appreciating sculptures we seem characteristically to treat them as objects in a way which does not seem true of other works of other art forms. There are of course several senses in which all artworks are generally thought of as objects, but none of these quite capture the sense in which we treat sculptures as objects.

Firstly, it is as true of works such as Mozart's *Requiem* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as it is of works such as Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode* or Giacometti's

⁴³Götz Adriani, *Cézanne paintings*, Dumont: Buchverlag: Cologne, 1995, pp. 172-3, writing on Paul Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode*, (1883-87).

Busts of Diego (the identity and constitution of which seems more closely dependent upon a particular physical embodiment), that when we refer to them by name we pick them out as being one thing rather than another, and in this sense treat them as a thing.

Secondly, there is a sense in which all artworks may be thought of as objects in so far as our perception and appreciation of them is dependent to some extent on their being physically present to us. This seems as straightforwardly true of painting, dance, photography, film, and architecture - and also of literature, which must have a text or utterance; of theatre, which must be staged; and music, which must be made audible - as it is true of sculpture.

Thirdly, it is not uncommon to apply the range of concepts we normally apply to objects - mass, weight, height, shape, form, size, dimension, distance, location, texture, density, and so on - to artworks and in this sense treat them as objects. While some of these have only a metaphorical relationship to musical or literary works, they often have a literal application to works of sculpture, but they also have a literal application to paintings and architectural works, for example.

Fourthly, it is not just that sculptures are constructed out of three-dimensional materials, and are in this sense objects. Although in appreciating sculptures we do sometimes attend specifically to the material construction of a sculpture, this is also true of our appreciation of painting and other kinds of artwork. In any case, paintings as much as sculptures are constructed out of three-dimensional materials and are as much objects in this sense - three-dimensional physical materials are, after all, the only kind of physical materials available out of which to construct anything. But in neither case, at least if what we are doing is appreciating the artwork as an artwork, do we treat it as a mere object, as simply a lump of plaster or accumulation of pigments on a canvas base.

Fifthly, nor is it that sculptures always represent physical objects, so that we think of sculptures as objects in so far as we attend to the represented object. For one thing, not all sculptures are representational, and not all representational sculptures represent (actual or imaginary) physical objects. For another, the representation of physical objects and our attention to the representation of the object in appreciating the work does not in itself distinguish sculptures from paintings and works of art forms.

Further, just as we do not regard a sculpted bust as simply a lump of plaster or bronze, nor, in appreciating the bust as a work of sculpture with representational content do we regard the sculpture as a person's head. Were we to do so our reaction to one of Giacometti's *Busts of Diego* might be an inappropriate one of horror at Diego's bodiless head, just as our reaction might be, were we to make the similar mistake, to try to eat one of the fruit represented in Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode*. We might well react in these ways were we fooled by some effect of the sculpture or the painting, but to be so fooled is first to fail to realise that the representation is a representation and secondly, in doing so, to fail to treat the sculpture or the painting as a sculpture or as a painting.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be a sense in which it is characteristically appropriate to speak about sculptures as objects for which there does not seem to be any analogous sense in which it is appropriate to think, for example, of pictures as objects - a sense in which, even when not being attended to as either mere material or representational content, a sculpture remains and continues to be considered as an object. Consider again, for example, Giacometti's *The Palace at 4 a.m.*. It is not so much that this sculpture represents a stage set in miniature (although it might also do this), nor that it could be used as a miniature prop on stage. Yet the use of wood, metal, and plaster in *The Palace at 4 a.m.* has constituted an object which, considered as an object, can be described in a perfectly useful sense as a (albeit miniature) stage set. Regarding *The Palace at 4 a.m.* as a miniature stage set we notice certain things about it which are important and which might not otherwise be noticed, things which are important to the way that we understand the sculpture, and to the value we place on its elements in regarding the sculpture as a whole and on the sculpture itself. Rather than being a feature peculiar to sculptural works like *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, the same seems similarly to be characteristic of the way we speak about (representational) sculpture in general. We might speak of the 'head' of Michelangelo's *David*, or its 'leg', 'feet', 'hands', or 'torso' in the same kind of way. If, on the other hand, we imagine a painting of a stage set, then there does not seem to be any analogous sense in which the painting is a stage set, or in which it can be valuable to think of the painting as being one. If we are not attending just to its representational content of a painting of a stage set or to it as mere

material, then we do not see a stage set and we do not see paint as a material, but rather the paint as used to make an image which resembles the image of a stage set. We would not say that the use of paint had, or was even intended to, constitute an object which, in any useful sense, is describable or can be treated as itself a (miniature) stage set. The same goes for how we regard Cézanne's fruit in appreciating *Still Life with Commode*, or a pictured human body, as opposed to how in appreciating Michelangelo's *David* we regard the body.

A second striking difference (which I think is not unrelated to the last), is in the kind of activities in which the appreciator of sculpture engages when regarding a work as sculpture. When we appreciate a sculpture as a work of art we characteristically move about it and adopt different perspectives on it. If we did not do this we simply could not appropriately appreciate sculptural works: we could not notice important aspects of sculptures such as the transition between profiles in Giacometti's *Busts of Diego*. We do not characteristically do this in appreciating paintings and photographs (or indeed, film where the picture moves, dance where the dancers move, or theatre where the action moves, although we do do something similar as part of appreciating architecture). When appreciating a painting the viewer is characteristically in front of the canvas, and although they may move closer and farther away, or from side to side, the difference is not one of perspective but simply of distance or angle, for in a painting the perspective is (or, as in the case of Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode*, the several perspectives are) provided for the viewer without involving a shift in orientation. While we could examine a painting from the side or from behind this would be to treat it as material rather than as a work, and could be of little other interest or value.

1.7 Entering the Space of Sculpture

These two characteristic differences may seem rather obvious, but they do *prima facie* open a space for philosophical enquiry. Any adequate philosophical account of sculpture must be able to make sense of and explain these kinds of characteristic features of the sculptural appreciative stance. To begin with, they open questions concerning the nature of sculpture, and questions about the distinctive artistic sculptural functioning of typical

artistic features such as representation. We should expect a philosophical account of the nature of sculpture and sculptural representation to be both consistent with and explanatory of the distinctive features of the sculptural mode of appreciation. Naturally, a whole range of issues might arise, including other artistic functions, such as expression, or, more broadly, the aesthetics of sculpture. A theory of the nature of sculpture, however, seems basic to any satisfactory account of the distinctively sculptural functioning of such features as representation or expression, as well as to any distinctive sculptural aesthetic (should one exist).

Historically two general philosophical theses concerning the nature of sculpture have been predominant. The 'physical thesis', in its most basic form, holds that these differences are explained by the fact that sculptures are three-dimensional physical objects whereas paintings are two-dimensional. The 'perceptual thesis' suggests an explanation in terms of differences in the mode of perceptual access distinctively appropriate to sculpture, or in terms of the phenomena of perceptual experience distinctive of sculpture. I examine these theses in Chapters 2, and 3 and 4, arguing that neither of these theses, either individually or in combination, are entirely satisfactory, but that both nevertheless contain insights which can be harnessed to an alternative account which we have good reasons to prefer and which I develop in Chapter 5. Stated briefly, my thesis is that the sculptural is essentially an art practice in which the productive/appreciative use of three dimensional properties of material functions directly as an artistic medium. It is this basic difference in the way materials are used in production and appreciation, rather than physical, perceptual, phenomenal, or psychological differences per se, which best explains the key differences in the kind of things we treat sculptural as being. In Chapters 6 and 7 I put this theory of the nature of sculpture to work in giving an account of the nature and functioning of sculptural representation. In Chapter 6 I critically examine the resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe theories of representation with respect to their application to sculpture, and propose an intentionalist theory of the determination of a work's sculptural nature, of representationality, and of the object and content of sculptural representations. In Chapter 7 I provide further motivation and justification for the position suggested in Chapter 6 in terms of an integrated account of

sculptural appreciation which unifies key considerations in the explanation of the determination of the representational facts and of the process of appreciation.

Part I. The Nature of Sculpture

Chapter Two

The Physical Thesis

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The Basic physical Thesis

2.3 Read's Physicalism

2.4 F. Martin's Materialism

2.5 The Importance of Material

2.1 Introduction

I noted in Chapter 1 that the view that the distinction between sculpture and painting is essentially a distinction between three-dimensional and two-dimensional artworks is widely assumed in the philosophical literature. Herbert Read asserts that “the peculiarity of sculpture as an art is that it creates a three-dimensional object *in space*”⁴⁴, and further that its “uniqueness consists in its realization of an integral mass in actual space”⁴⁵.

Painting, by contrast on his view, gives in two-dimensions the illusion of space and mass. In *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, F David Martin maintains the traditional view that sculpture is basically three-dimensional and painting two-dimensional. Other recent writers on sculpture express similar views: Robert D Vance states that “sculptures are objects designed in three-dimensions to occupy spaces related to the spaces we ourselves occupy”⁴⁶; Naum Gabo holds that “sculpture is three-dimensional *eo ipso*”⁴⁷; and L R Rogers says that “what basically distinguishes sculpture from painting is ... the mundane and marvellous fact that it extends three-dimensionally rather than two-dimensionally.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *The Art of Sculpture*, p.46

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.71

⁴⁶ Robert D Vance, “Sculpture”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, No. 3, July 1995, p.225.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Donald Brook, “Perception and the Appraisal of Sculpture”, p.323

⁴⁸ “Sculpture, Space, and Being Within Things”, p 166

Perhaps such basic physical differences as the three-dimensionality of sculptures and the two-dimensionality of paintings explain both why it is that sculptures are thought of as objects in a sense not also true of paintings and the differences in the characteristic activities of appreciating sculpture and painting. Although the physical thesis is widely maintained, it is seldom expanded upon or argued for, and has rarely been subjected to critical scrutiny. To assess the merits of such an approach, it needs to be established whether in fact there are such physical differences between the arts, and whether, in any case, such differences would be appropriate to an adequate explanatory account.

2.2 The Basic Physical Thesis

In its most basic form, the physical thesis holds simply that sculptures are those art objects which are three-dimensional, as contrasted with, for example, the pictorial arts which are two dimensional. The idea is that where as sculptors produce objects in the round, painters and photographers and the like produce flat objects. It is a physical thesis because the key distinctive and defining characteristic of sculpture is held to be a physical feature: their physical three-dimensionality, their being materially “in the round”. This is a typical common sense first thought about the distinctive nature of sculpture. The problem with the basic for of the physical thesis is that *all instantiated artworks are three-dimensional in their material construction*. Paintings, photographs, film; all are made of three dimensional stuff - after all, there is no other kind of stuff out of which to make anything. So, it follows simply, and straightforwardly, that if sculpture has a distinctive and essential feature, it cannot be that they are three dimensional physical objects.⁴⁹ Of course, it may be true that there are statistically typical differences of degree

⁴⁹ Of course, for some kinds of art work, like music, or poetry, and other multiply instantiable art works there might be questions about the ‘location’ and substance of the work itself, and a motivation to distinguish the work from any of its particular instantiations. There may be a sense in which such works nevertheless exists independently or without instantiation, but such works, when instantiated, are instantiated materially. Musical works, for example, may in some sense exist independently of any particular occasion of performance, but are only instantiated when performed on instruments which produce vibrations in the air which we then hear.

with respect to the “roundness” of sculptures as opposed to other kinds of art work, but such a fact can hardly ground a theory of the distinctive nature of sculpture.

But the basic form of the physical thesis can also be found as an element of more sophisticated philosophical accounts of the nature of sculpture. Thus we find Robert Vance, for example, stating that “sculptures are objects designed in three dimensions”⁵⁰, that “what counts for sculpture is real occupancy of space”⁵¹. Vance builds upon this foundation a more sophisticated account of the nature of sculpture which incorporates and builds upon elements of a modified version of Richard Wollheim’s theory of seeing-in and of Kendall Walton’s theory of mimesis as make-believe.⁵² He holds that because sculptures are objects designed to occupy three-dimensional spaces related to the spaces we ourselves occupy, then, in contrast to mere objects in space, sculptures somehow depend on their presence to us as sculptures on the appreciator’s bodily self-awareness. Vance’s final position is that what makes art works sculpture is their suitability for being appreciated in the five distinctive ways which presuppose the truth of a basic form of the physical thesis. These five ways are:

- i) we observe sculpture by moving and gathering different perspectives on it, preserving its look and feel from various points of view in memory;⁵³
- ii) such observation evoke certain non-propositional imaginings (e.g. tactile imaginings, haptic imaginings, kinaesthetic imaginings);⁵⁴
- iii) these non-propositional imaginings involve somatic sensations;⁵⁵

⁵⁰ “Sculpture”, p.225.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.217

⁵² I discuss these theories, as well as Vance’s views about them, in some detail in Chapter 6.

⁵³ “Sculpture”, p.224

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

iv) the exercise of such somatic sensations in non-propositional imaginings engenders identifications with the sculpture⁵⁶

v) this identification with the sculpture, involving somatic sensations, then effects how the sculpture is seen - many visual features will be determined by the features it is felt to have.⁵⁷

Now, these five features may be distinctive of our appreciation of sculpture, but if they are it cannot be *because* sculptures are designed in three dimensions to occupy space related to the spaces we ourselves occupy. The notion of design gives access to a way of distinguishing sculptures from natural objects or accidentally produced artefacts, but it cannot be sufficient to distinguish sculptures from other art works, which are also designed. No further grip is given by the appeal to three dimensionality given that all objects occupy spaces related to the spaces we ourselves occupy, all are three dimensional in their material construction, and the material construction of all artworks is designed in three dimensions.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 224-5. According to Vance: "e.g. being aware of motor sensations of resistance and imbalance within the context of imagining what it feels like to lift (a part of) a sculpture is tantamount to my imagining my being (the part of) the sculpture, identifying with it as if its sculpturally articulated material were my own body in which I feel its apparent weight and degree of equilibrium. Sensing resistance and imbalance while imagining lifting the sculpture I identify with the sculpture by imagining its apparent features as being experienced by myself. To imagine what surface of sculpture feels like to touch is to imagine feelings of e.g. smoothness as if these were felt features of one's own body - the appreciator identifies with sculpture by imagining it as an extension of her own body, the felt smoothness being felt-in the sculpture." Some of this seems unconvincing. I don't say that we can't imagine being the sculpture, or that we don't sometimes do so, but rather that we need not always. Further, imagining feeling the surface, weightiness etc., and feeling this, is not necessarily in itself to imagine being the sculpture or to imagine the sculpture as one's own body.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.225. e.g. will look dynamic because it feels dynamic.

Notably, such an account leaves unanswered the question of why these five features are distinctive of our appreciation of sculpture, if indeed they are, when it seems that if we are seeking to give an explanatory account of the nature of sculpture these are among the very things which we should be aiming to account for. Similarly, the basic form of the physical thesis upon which it is based leaves unexplained why sculptures are generally “rounder” than paintings, if they are, or why it is that it generally makes more sense to walk around a sculpture than a painting given that both are three dimensional material constructions. Differences in shape and so forth do not explain themselves what their role is, or how they function artistically within sculpture as an art. I say more about this in the following sections of this chapter, and in Chapter 3 and 4 I address in some detail views which seek to give an account of the nature of sculpture in terms of a distinctive sensibility, specifically in relation to Read’s theory. Further, as I argued in the preceding chapter, it would be wrong to argue, as the basic form of the physical thesis argues, from the properties of artwork to the essential characteristics of an art-practices, except in the recursive sense in which an art practice might be said characteristically to produce objects with certain properties. But in such a case it is an account of the terms of the art practice which are required rather than an account, in isolation from the context of the practice, of the properties of those objects produced within it.

Although the physical thesis fails in its crudest formulation, there may nevertheless be ways of reworking the intuitions underlying the physical thesis so as to make a more sophisticated formulation plausible. I will now look at the two most developed existing attempts to make the physical thesis plausible, to be found in the theories of Herbert Read and F David Martin.

2.3 Read’s Physicalism

Read does little to clarify his claim that the uniqueness of sculpture lies in its creation of a three-dimensional object in space and the realisation of an integral mass in actual space, other than a brief discussion of the distinction between spatial quantity and spatial

quality. Almost directly after his claim about sculpture's peculiar dimensionality, Read states that:

“a solid object is situated in space; it occupies or displaces a definite amount of space. It becomes an object for us by being differentiated from other objects and by being delimited from the space surrounding it. We have a sensation of the amount of space occupied by the object, which is the *quality* of volume, or *bulk*. If we refer to the *quantity* of matter the object contains, we speak of its mass.”⁵⁸

Read's account appears to face a number of conceptual difficulties, some of which, however, can be solved by clarification rather than requiring in themselves a fundamental revision of his claims about space and sculpture. Read seems to be working with a notion of space as an absolute three-dimensional field which exists independently of any (solid) objects which are located within it and which occupy a particular quantity of it, rather than a notion of space as a relationship between objects. Haig Khatchadourian argues that Read's notion of absolute space is a problem because so thought of space is an idea and hence an object of thought rather than of perception⁵⁹. It seems to be Khatchadourian's view that this presents a problem for Read because Read's account of sculpture as an art relies on (the quantity of) space occupied or displaced by a sculpture itself being an object of perception, which is perceived by us as volume or bulk. Furthermore, says Khatchadourian, what is perceived when we look at or touch a sculpture are the three-dimensional surfaces of the material which occupies space and which has mass rather than space or mass as such which (at least as conceived by Read), seem to be inferred from our perceptions.⁶⁰ If Khatchadourian is right about this, and Read wants to retain his view of space and mass, then Read's account of the relationship of priority between space and mass and our perception of the qualities (spatial and qualities of mass) of objects, and between our perception of these qualities and our

⁵⁸ *The Art of Sculpture*, p.46

⁵⁹ “On the Nature of Painting and Sculpture”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, p.335

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

perception of the material object, are undermined. To this extent the fundamental role Read gives to space and mass in his theory of sculpture an art also seems somewhat shaken.

If it were the case that on Read's view space is simply ideal, then Khatchadourian's criticisms might be justified. However, I think that Khatchadourian's criticisms misread Read's view of space. Read in fact seems to be working with three distinct notions of space: space as a concept, space as a psychologically constructed feature of perception, and space as a "practical necessity". "Space as a concept, to which we react spiritually and emotionally"⁶¹ is an object of thought and not of perception. The particular concept of space which Read has in mind is of space as an absolute spatial field. I do think that Read's claim about the uniqueness of the art of sculpture is meant to refer at least partially to the concept of space (although I do not think that this is the only or the central notion of space to which it refers). Read sees the development of the concept of space and the development of sculpture as an art as being related. Read claims that the ancient Egyptians did not possess an idea of space as an extensional field.⁶² The "space shy" ancient Egyptians were nevertheless sculptors. According to Read the lack of an concept of space did not prevent the Egyptians from becoming accomplished sculptors, but it did prevent them from fully realising the potential of sculpture as an art (e.g. the limitations imposed by the "law of frontality"). It is only in modern times, when the idea of space has flourished, that the art of sculpture has "matured" since only as we conceive of space and objects a certain way are artists going to explore space "fully" in sculpture. Taking this into account, we can understand Read's claim that the peculiarity of sculpture as an art is its creation of a three-dimensional object in space as claiming a special relationship between sculpture as an art and the idea of space. It was this peculiarity of sculpture which, in Read's view, the ancient Egyptians (and indeed other sculptors prior to Rodin) failed to fully realise. I do not think, however, that Read's discussion of the relationship between the space and mass of objects and their perceptual qualities refers to space as a concept – such an interpretation would make little

⁶¹ *The Art of Sculpture*, p.54

⁶² *Ibid.*

sense of his discussion, and Khatchadourian's criticisms concerning the conflation of objects of thought with objects of perception would apply.

Read's view of space as constructed is compatible neither with space being considered a simple object of perception, nor with space being considered a simple object of thought. Read derives his ideas about space primarily from the psychological theories of William James and Jean Piaget. Although his is a conception of space as a construction, he thinks that space is constructed *in* perception rather than being either an idea brought in, as it were, from outside which constructs perception in any direct sense, or being an independent object of perception. Drawing explicitly from Piaget and James⁶³, Read says that:

“We are not born with a notion of the object as a distinct entity, existing and moving in a spatial field: such a notion is built up during the first two years of life by processes of discrimination, association, and selection. Out of the original chaotic experience of vastness (to use William James's phrase) the infant constructs real space, and this construction involves several subordinate processes that are gradually co-ordinated. As a beginning, separate objects have to be discriminated within the total field of vision. In itself this process involves several stages of development: the objects must be arranged in definite order, and

⁶³ Read refers to William James's *Psychology*, London and New York, 1892, and to Jean Piaget's *La Construction de réel chez l'enfant*, Neuchâtel and Paris, 1937; trans. Margaret Cook as *The Construction of Reality in the Child*, New York, 1954; as *The Child's Construction of Reality*, London, 1955. On p.47 of *The Art of Sculpture*, Read quotes Piaget (New York edition, p.218. Cf. p. 217): “Hence, in the last analysis, it is the functioning of intelligence which explains the construction of space. Space is an organization of movements such as to impress upon the perceptions shapes that are increasingly coherent. The basis of these shapes derives from the very conditions of assimilation that entail the elaboration of groups. But it is the progressive equilibrium of this assimilation with the accommodation of the motor schemata to the diversity of objects which accounts for the formulation of sequential structures. Space is therefore a product of an interaction between the organism and the environment in which it is impossible to dissociate the organization of the universe from that of the activity itself.”

then their relative sizes must be perceived and assessed. At the same time, all the different sensations – of sight, touch, hearing, taste, and the rest – must “coalesce” in the same thing. In this process, one of the sensations usually will be “held to be the thing”, while “the other sensations are taken for its more or less accidental *properties*, or modes of appearance.” We tend to see the bulk of a tree, for example, but to feel the bulk of a piece of furniture, a tool, or a book. The point to emphasize, for our present purposes, is that space perception is almost entirely acquired by education. We say “almost entirely” because the individual may be conditioned to his environment by certain hereditary biological processes; we are not born into a static or a mechanical world but are insinuated into a continuous process of organic evolution.”⁶⁴

Read continues:

“When we consider the evolution of sculpture, it is important for us to realize that the kind of coherent space perception that man now possesses is a construction of the intelligence, and that, even so, as William James pointed out, “touch-space is one world; sight-space is another world. The two worlds have no essential or intrinsic congruence, and only through the ‘association of ideas’ do we know what a seen object signifies in terms of touch”.”⁶⁵

However plausible one considers the account of the construction of space preferred by Read (an issue I address below), I think it is nevertheless apparent that Read is not making the error which Khatchadourian attributes to him. Although Read’s talk of “space perception” may sound as if he is thinking of space itself as if it were an object to be perceived rather than a quantity to be judged, what he in fact seems to be talking about

⁶⁴ *The Art of Sculpture*, pp. 46-47. Read notes that “In general I am relying on James’s treatment of this subject.”, and refers (presumably in relation to the material he presents in quotation marks) specifically to p. 339 of James’s *Psychology*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 47.

is instead the psychological construction of space in perception and, equally, the spatial nature of perception. Read is discussing here the construction of objects as much as the construction of space, for in his view our construction of space and our construction of the object are part of the same set of processes. On his account both space and objects are in this sense psychological, but neither space nor objects are simply ideal. We perceive an object (a sculpture for example) as spatial, or in spatial terms, but we do not perceive directly the quantity of space it occupies or displaces, but construct this, and the object, in processing the sensational data provided us by the interaction of the (unconstructed) object and our perceptual organs.

Just as Read's claim about the uniqueness of the art of sculpture is meant to refer at least partially to the concept of space, so too it refers to space as constructed. Directly following his discussion of James's notions of "touch-space" and "sight-space" he suggests that:

"sculpture is primarily an art of "touch-space" – is and always should have been – whereas painting is primarily an art of "sight-space"; and that in both arts most of the confusion between theory and practice is due to neglect of this distinction."⁶⁶

In the light of his theory about the construction of space, Read's claim that the peculiarity of sculpture is its creation of a three-dimensional object in space can be read as saying that we construct this space and the sculptural object in a way which gives priority to the tactile over the visual.

But while I think Khatchadourian's criticisms of Read derive from a misreading of Read's account of space and mass, Read's account of constructed space nevertheless faces an analogous problem if we suppose that his discussion of the relationship between space and mass and objects and their perceptual qualities refers to space as constructed.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.48 The claim that "sculpture is primarily an art of "touch-space" is, in my view, is a distinct thesis best seen as intended to compliment and be supported by Read's assertion of a version of the physical thesis rather than as contradicting it. I discuss Read's perceptual thesis in some detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

The relationship of priority which Read suggests between space and mass, on the one hand, and an object's perceptual spatial qualities (volume) and perceptual qualities of mass (ponderability) are undermined, as is consequently the fundamental role apparently given by Read to space and mass in defining the uniqueness of sculpture as an art. The view he derives from James and Piaget still makes perception prior to space and mass, whereas his initial discussion of the relationship between space and mass, on the one hand, and their perceptual qualities on the other, indicates that space and mass have not only a causal priority over the perceptual qualities of objects, but also a special place in the definition of sculpture's uniqueness as an art. If constructed space and mass do not underlie our perceptual qualities such as volume and ponderability as a cause, but are themselves psychologically constructed properties which are features of the way we perceive objects and the world (we perceive the worlds spatially), then it seems that what has priority in the perceptual story cannot be space, but rather brute unconstructed and pre-conceptual physical reality.

In fact, it fits best with Read's account of space and mass and their perceptual qualities that we should interpret Read as referring neither to space as a concept, nor to space as constructed, but rather to space as prior unconstructed reality. This latter notion of space, I take it, is part of what Read has in mind when he talks about "space as a practical necessity, to which we can react on a merely sensational level"⁶⁷ as opposed to space as either a concept or as a psychological/perceptual construct. Read's three notions of space are related in that (1) we have a concept of space if we think of space as something which exists independently of either our conception or our psychological construction of it in perception, and (2) in that it is the psychological construction of space in perception which allows us to negotiate the world at a practical level.

Read claims that "the peculiarity of sculpture as an art is that it creates a three-dimensional object *in space*" and that its "uniqueness consists in its realization of an integral mass in actual space" also refer to space in this sense, as a practical necessity, a brute unconstructed and perception independent physical reality to be perceived and negotiated. It seems therefore that the most basic distinction between sculpture and

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.54

painting on Read's account is in terms of perception-independent physical quantities (space and mass), rather than in terms of the qualities (volume and bulk, ponderability) of these quantities in perception (which he nevertheless thinks is a further, and consequent, distinction). It seems that we are to understand that the peculiarity/uniqueness of sculpture consists fundamentally in its creation of three-dimensional solid objects containing quantities of matter which occupy or displace the space in which they are situated.⁶⁸

It is with this physical aspect of Read's claim that I am concerned here. As we shall see, however, it is in fact the perceptual qualities of volume, bulk and ponderability, rather than the physical quantities of space and mass as such, which turn out to be of most interest to Read. Nevertheless it is the physical quantities of space and mass which play a foundational role in his theory. He takes it to follow from these basic physical differences that "it is space itself as a perceived quantity that becomes the concern of the sculptor", that sculpture is primarily an art of "touch-space" rather than "sight-space"; that it is "an art of palpation"; that the sensibility required by sculpture involves a sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces, a sensation of volume as denoted by plane surfaces, and a synthetic realization of the mass and ponderability of the object; and that there are qualities that can be conveyed only by the art of sculpture. Read takes these claims both to follow from one another and to be independently supported by sculpture's peculiar physical nature. The claim that sculpture is an art of palpation, for example, is not only taken by Read to be a consequence of its being an art of "touch space", but is justified by Read on the grounds that touching and handling "is the only way we can have direct sensation of the three-dimensional shape of an object. Read takes there to be a causal relation between the three-dimensionality, mass, and other spatial properties of sculptures and our perception of them primarily in terms of "touch-space". The two-dimensional insubstantiality of paintings appeals, by contrast, to our perception of them primarily in terms of "sight-space".

⁶⁸ What Read means by "integral mass" is presumably related to the Jamesian idea of the integration of touch and sight space.

Whatever the truth about space (whether Read is right to conceive of it as an absolute three-dimensional extensional field, or whether we should conceive of it as a relation between objects or some other way), this truth holds for both painting and sculpture. Read's key point concerning the essential difference between sculpture and painting is about the material dimensionality of art-objects, the nature of the sculptural object's physical occupancy and displacement of space. There is in Read's statement that whereas "sculpture creates a three-dimensional object *in space*", "painting may strive to give, on a two-dimensional plane, the illusion of space" an ambiguity concerning the relationship between dimensionality and spatial occupancy or displacement. Are we to understand that sculptures are objects which fill or displace space in three-dimensions, whereas paintings fill or displace space in two-dimensions although they may give the illusion of filling space in three-dimensions; or are we, alternatively, to understand that sculptures are three-dimensional objects which fill or displace space, whereas paintings are two-dimensional objects which do not fill or displace space but may appear to? The first contrast gives rise to the problem that if space is conceived of as inherently three-dimensional, as Read seems to conceive it to be, then space cannot be filled or displaced in two-dimensions. The second contrast gives rise to the problem that if we conceive space as inherently three-dimensional, then it is not clear what a two-dimensional object could be, or rather, it is not clear in what sense something two-dimensional could be an object on Read's terms, since all objects would have to be three-dimensional.

The solution to this ambiguity makes evident a more serious problem for Read's physical thesis, and indeed for the physical thesis in general. Whichever of the two ways we interpret Read, either the materiality of the sculpture is asserted and the materiality of the painting denied, or the material three-dimensionality of the sculpture is contrasted with the material two-dimensionality of the painting. This is a problem because the only sort of material object there can be is a three-dimensional one which displaces or fills space in three-dimensions. Paintings, considered materially (as, for example, paint applied to canvas), are surely as much three-dimensional objects which fill or displace space in three-dimensions. Paintings as much as sculptures are constructed out of three-dimensional materials which are, after all, the only kind of physical materials available

out of which to construct anything. One solution would be for Read to hold that the arts of painting and sculpture each create three-dimensional objects in space, but that whereas all three-dimensions remain aesthetically relevant in sculpture, in painting we consider only the two-dimensional plane of the painted surface which may create an illusion of space. This would solve the ambiguity, but this solution does some violence to Read's version of the physical thesis, since he could no longer maintain that it was a peculiarity of the art of sculpture that it creates three-dimensional objects in space. Rather, the peculiarity would now be that all three-dimensions of the object are relevant in sculpture, whereas only two are relevant in painting. This would be relatively expensive for Read, because if he could not maintain a basic physical difference of kind in terms of dimensionality and the occupancy of space, then the further theses concerning sculpture which he sees as following from his physical thesis may be left unfounded. As soon as the 'peculiarity' has been shifted in this way, the focus has been removed from putatively essential physical differences of kind between sculptural and painterly works considered as material, and has been forced elsewhere.

2.4 Martin's Materialism

To the extent that Read asserts a basic physical difference between sculpture and painting, his has much in common with F David Martin's position. Martin maintains a version of the traditional view that sculpture is basically three-dimensional and painting two-dimensional. However, he recognises that there are difficulties which limit the usefulness of a distinction between sculptural and other artworks on the basis of dimensionality, and cites a number of "mixed media" works which he thinks make the line between painting and sculpture hard to draw:

"Some low-relief sculpture, for example, is hardly more three-dimensional than some paintings by Van Gogh or Jackson Pollock in which the paint is piled on the canvas as high as half an inch. The paint of Richard Pousette-Dart's *Cavernous Earth with Twenty-seven Folds of Opaqueness* in the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington protrudes an inch from the canvas. Max Ernst developed

the technique called “grattage” (as in *Swamp Angel*), grating or scratching wet paint with sharp tools, working it like sculptural material. Ben Nicholson’s *Painted Relief* [fig.17] – painted synthetic board mounted on plywood – is an excellent example (as is suggested by the ambiguity of the title) of the difficulties in attempting to distinguish sculpture from painting solely on the basis of dimensionality. ... Contemporary works, especially, are often difficult to classify. They exhibit a characteristic of our time by challenging the inherited practices and distinctions. For example, Lucio Fontana sometimes slashes through his painted canvas, showing depths of several inches, like open wounds. Lee Bontecou, conversely, sometimes uses wire to stretch her canvas and other materials out into space. Even some of the earliest known works, such as the bison of the Altamira cave paintings, often involve the bulges and hollows of the rock formations in a way that brings out three-dimensionality, and some of the outlines are incised as well as painted. And what about painted pottery? And mosaics? Three-dimensional objects such as tables and chairs are placed in front of their painted canvases by some pop painters (or sculptors?), such as James Rosenquist and Tom Wesselmann, in such a way that they are ingrown with the two-dimensional designs. Are these examples of sculpture or of painting?”⁶⁹

Martin presents analogous examples of the difficulty of drawing a physical or spatial distinction between sculpture and architecture:

“Although it is easier to distinguish sculpture from architecture on the basis of whether an inner space for practical purposes exists, there are also difficulties with this criterion. For example, the Pyramids were intended to open up an interior space for the dead only. Antonio Gaudi’s chimneys of the *Casa Milá* [fig.18] in Barcelona are powerfully sculptural in appearance, yet their interiors are a functional part of the building. Eero Saarinen’s immense *Gateway Arch* in Saint Louis opens up an inner space only for people on a small observation deck

⁶⁹ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1981, p.5-6

at the top and in the passageways and elevators that get them up there. Constantin Brancusi's *Gate of the Kiss* [fig.19] and Alexander Calder's *Gates of Spoleto* can be used as shelters. Kurt Schwitters in his *Merzbau* [fig.20] environment divided interior functional space by using fantastic combinations of refuse and found objects as structural and decorative elements. Are the examples of sculpture or of architecture?"⁷⁰

Martin nevertheless maintains these physical distinctions.⁷¹ His view is that "mixed media" works present problems of categorisation rather than undermining the validity of the dimensional criteria as such, since on his view the very idea of mixed-media works only makes sense if we have a prior understanding of the distinguishing characteristics of the media which have been mixed. Martin says:

"The usual answer, for good reasons, classifies such examples as mixed media. Painting, sculpture, and architecture at various times, as these examples clearly indicate, have tended toward or achieved merger rather than exclusion. No angel with a flaming sword stands between the painter, the sculptor, and the architect. To insist upon sharp divisions between painting, sculpture, and architecture which would deny their interactions and fusions is fruitless. Certainly (and fortunately) contemporary artists will not be intimidated by such theorizing, although, as in the nineteenth century, that kind of theoretical intimidation has occurred. But, on the other hand, to classify works as mixed media is an answer that begs the question about the autonomy of sculpture. When sculpture mixes with painting or architecture, an adequate explanation of the result must include an understanding of what went into the mix."⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 6-7

⁷¹ Ibid., p.5-7

⁷² Ibid., p. 7

At this point Martin seems in danger of subscribing to a version of the implausible naive physical thesis, although the fact that he both maintains the dimensional criteria and denies that there is a clear-cut dimensional distinction between painting and sculpture means that it cannot be a straightforward version of this thesis. Martin seems to avoid this, however, by explicitly recognising that paintings, like sculptures, do have three-dimensional material bodies. According to Martin, while paintings may also be three-dimensional objects:

“Since the canvas of a painting is usually thin and light, it does not exert much physical force in our perception even when, for example, we are perceiving it as just a solid object to be hung on a wall and not as a painting. But, much more importantly, when we stand back from the wall and perceive the canvas and its pigments *as a painting* then the painting creates an imaginary space that conceals the actual three-dimensionality of the canvas. ... as long as we perceive such works as paintings, and the paintings work successfully, we are not aware of the canvases as parts of three-dimensional solids. The paintings float free from their anchorage to their material bodies. To the degree that a painting is unsuccessful, to that degree the painting fails to float free.”⁷³

Martin continues:

“The images of a sculpture, unlike a painting, never float free from their material body, even Christo’s *Kassel Balloon* or Robert Irwin’s “scrim” pieces. When the images do float free, as when Sylvia Stone and Christopher Wilmarth uses transparent, planar material that has no perceptible material body of significance, then such works are more painterly than sculptural, and it is confusing to classify them as sculptures. Similarly, the will-o’-the-wisp color-and-shape transformations of Thomas Wilfred’s *Lumia*, for example, *Luma Suite, opus 158*, 1963-64, in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, may usefully be

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 64-65

classified as light art or film or kinetic painting, but certainly they are not sculptures. And the hologram – a three-dimensional pattern in space produced by laser lights – is just as painterly despite its three-dimensionality, for there is no perceptible material body.”⁷⁴

So it becomes evident that in drawing a distinction between sculptures and paintings Martin is not concerned with the pure dimensionality of the art object but with its material dimensionality, in particular with its perceptible, or apparent, material dimensionality. Although paintings and sculptures each have material three-dimensional bodies, the material bodies of paintings do not have a significant impact in our perception of them, whereas the material bodies of sculptures do. This seems at first to be a position analogous to the suggested possible solution to Read’s ambiguity (above) where a distinction between sculpture and painting is made on the basis of the aesthetic relevance of dimensional aspects of the art object, with all three-dimensions of the object being relevant in sculpture as contrasted with only two having relevance in painting. In fact, however, Martin’s is a phenomenological thesis which has implications for the aesthetic relevance of the dimensional aspect of the material bodies of artworks, rather than a thesis about aesthetic relevance as such. The difference between painting and sculpture, Martin suggests, is a phenomenal one. His central thesis, after all, is that “the autonomy of sculpture follows from the distinctive way sculpture manifests itself in our perceptions, and this distinctiveness is determined especially by the most distinctive feature of sculpture: its impact into surrounding space.”⁷⁵ According to Martin:

“Sometimes paintings, especially their colours, also project into the surrounding space ... These various kinds of projections fill but do not energize the surrounding space. They float like mists without significant impact ... because they lack an apparent three-dimensional base that would give them projective force. ... our perceptions of the projections of such painting are without

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.65

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 62

significant weight, so light that normally we are unaware of any tactile sensation. Only in the rare cases of exceptional stimulation are we even aware of tactile stimulation of our eyeballs, as in the green jelly-bean-like ellipses in Larry Poon's *Orange Crush*, 1963 ... which seem to jump out at us from their locations in a field of pure orange. With the space around a sculpture, on the other hand, we are aware of its transmission of forces into real space, even though that space is not actually solid but only a conductor, and even though we do not touch the material body of the sculpture that is the base for the projection of these forces. The visual projections of a sculpture, unlike even a painting such as Poon's *Orange Crush*, are felt as having force behind them because they are grounded in a three-dimensionality with significant mass that is not concealed and because the impacted space is perceived as part of and continuous with real space.

Since the sensa of a painting are perceived as free from the actual three-dimensionality and mass of its canvas (the material body of the painting), they have lost the impact that only a visible or palpable entanglement in solidity can produce. ... Since the sensa of sculpture, conversely, are perceived as an integral part of the three-dimensional thing (the material body of the sculpture), the sensa project something of the force of that material body, and so the sensa not only fill but forcefully impact into space."⁷⁶

Martin accounts for the putatively distinctive perceptual phenomenology of sculpture by appealing to further physical characteristics of sculpture which he contrasts with the physical characteristics of paintings. According to Martin, the way in which sculptures manifest themselves in our perceptions is distinctive because of their distinctive physical properties of three-dimensional spatial occupancy and mass. It is worth noting here that Martin's concept of space is as a relation between things, unlike Read's notion of space as an absolute three-dimensional field.⁷⁷ Martin draws a distinction between real and phenomenal space. I will address Martin's theory of

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 71-72.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p86

phenomenal space as some length in the following chapters - what specifically concerns me here is the relation which Martin sees between real and imaginary space in sculpture and painting. Martin sees the latter following from the former, only rather differently in painting and in sculpture, and the relation seems to be a largely causal one based in physical differences.

Martin sees the greater physicality of sculptures, for example their greater mass and weight or corporeality as compared to paintings, as causing the phenomena of “enlivened space” or “impacting between” which he sees as distinctive of our experience of sculpture.⁷⁸ The story is largely a causal one - it is not simply that we choose to ignore the material three-dimensionality of paintings as aesthetically irrelevant, although there is an element of this, but rather that paintings appear two-dimensional, and they appear to us this way because they are materially less significant, weighty, or imposing. What makes the material three-dimensionality of paintings aesthetically irrelevant on Martin’s view is the fact that their material structure is such that they give rise to certain perceptual phenomena in which the material body of the work does not make a significant impact. The “thin and light” canvas of a painting is responsible for the free floating image because its three-dimensional material body “does not exert much physical force in our perception”. The material body of a sculpture, by contrast, has “three-dimensionality with significant mass”⁷⁹, and by “significant mass” he seems to mean here something more like mass which has a significant perceptual impact rather than the aesthetic relevance of mass. According to Martin:

“While perceiving a painting tactile sensations are certainly not absent, of course, for there is the stimulation of the painting on our eyes. But because there are no impacting forces in the surrounding space, for the forces do not reach a threshold that would make us explicitly notice them, the tactile sensations and, in turn, haptic resonances are minimal. Thus with painting tactual and kinaesthetic sensations are largely psychological derivative of mental association, as when the

⁷⁸ Ibid.,

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.72

vivid velvet in a painting by Veronese evokes a memory of how the material feels when we stroke it.

With sculpture tactual and kinaesthetic sensations are felt more strongly than with painting because the stimuli of psychological association are usually just as strong if not stronger while the physical stimuli are always stronger.”⁸⁰

So although Martin’s recognition that both paintings and sculptures have three-dimensional material bodies seems to avoid a naive form of the physical thesis, his founding of this difference in phenomena of perception caused by further physical differences appears to renew the threat. Indeed, there seems to be a *prima facie* inconsistency in Martin’s position. On the one hand Martin claims that there are physical differences in the material bodies of paintings and sculptures which underlie the differing phenomenal contents of our perceptual experience of each kind of work, yet on the other hand in his discussion of the purely dimensional criteria he suggested that there are no such clear-cut physical distinctions, although he still wants to maintain a dimensional account of the difference between sculpture and painting. Whichever claim one takes, the one seems to undercut the other. If there are in fact no clear-cut physical distinctions between sculpture and painting in terms of the dimensionality of their material bodies, then it seems that he cannot appeal to such differences as causes in trying to explain differences in the phenomena of our experience of them. But if there are differences in the material bodies of paintings and sculptures which can account for differences in the phenomena of our perception of them, then one is left wondering how this fits at all with his claim that there are none - that “some low-relief sculpture, for example, is hardly more three-dimensional than some paintings by Van Gogh or Jackson Pollock in which the paint is piled on the canvas as high as half an inch”.

There are two ways we can interpret Martin’s thesis, one of which is unsatisfactory and the other, while plausibly Martin’s view, yields a false claim. One

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.62. Note that the sensations which Martin sees as derived from psychological associations concern the representational content of the work rather than the material body out of which the work is constructed which is insignificant in our perceptions.

reading of Martin is plainly incoherent and seems unlikely to be Martin's view although at times he does write as though he was thinking along these lines. The other possible reading is coherent both logically and with Martin's text, and is therefore likely to be Martin's view although, I argue, it fails on both explanatory and factual grounds. The first possibility is that when Martin denies that there are clear-cut dimensional distinctions between sculpture and painting but nevertheless maintains that dimensional criteria are an appropriate basis for accounting for the distinction between the arts, he avoids a contradiction by holding that the relevant kind of dimensional differences are in the apparent or phenomenal, rather than the actual material, dimensionality of each kind of artwork. This seems to be the route Martin is taking when he talks about difference in the phenomenology of perception of sculpture and painting, where the material three-dimensionality of painting, but not sculpture, is concealed. On this interpretation the dimensional criteria are still good because they refer to the apparent rather than the actual material dimensionality of the bodies of artworks. But then what are we to make of Martin's grounding of this phenomenology in physical differences in the material bodies of paintings and sculptures? Perhaps actual differences are then introduced not as themselves distinguishing dimensional criteria, but as the causes of the distinguishing criteria, which turn out to be phenomenal. The problem with this is that Martin does seem to be talking about the material bodies of works in his initial discussion of the dimensional criteria, and not the way the material bodies of works appear to us in perception. Even if difference in the material dimensionality of the bodies of artworks are treated as the causes of the distinguishing criteria rather than the distinguishing criteria themselves, the causal relationship is such that one wonders why these physical difference would not themselves also be distinguishing criteria, since the causal relation indicates that the phenomenal differences only occur where there are the physical differences. In this case, it is hard to see how the claim that there are physical differences, either as causes or as criteria, fits with either the view that there are no clear differences in material dimensionality or that the distinguishing dimensional criteria are phenomenal but not actual.

The solution to these problems is to read Martin slightly differently. It seems that when Martin maintains the dimensional distinction between sculpture and paintings even though he says that although there are no clear-cut dimensional differences between paintings and sculptures, we must read him as referring to actual material dimensionality rather than phenomenal dimensionality. It also seems that we must read Martin as claiming that there are differences in the phenomenology of our perceptions of sculptures and paintings, and that our perception of them is caused by associated physical differences in the material bodies of works of painting and sculpture. But whereas Read suggests a difference in kind with respect to the material dimensionality of sculptures and paintings which cannot ultimately be sustained, Martin can be seen as suggesting instead a difference in degree. So although there are no clear-cut distinctions of kind between painting and sculpture in terms of the dimensionality of their material bodies, Martin's claim is that sculptures tend to be more three-dimensional - they have more weight, more solidity, are rounder - whereas paintings considered materially, although three-dimensional, are less so - they are lighter, more flimsy, and tend to be flatter. There are works which we would normally think of as paintings and works which we would normally think of as sculpture which hardly differ in these terms, such the thick build-up of paint and the dramatic and wildly contoured surface of Frank Auerbach's paintings such as *Head of E.O.W.* [fig.21], which are hardly less three-dimensional than much conventional low relief sculpture, or even than the painted sculptural reliefs of Ben Nicholson [fig.17] or Jean Arp, such as *Forest* [fig.22]. There are also works which seem hard to categorise because of the way they mix shapes, weights, and solidities, such as the evocative collage of Robert Rauschenberg's *Canyon* [fig.23] which, spilling from its grid-like composition, both relates and contrasts images and things, weights and positions. Or consider Eva Hesse's *Untitled* [fig.24], which is clearly conceptually related to painting by basic forms and wall-mounted configuration, and which for the most part is hardly more weighty or solid than many paintings we encounter in a gallery. Indeed, although complexly constructed, they seem in many ways even less substantial, prematurely born, decaying, and peeling away from the walls, maybe to fall decomposing to the floor to which they are related by already mummified twin eye-level

umbilical chords. In view of the absence of distinct boundaries of this kind between the arts, and given that the material bodies of works are causally responsible for the phenomena of our perception of them, then we would also expect that differences in the phenomena of our perception of paintings and sculptures will also be differences of degree rather than of kind. It seems plain from what Martin says that he does think that there are a range of phenomena associated with variations in the material dimensionality of artworks. So although appealing to physical differences in degree brings Martin back to a version of the physical thesis, he avoids the problems associated with claims of a difference in kind.

Or at least so it can seem. Whether or not this is the case rather depends upon how one should interpret Martin's discussion of mixed media. Martin could be taking one of two views here. One possible interpretation of Martin's thesis is that we can place artworks somewhere on a continuum of material three-dimensionality and an associated (parallel) continuum of perceptual phenomena. Martin might then want to say that sculptures tend to fit in towards one end of the continuum whereas paintings fall in towards the other. This would amount to the claim that sculptures tend to be more significantly material and three-dimensional objects which "enliven" the space between object and viewer, whereas paintings tend to be flatter, lighter things which do not enliven space. If this were the claim, it would simply be pointing out an association between the two art forms and characteristic shapes and weights and the perceptual phenomena these give rise to. If this is a form of the physical thesis, it is not one with which anyone could really disagree, but it is hard to see how it might function as a non-trivial explanation of the two distinctive features of the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation with which I began this section. While it is possible that appeals to perceptual phenomena may provide the basis for an answer to the issue of how it is that we think of sculptures as objects in a way which we do not think of paintings (I address this issue in more detail in chapter 4), the claim that sculptures tend to be rounder or heavier than paintings does not in itself seem to capture this sense of 'object'. Nor does it seem to explain it, since sculptures and paintings are being treated here as the same kinds of objects (three-dimensional material objects), and the problem requiring

explanation was that we seem to treat them as different kinds. Further, if there is this characteristic distribution of weights and shapes between the arts, this itself is something which needs to be explained, especially if it is being appealed to as a central fact in a theory about the nature of sculpture. We might acknowledge on this account that some sculptures may be less weighty and rounded than some paintings, but why is it that generally this is not the case? What does this tell us about how sculpture and painting function artistically? If it is just left as a claim, and if it is simply acknowledged that not all sculptures are rounder and heavier than all paintings, then it is not clear how these facts enter into an explanation of this. Further, for example, if there is just a difference in the degree of roundness or weightiness, rather than in kind, then how can Martin explain the fact that at somewhere on the scale of roundness and weightiness we treat objects in one way, as sculptures, or another way, as paintings. Martin cannot provide an answer to this, and in fact he doesn't seem to attempt to do so in physical terms, but in terms of perceptual phenomena. That is, we treat them differently because although physically they are of the same kind, the differences in degree cause us to perceive them differently. But given that there is an accompanying continuum of difference in "enlivened space" and other phenomena, it is hard to see how this in the end avoids the problem rather than just shifts it. But for now it is enough to see that this approach would mean (as with the suggested solution to Read's ambiguity above), that it must be shifted.

Another possibility is that Martin could be suggesting a continuum with sculpture at one end, painting at the other, and mixed works which are neither pure painting nor pure sculpture somewhere between. On this account material dimensionality and the causally consequent phenomena of our perceptual experience of a work's physical properties are relevant in a different way - as definitional criteria rather than associated characteristics. It is not just that sculptures tend generally to be rounder and heavier and paintings flatter and lighter, but that sculptures and paintings are essentially so. The appropriate degree of weight and fullness for a work to qualify as a painting or a sculpture would be determined, given Martin's appeal to the phenomena of perception, by a work's having whatever physical characteristics give rise to perceptual phenomena of a certain kind. The suggestion would be that sculptures are works which 'enliven

space', whereas paintings are works which do not. Intermediate works may do a bit of both, and will be more or less sculptural or painterly depending upon the mix. This interpretation indicates that Martin may after all be suggesting a difference in physical kind between painting and sculpture after all, and in a sense he is, although plainly he is not concerned with the physical characteristics in themselves. On this account, a difference in degree in physical characteristics becomes a difference in kind because it is measured against a difference in the kind of phenomena to which the physical body of a work gives rise in our perceptual experience of the work. The differences in the phenomena of perception on this account are difference in kind rather than degree, only often works give rise in varying degrees to perceptual phenomena of both kinds. On this interpretation, Martin's claim about the difference between sculpture and painting and the lack of a clear-cut dimensional distinction can be read as noting a problem of classification rather than of definition. It is not that the range of works which combine two-dimensional and three-dimensional material characteristics and which enliven or fail to enliven space to varying degrees undermine the definition of sculptures as essentially fuller three-dimensional art objects which enliven space, and paintings as essentially flatter three-dimensional art objects which do not. It is simply that he admits a range of intermediate works which are neither pure sculpture nor pure painting rather than admitting that there is no distinction to be made in terms of a work's material dimensional properties and the phenomena of our perceptual experience of these properties. Although Martin may at times easily be read as taking the former approach, I believe this latter interpretation fits Martin's text best.

So, although the focus of Martin's discussion seems to shift away from the physical and onto the phenomena of perception, physical differences of kind do after all play a central role in his theory. Now, because the physical differences in kind are specified quite differently from the way they were specified in the naive version of the physical thesis I examined at the beginning of the chapter, Martin's claim here is not susceptible to the particular objections which render the naive physical thesis implausible. However, Martin's thesis still faces major difficulties, and some of them are at least analogous to those which led us earlier to abandon the physical thesis in its crudest form.

Since, on Martin's account, differences of degree in the physical characteristics of works become, by being indexed to kinds of perceptual phenomena, differences in kind of a sort after all. In this case Martin still needs to explain, as he would have in the former account, how it is that perceptual phenomena of different kinds are associated with physical characteristics which differ in degree rather than in kind in all aspects other than their giving rise to perceptual phenomena of the given kind. And he needs to do so in a way which is capable both of accounting for sculptures and paintings as themselves differing in kind as types of work, since this is how he sees them differing, and also of accounting for the two *prima facie* differences in the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation which I noted in Chapter 1.

A significant problem for Martin, and one that is specific to this particular version of the physical thesis, is that if, one considers there to be differences in physical kind between painting and sculpture, and one considers these to be differences in kind rather than degree because the physical characteristics in question (weight, fullness) give rise to different kinds of phenomena in perception, then it is not clear how one would answer the question of why, or how, a certain physical set of characteristics gives rise to a certain kind of phenomena in our perceptual experience of those physical characteristics. We would expect that the difference would normally be explained by saying that type x perceptual phenomena are experienced because type x physical properties exist as underlying causes, but if being a physical property of type x just is to be whichever physical type gives rise to perceptual phenomena of type x, then this sort of answer is no explanation at all, or at least, it is a trivial and unhelpful one. If differences in physical kind between sculpture and painting are non-specifiable except in terms of the phenomena to which they give rise in perception, then we cannot hope to give an interesting answer to the questions about why certain material characteristics of one art-object give rise to those sort of phenomena in perception, when they do not in the case of other art-objects (especially problematic when one is painting, other sculpture) except to say that it just does. And this doesn't help us explain how when artists employ material in creating artworks these materials and the physical properties, function artistically. We get a picture of art in which there really is nothing to say about what artists do specifically

with materials, and in which the only story in which materials really have a role is a causal one primarily concerning the perceptual phenomena to which shaped materials give rise. There is, no doubt, a causal element to any plausible and explanatory story about art and the artistic functioning of the physical properties of the materials which bear artworks and out of which they are fashioned, but if we remain at the purely causal level, even just at this stage⁸¹, we have a story which has not yet said anything about art objects as *art* objects rather than as any kind of object, since any kind of object, considered simply in terms of its material stuff, will give rise to phenomena in our perception of it in just the same kinds of *causal* ways.

In addition, I do not think that Martin's particular version of the physical thesis could in any case give us a satisfactory explanatory account of either of the *prima facie* differences in the ways in which we treat sculptures as objects which I pointed out in Chapter 1. It is possible that differences in the phenomena of perception might do this, a possibility which will be examined in Chapter 4. But the physical differences in kind which Martin suggests are the key to understanding sculpture, seem, as has just been noted, no longer to do any work independently of the phenomena of perception to which they give rise and which make them different kinds of physical characteristics. It is not just that we are left wondering how it is, since we would expect similar causal bases in perception to give rise to similar perceptual phenomena, that physical characteristics which are different in degree rather than kind give rise to different *kinds* of perceptual phenomena, and how these differences more than mirror but in fact determine the distinction between sculpture and painting as arts. For even if such an account of physical differences were capable of providing the basis for an informative account of a difference between sculpture and painting, physical differences of this kind (specified in terms of the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of them) do not seem to capture the sense in which we seem to treat sculptures and paintings as being different kinds of objects. While there is a difference in kind being asserted, the phenomena of perception seem to be doing all the work. The approach has an advantage over the naive

⁸¹ Martin perhaps wishes to leave the non-causal element of his story to a stage after we already have the phenomena of our perceptual experience of the artwork.

physical thesis in so far as, by focusing on the phenomena of our perceptual experience of the material rather than material as such, it does not assert a straightforward physical difference between the arts as if this purely material contrast captured the distinction noted in earlier in Chapter 1. But the alternative seems little better as a version of the physical thesis. To say that the sense in which we treat sculptures and paintings as being different kinds of objects is that paintings are objects which give rise to one kind of phenomena in perception whereas sculptures are a kind of object which give rise to another kind of phenomena in perception, either seems like a version of the phenomenological thesis rather than the physical thesis or, like the naive thesis, it again specifies some physical properties which do not capture the sense of object in question and which, in any case, do not do any explanatory work.⁸²

Nor, for the same reasons, does Martin's physical thesis seem any better suited to an explanatory account of the difference in appreciative activity noted in Chapter 1. The results are similar to those of the alternative interpretation of Martin's discussion of mixed media works discussed above, according to which the differences in the activity of appreciating sculptures and paintings could be seen either as trivially accounting for these differences by appeal to differences of degree in the physical characteristic of the material bodies of sculptural and painterly art objects (we tend to walk around sculptures because they tend to be rounder, we tend not to walk around paintings because they tend to be flatter), or else as simply false (since some sculptures are not rounder than some paintings). In this case, however, the choice is not between trivial and false explanations but between trivial physical explanations, on the one hand, or on the other, explanations which, to the extent that they are interesting, cease really to be usefully characterisable as physical explanations, but are instead best thought of as being phenomenological claims which may or may not be true explanatory. The explanation of difference in activity is either trivial (we walk around sculptures because they have physical characteristics which

⁸² As I have noted, it is possible that the phenomenological claim that sculptures appear to us in perception as one sort of object and paintings as another might provide an explanation of why it is that sculptures and paintings seem to us, and are treated by us as being, objects of different kinds. But once again, in this case, the focus has shifted away from the physical.

give rise to perceptual phenomena of roundness, we tend not to walk around paintings because they have physical properties which give rise to perceptual phenomena of flatness), merely pointing out a difference which is, if relevant, a part of the very difference we are trying to explain⁸³.

Nevertheless, I think Martin has identified an important issue here about how we are to construe the differences and relationships between the various arts - are we to think of sculpture and painting as discrete kinds of artwork having an essential connection with, for example, particular physical configurations and perceptual phenomena, or are we to look at the range of ways in which the physical properties of materials and the phenomena to which they give rise in our perception are exploited in artworks as being only contingently, rather than essentially, associated with different artistic traditions? I won't address myself to this specific issue here, but I will return to it in Chapter 5. What should be noted here is that whichever version of the sliding scale thesis is correct, it cannot be a scale purely of dimensionality and corporeality. In themselves, these criteria don't seem to do the work of telling the difference, or, specifically in relation to Martin's objectives, the job of justifying the "more or less sculptural/more or less painterly" account to which he seems to hold. Martin seems to recognise this in directing the majority of his attention to differences in the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture and painting. As I said above, this shift of focus away from the physical and towards the perceptual *might* be able to account for the two *prima facie* difference in the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation I noted in Chapter 1, but if it is to do so, Martin is going to have to abandon his reliance on a purely causal link between the material dimensionality or corporeality of sculptural and painterly art objects and the phenomena to which they give rise in perception. Although clearly we want some sort of causal link to exist between the material properties of an art-object and the way it appears to us in perception, this link needs to be mediated in a way which Martin does not allow. I will say more of this in the next section. It is enough to note here that the kind of link Martin draws between the physical characteristics of art objects and the phenomena they

⁸³ Or, if we focus on the phenomenal aspect of the claim, potentially explanatory but no longer really characterisable as a version of the physical thesis.

give rise to in our perception of them undermines rather than supports a phenomenological explanation of the differences between sculpture and painting, and in particular, of the two basic differences in the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation we began with. In this respect Martin's account falls foul of the same or similar kinds of objections which render the naive physical thesis either false or trivial, and in addition gives rise to further problems of explanation concerning the relationship between physical characteristics and perceptual phenomena. It seems that Martin would be better to abandon the physical element of his theory altogether rather than allowing it to hamper the more promising phenomenal approach.

2.5 The importance of material

Although the Physical Thesis fails as an account of the nature of sculpture of the differences in the kinds of things we regard sculptures, as opposed to paintings, as being, it is surely nevertheless true that the material body of a work of art plays an absolutely central role in our appreciation of the work. The physical thesis, by focusing simply on the physical properties of the material bodies of artworks fails to provide an explanation of the ways in which these properties contribute to the artistic functions of works either in their production or in their appreciation. Properties such as shape, surface texture, volume, and mass, do have an importance in sculpture, but they also do so in painting. If there is a difference in the role such properties play in sculpture and painting, then this will be a matter of the use we make of these features in producing and appreciating sculpture, and how this differs from the use we make of the same kinds of features in painting. Rather than having explanatory priority, properties of three-dimensional objects such as volume and mass acquire a particular sort of relevance only as a consequence of what is involved in regarding or appreciating something as a work of sculpture. The physical thesis remains silent on this.

I think there are important differences in the ways materials are characteristically treated in sculpture and in painting. The difference is not simply a brute physical difference between sculpture and painting regarded as material (or represented object), but is a difference which exists only between sculpture considered as a medium and

painting considered as a medium. In regarding a sculpture as sculpture, painting as painting, or indeed any artwork as a work of art, we do not generally attend alone to its nature as material, or to the object represented (if there is one) or other emergent content of the work. At least, to the extent that we may do so from time to time, this forms only an element of an appreciative process. If we were to attend to works only in either of these ways, then we would be failing to appreciate them as works. Typically in appreciating artworks, whether paintings or sculptures, the central focus is on the relationship between the material and the subject matter of the work rather than the material or subject matter themselves. The concern with material here is with material as used towards the end of content. The concern with the content is with this content as realised materially. The material is attended to not as material but as a medium, an attitude which incorporates an orientation towards the subject matter or content of the work.

I will argue in Chapter 5 that it is when it is considered in this way rather than, as in the physical thesis, in terms of its objective physical properties, that material plays a role in an explanation of the two *prima facie* differences in the vocabulary of our appreciation of sculptures and paintings as works of art. It is when we consider works in this way that it makes sense to think of, for example, the *Palace and 4 a.m.* as a stage set whereas it does not make sense to think of Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode* as an arrangement of fruit and furniture in actual space. We see this in non-representational sculpture and painting also. Contrast, for example, the way we regard Anthony Caro's arrangement of line and coloured plane in *Early One Morning* [fig.25], as opposed to the arrangements of line and colour field in Piet Mondrian's *Composition* [fig.26]. We do not treat the sculpture as simply a lump of steel, but nevertheless as an object, as an arrangement of material three-dimensional form and line and colour. The abstract painting, on the other hand, when thought of as material with this orientation, may be thought of as an arrangement of lines and colours and two-dimensional forms, but not as an arrangement of three-dimensional forms and lines. My suggestion is that in appreciating sculpture appropriately, a key element of our appreciative stance involves regarding the material as a medium which, in its orientation towards content, embodies

(rather than simply represents) three-dimensional form. I argue that it is this basic difference in appreciative stance with respect to the art-object, rather than physical differences per se, which best explains the key differences in the kind of things we treat sculpture as being.

As well as being a theory in its own right, the physical thesis also often functions as the foundation upon which more comprehensive theories of sculpture are built. Most existing versions of the perceptual, phenomenological and psychological theses assume the truth of the physical thesis in so far as sculpture's three-dimensionality in actual space is taken to be causally connected with the way we perceive it, and with the distinctive phenomenological content of sculptural experience. The failure of the physical thesis therefore undermines those versions of the perceptual, phenomenological and psychological theses which rely on it, but may not undermine the validity of perceptual, phenomenological, or psychological theories in general. I turn now to look at the Perceptual Thesis.

Chapter Three

The Perceptual Thesis I: Perceptual Modes

3.1 Introduction

3.2 General theories of perception

3.3 Touch essentialism

3.4 A perceptual system of the arts

3.5 Intended touch and motivated touch

3.6 Actual touch

3.7 Hypothetical touch and imagined touch

3.8 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

There clearly is something about perception which is central to our appreciation of sculpture. It is not just that our perceptual faculties provide our only direct experiential access to sculptural works. After all, this is true also of the literary arts in which our perceptual faculties give us access to the work via the spoken or written text. In the literary arts, attending to the content of our perceptual experience of the physical properties of the materials bearing the text does not always in itself form a necessary and essential part of our aesthetic experience and appreciation of the work as a literary work of art.⁸⁴ For sculpture, on the other hand, as for other ‘perceptual’ arts such as painting, film, or music, our aesthetic or artistic interest in works always and necessarily is largely with regard to their perceivable and perceived qualities, and attention to them necessary not just as a means of access to the work, but as a constitutive part of appreciating the work. Although it does not follow from this in and of itself that sculpture’s

⁸⁴ For example, the published format of the text of many novels could be changed without this effecting, or being relevant to, our understanding and appreciation of the content of the work. On the other hand, there are literary works for which attending to the visual appearance (e.g. e. e. cummings) or the aural characteristics (e.g. much poetry) of the text is crucial to an appreciation of the work.

distinctiveness as an art lies in the way it is perceived, it might nevertheless seem a promising conjecture to explore given the centrality of perception to arts such as sculpture and painting.

Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, it has been characteristic of sculptural theory to concentrate on or afford centrality to the issue of the perception of sculpture, and to seek to locate in the way sculpture is perceived differences with other art forms which give rise to distinct philosophical problems of explanation. As we saw in Chapter 2, such approaches have tended to base claims about the perception of sculpture on prior claims about the distinct and essential physical nature of sculptural works. I argued that in so far as this was the case, the failure of the physical thesis undermines perceptual theories which presuppose its truth. However, since there is no necessary connection (or relationship of logical priority) between the physical thesis and perceptually based theories of the nature of sculpture, versions of “the perceptual thesis” remain worth exploring in their own right.

Theories seeking to account for the distinctive nature of sculpture as an art in terms of the way we perceive sculpture may involve claims of several different sorts: (i) general theoretical about the nature of perception and claims about the relation of these to our understanding of the nature of sculpture as an art; (ii) claims about the sense-faculties actually or properly involved in perceiving sculpture; and (iii) claims about the phenomena of our perceptual experience of sculpture. Each approach can be found in the recent philosophical literature concerning sculpture, often in combination and without explicit distinction. I address (i) and (ii) in this Chapter, and (iii) in Chapter 4.

I begin by arguing that general theories of perception themselves can do little to establish or give weight to any particular theory of the nature of sculpture, since whichever story about the nature of sense perception is true will hold true for all perception and not simply our perception of sculpture. I then critically examine the claim (in various of its forms), that the nature of sculpture is to be accounted for in terms of the distinctive and essential involvement of one or more of our modes of sensory perception. I argue that this position fails to provide any adequate set of necessary or sufficient conditions for the sculptural, and tends to fall foul of a number of the explanatory goals

considerations I raised in Chapter 1, in particular those concerning the explanation of artworks and art practices. Indeed, I argue, if there is anything of special note about the relationship of the sensory modes to sculpture, then this seems *prima facie* to be a feature of the sculptural which requires explanation, rather than something which explains sculpture's nature. For example, if it is true that we characteristically engage in particular activities while appreciating sculptures, such as touching their material bodies, why is this? What is it about sculptures that makes touch characteristically appropriate (if indeed it is)? A theory of the nature of the sculptural based in other considerations which accounted for this kind of perceptual relationship, as well as other key features of the sculptural, would be preferable in not only providing necessary and sufficient conditions, but also in light of its greater explanatory power.

I argue that once accounts of perception are made to do any philosophical work, they bear less upon questions about the nature of sculpture than about the role perception has in the appreciation of sculpture, about how in our interpretation and evaluation of sculpture we ought to perceive and attend to sculpture, which kinds of perceptual access and experience we ought to seek out and pay attention to as relevant, and what we ought to do with the perceptual information we are given. The difference between someone who sees Giacometti's Busto [fig.27] and thinks of them only as lumps of gnarled metal, one who sees them and thinks that they are representations of heads, one who sees them and thinks that "their sculptural space is identical with their and our real space, yet they are removed from everyday space as if situated in an unpenetrable and irreducible sacred zone"⁸⁵, and the person who sees them and thinks that "it is as if the sculptor had tried to seize the volume of the head with his hands, and as if as he did so he found that the form somehow drew itself in, shrank, becoming concave so that it eluded his grasp"⁸⁶, are not at root differences in perception but in the sense made of what is perceived.

⁸⁵ Reinhold Hohl's 'What's All the Fuss About? Giacometti and Twentieth Century Sculpture' in Valerie J Fletcher, *Alberto Giacometti 1901-1966*, Lund Humphries: London, 1988, p. 61

⁸⁶ *Looking at Giacometti*, p. 35.

3.2 General theories of perception

What might be the relationship between a general theory about the nature of human sense perception and a theory about the nature of sculpture as an art? While it is easy to see that any adequate account of the nature of sculpture must be consistent with our perceptual experience of sculpture, and therefore that truths about the nature of perception may constrain the range of plausible theories seeking to explain the nature of sculpture in perceptual terms, it is not easy to see how claims about the general nature of perceptual experience are directly relevant to establishing any particular theory of the nature of sculpture. After all, whichever story about the nature of sense perception is true the same general account will hold true for all perception and not simply our perception of sculpture.

It may, however, plainly be the case that our perceptual experience of sculpture might contribute to the verification or falsification of a given account of the nature of perception in general. It is also clear that the falsity of a given general account of the nature of sense perception will undermine any theory of the nature of sculpture which logically depends upon the truth of such a theory. What is not clear is that a true account of the nature of perception will single out or point us logically in the direction of the correct account of our perceptual experience of sculpture, still less towards an account which grounds the nature of sculpture as a distinct art form in terms of the ways in which sculpture is perceived. Nor is it clear that an account which seeks to ground the nature of sculpture in distinctive aspects of our perception of sculpture must make assumptions which logically presuppose or follow from the truth of any metaphysical theory of perception.

Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, both Read and Martin place a great deal of argumentational weight upon metaphysical claims about the nature of perception, not just in relation to their views about the basis for the autonomy or independence of sculpture as an art, but in their claims about the essentially distinctive nature of sculptural works.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Read appeals to William James' *Psychology*⁸⁷ and to Jean Piaget's⁸⁸ theories of the construction of space in perception in drawing what he takes to be the basic distinction between sculpture and painting. According to Read:

When we consider the evolution of sculpture, it is important for us to realize that the kind of coherent space perception that man now possesses is a construction of the intelligence, and that, even so, as William James pointed out, "touch-space is one world; sight-space is another world. The two worlds have no essential or intrinsic congruence, and only through the 'association of ideas' do we know what a seen object signifies in terms of touch".⁸⁹

Read then appeals to this view of the nature of human perception in claiming that "sculpture is primarily an art of "touch-space" - is and always should have been - whereas painting is primarily an art of "sight-space"; and that in both arts, most of the confusion in theory and practice is due to neglect of this distinction."⁹⁰

The Jamesian view of the construction of perception provides Read with a conceptual framework within which our perception of artworks can be considered, but it is dubious that the Jamesian view of the construction of space gives any support to his claims about sculpture. Firstly, even if it were true that space is "constructed" in perception, and even if it were the case that it is constructed in terms of separate worlds of "touch-space" and "sight-space" related to one another for us only through a

⁸⁷ *The Art of Sculpture*, p. 47, refers to William James's *Psychology*, London and New York, 1892.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Read refers to Jean Piaget's *La Construction de réel chez l'enfant*, Neuchâtel and Paris, 1937; trans. Margaret Cook as *The Construction of Reality in the Child*, New York, 1954; as *The Child's Construction of Reality*, London, 1955.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

secondary cognitive process involving the association of ideas⁹¹, it follows neither that sculpture is an art of “touch-space” and painting an art of “sight-space” nor that sculpture is a distinct art, nor that its distinctness lies in its being an art of “touch-space”.⁹² Indeed, the Jamesian account of perception could well be true and yet the claim that sculpture is a distinct art, or that it is a distinct art in virtue of the nature of our perceptual experience of sculptural artworks, false. Further, since the truth of the account Read gives of the distinctive nature of sculpture as an art of “touch space” presupposes the distinctness of “touch space” and “sight space”, should the theory of perception be false, then claims about the nature of sculpture which incorporate the false theory would also, thereby, be false. But in order to justify his claim that sculpture is an art of touch-space, Read requires not only the truth of a Jamesian theory of the construction of space, but also some independent basis for assigning sculptural works to the category of a “art of touch-space”. Something must explain this - there must be some criteria which ground this assignment. Now, it seems that if there are some facts about sculptures which determine their distinctively belonging to the world of touch-space, then these facts must

⁹¹ Perhaps the “association of sensations” would see to be better? It is not clear why we must have concepts of touch and sight space to put them together, for this seems to make it a cognitive rather than a precognitive process.

⁹² As we saw in Chapter 2, Read takes the truth of the claim that sculpture is an art of “touch-space” (and the further claims about perception which he takes to be consequent to this), to follow from the distinctive physical properties, especially the physical quantities of space and mass, of sculptural objects. I argued in that chapter, however, that the physical thesis fails, and if this is the case then the physical thesis fails to account for sculpture’s being an art primarily of touch-space and rather than sight-space. Read has other grounds for assigning Sculpture to the world of touch-space involving the modes of our perceptual access to sculptures and the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculptural works. Read in fact takes these also to be based upon sculpture’s distinctive physical nature, and to the extent that this is the case and my claims about the failure of the physical thesis are correct, then these claims are also undermined. Nevertheless, other non-physical considerations may count in favour of Read’s claims about perceptual access and perceptual phenomenology. I explore Read’s views on these issues in the following sections.

themselves be distinctive of sculpture. But if this is the case, then it would seem that a case for the distinctiveness of sculpture could be made with reference to those facts themselves, and need not presuppose the truth of the general theory of perception. The real work would seem to be done by the facts rather than the categories to which those facts assign sculpture according to the general theory. Even if the general theory were false, those same facts might provide the basis for a claim that sculpture has a distinct nature as an art because of the way we perceive sculptural works. As such his general claims about the nature of sculpture are placed in danger of being undermined by relying on a general theory of perception which need not have been presupposed by him to make his case when the weight of his claims are in any case supported elsewhere.

Martin's theory about the nature of sculpture, which largely concerns the phenomena of our perceptual experience of sculptural works, similarly takes claims about the nature of human perception to play an important role in a proper understanding of the art of sculpture. Martin rejects the "subject/object dichotomy" which he takes to be inherent in the "traditional theory of perception"⁹³ together with this traditional theory's assumption of the "eminence of the eye", and appeals instead to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological view of the nature of perception, which holds the body of the perceiver to be more fully and reflexively integrated within perception. Martin uses his general phenomenological account of the nature of perception to criticise Read's account of the nature of perception, in particular Read's view of separation of the visual and tactile aspects of perception in the construction of space. So at least in so far as it contributes to this negative task, Martin's introduction of a general theory of the nature of perception has some role in his argument. Further, of course, Martin's commitment to a phenomenological theory of perception provides the conceptual framework in terms of which his case about the nature of sculpture is made.

But it is not clear what positive logical contribution this theory of perception adds to Martin's claim that the distinctive nature of sculpture lies in the distinctive phenomena of our perceptual experience of sculptural works. We might make perfectly good sense of the notion of "impacting between" and the other aspects of the phenomena of our

⁹³ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p. 42 ff.

perceptual experience of sculpture without appealing to a phenomenological account of the nature of perception without casting our experience in the language of such a theory, and irrespective of whether such a theory is true. What really counts for Martin is not whether a phenomenological theory of perception is true, but whether or not, whatever general account of perception is true, there is something distinctive about the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture as opposed to other arts. After all, if phenomenology gives a true account, it will be true for painting as well as sculpture. Just as in Read's case, the weight of the argument really lies elsewhere.

Martin's claims about the relative merits of the "traditional" "object/subject" model and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Read's account the psychological construction of "touch-space" and "sight-space" in perception really seem to address more general problems about perception rather than ones specifically concerning the perception of sculpture. As I said above, I think this will be the case for any general theory of the nature of perception. Such theories will be relevant to theories of the nature of sculpture which involve accounts of our perception of sculpture only to the extent that any true perceptual theory of the nature of sculpture must be consistent with a true theory of perception. The positive argumentational weight in any theory which seeks to give an account of the distinctive nature of sculpture in terms of the way we perceive sculptural works must always lie elsewhere: for example, appeals to the ways our sense faculties are engaged, or to the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience.

3.3 Touch essentialism

As I noted in Chapter 1, it seems to be a fact that we touch sculptures more often and in more ways than we touch paintings or other kinds of artwork. But what should be made of this? Is there an essential connection between touch and sculpture, such that the nature of sculpture is to be explained in terms of the role of touch in appreciating sculptures (I call the view that there is such a connection "touch-essentialism")? Or is the connection between touch and sculpture an association which may illuminate, but which is more to be explained by than it is explanatory of the nature of sculpture?

I will examine the case for and against actual and hypothetical versions of touch-essentialism. Touch-essentialism makes a strong claim and requires proportionately strong justification. I argue that there are insufficient grounds to think that touch-essentialism is true. Most of the arguments in favour of touch-essentialism are either false, inconclusive, too weak to warrant the strong claims of touch-essentialism, or, in so far as some of the weaker claims are true, insufficiently explanatory of the nature of sculpture, and of sculpture as an art, even if true.

What grounds might there be for preferring some form of touch-essentialism, and how strong a case does the appeal to such grounds provide? Both Read and Martin, argue that in both theoretical and common understanding of the nature of sculpture, there has historically been an inappropriate priority afforded to vision as opposed to touch (or indeed the other senses). Read refers to this as the “visual prejudice⁹⁴”, Martin as “pre-eminence of the eye”. Read (drawing on James and Piaget) and Martin (appealing to Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger) diagnose the origins of this priority as lying in somewhat different theoretical misconceptions about the nature of perception, and as having different consequences for the way sculpture has been and should be understood. I have already addressed the relevance of what I have called “general theories of the nature of perception” to the question of the nature of sculpture, and my criticisms of Read and Martin on this score should be kept in mind. Nevertheless, it is interesting, independently of the merits of the general approach, to see the origins of Read’s and Martin’s claims about the relationship between perceptual modes and the nature of sculpture.

Read chooses this statement by Cellini to illustrate the “visual prejudice”:

A painting is nothing more than one of the eight principal views required of a statue. And this is so because when a worthy artist wants to model a figure – either nude, or draped, or otherwise ... he will take some clay or some wax and begin to fashion his graceful figure. I say ‘graceful’ because beginning from the front view, before making up his mind, he often raises, lowers, pulls forwards

⁹⁴ *The Art of Sculpture*, p. 56

and backwards, bends and straightens every limb of the said figure. And once he is satisfied with the front view, he will turn his figure sideways – which is another of the four principal views – and more often than not he will find that his figure looks far less graceful, so that he will be forced to undo that first fine aspect he had decided upon, in order to make it agree with this new aspect ...

“These views are not only eight, but more than forty, because even if the figure must be rotated no more than an inch, there will be some muscle showing too much or not enough, so that each single piece of sculpture presents the greatest variety of aspects imaginable. And thus the artist finds himself compelled to do away with the gracefulness that he had achieved in the first view in order to harmonise it with all the others. This difficulty is so great that no figure has ever been known to look right from every direction.”⁹⁵

Read takes this as exemplary of the tendency to think of sculpture in visual terms more properly suited to painting. Firstly, I think there are grounds to wonder about Read’s interpretation of Cellini. Cellini could equally well be taken to be concerned more with the fact that there are very often a variety of *perspectives* from which it is appropriate to appreciate sculpture, as contrasted with the single frontal perspective associated with most painting, rather than to be proposing a thesis about the appropriateness of vision to sculpture which takes sculpture to be simply a many-sided painting. Another renaissance sculptor and theorist, Leon Battista Alberti, in his c.1433 monograph *De Statua*, seems less concerned with the role of vision in sculpture than he is motivated by a rationalist and scientific concern with the accurate measurement and reproduction in art of the human anatomy. This is reflected in his invention, and description in *De Statua*, of a device called the “Definer” [fig.28] for measuring the human form in such a way as to provide sculptors with information of the kind needed for reproduction of this form in their chosen material. It is worth noting that the accurate reproduction of the surface form and dimensions of a body is not equivalent to the reproduction of its form as viewed from any perspective, but rather the perspectives

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

available for viewing will mirror those available for the viewing of the original object. Although medieval and renaissance theoretical and practical texts about sculpture may refer to the role of our perceptual faculties, especially vision, in our appreciation of sculpture, this is not the same as seeking to ground a distinction between sculpture and other arts in the modes of our perceptual access to works.⁹⁶ There might be a case for saying that there has been a long-standing underlying assumption that it is vision rather than other sensory modes that is most central to sculpture, but the attempt to give an account of the nature of sculpture in terms of the mode of our perceptual access as such is rather a feature of more recent art theory. An explicit attempt to bring sculpture under a visual aesthetic is found closer to modern times in Adolf Hildebrand's 1893 monograph "The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture" (1893)⁹⁷. Here Hildebrand argued (controversially at the time also), that the essential formal unity or coherence of an art work as an image or appearance can only be realised in vision such that shallow relief, rather than sculpture in the round (which breaks the visual unity of form into a temporal sequence of two dimensional images), is the most basic condition of sculpture.

According to Read, the lack of a clear separation in experience between sight and touch of the sort we find between sound and other sensations contributed to a failure to recognise that the co-ordination of the senses (which Read calls a "sensibility"⁹⁸) appropriate to sculpture differed from that appropriate to painting, leading to the dominance of a painterly conception of sculpture which tended to thwart the development within art-practice of an independent sculptural aesthetic. Emphasis in theory on vision and in practice has led to problems because Sculpture is really "an art of palpation"⁹⁹. Read holds that because of its essentially three-dimensional physical nature, sculpture

⁹⁶ See Joan Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Early Renaissance*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1969.

⁹⁷ Reprinted in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities: Santa Monica, 1994, pp.227-279.

⁹⁸ *The Art of Sculpture*, p. 71.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49

gives preference to tactile sensations as against visual sensations¹⁰⁰ and can only be adequately appreciated through touch and not with the eye. Read takes touching and handling to be “the only way we can have direct sensation of the three-dimensional shape of an object”¹⁰¹, and holds vision to be inadequate to sculpture because he (mistakenly) takes vision to give only a two-dimensional image. While Read’s touch-essentialism is predicated upon and coupled with a physicalist view of the nature of sculpture, it nevertheless amounts to a thesis which could perhaps stand alone if, as I argue, the physical thesis fails.

Martin agrees that historically sculptural theory has been characterised by a “pre-eminence of the eye”, but the problem as he sees it is not so much that there has been an assumption about the role of vision *as opposed to* touch. Appealing to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception, Martin claims that it is rather that a model of perception which has seen our perceptual experience of the world as essentially divided between distinct sense modes (touch, vision, hearing, smell, taste, etc.) has encouraged a focus on vision at the expense of grasping the unity of perceptual experience. Martin also appeals to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theory of the unified and bodily nature of perception, and an account of the phenomena of our perceptual experience of sculpture, to undermine the kind-kind relationship which Read takes to hold between touch and sculpture and between vision and painting. Nevertheless, Martin does give an account of the ways in which our sense organs are differently involved in appreciating sculpture and painting. Although his account (which I explore in further detail in Chapter 4) is largely a causal one concerning the physical effects of the material bodies of artworks upon our perceptual apparatus, he sees the differences between sculpture and other arts as lying largely in differences in the phenomena of our perceptual experience rather than in any uniquely appropriate relationship between sculpture and a single perceptual faculty or set of faculties. The relationship between touch and sculpture remains an association, to be explained in terms of facts about the nature of sculpture, rather than being in itself a definitive criterion which explains the nature of sculpture. I agree with this latter aspect

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 70

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 49

of Martin's approach: the facts about the way touch is or can be used in appreciating sculptures is to be explained in terms of an account of the nature of sculpture which tells us why touch might be more useful to the appreciator of sculpture than to the appreciator of paintings. But whereas Martin does this in terms of an appeal to sculpture's physical nature causally underlying the phenomena of our experience, I have argued against sculpture having a distinctive physical nature and place the explanation elsewhere: in an account of the way which we regard and make use of the physical properties of sculptures, and our perceptual and other experience of them, in appreciating sculptures.

3.4 A perceptual system of the arts

Touch-essentialism might appeal to a more general perceptually based system of the arts which categorises the art forms, and assigns artworks to them, in terms of the modes of perceptual access to which artworks appeal, and which are taken to be essential to the nature of the art form. Read, for example, appeals to just such a thesis concerning the arts:

An art owes its particularity to the emphasis or preference given to any one organ of sensation. If sculpture has any such particularity, it is to be distinguished from painting as the plastic art that gives preference to tactile sensations as against visual sensations, and it is precisely when this preference is clearly stated that sculpture attains its highest and its unique aesthetic values.¹⁰²

Later he writes that:

... to each particular co-ordination of the senses corresponds an appropriate art with its aesthetic laws. If we give prominence to vision and subordinate all other sensations to its law of maximum aesthetic effect, then we get one kind of art; if

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 70

we give prominence to touch and subordinate all other sensations to *its* law of maximum aesthetic effect, then we get another kind of art.¹⁰³

It might be possible to assign artworks to type-categories in terms of the perceptual senses to which they appeal or give 'preference', but it is not obvious why it would be right to do so. The appropriateness of such a categorisation is (at least partly) relative, it can be assumed, to the purposes which motivate the categorisation. Such purposes might well be many and varied, but if the purpose is to provide an analytic account of the nature of, and essential characteristic differences between the art forms - (and it seems this *is* Read's primary purpose) - then I think such a categorisation fails as a general thesis, at least if we expect to end up with an account which fits our existing employment of art form concepts and terms rather than legislates new ones. This is so just as a contingent matter of fact - I suppose we could imagine a world in which our actual art form concepts did line up with the sense-organs in this way.

Several considerations suggest the failure of perceptually based systems of the arts (at least as we currently conceive them). Primarily, there *is* no type/type equivalence, or correlation, between actual perceptual modes and actual art form kinds. For example, although painting, drawing, printing, photography are all visual arts and give pretty much the same 'preferences' to the visual senses, they nevertheless are distinct art forms. While perceptual-essentialism might indeed delineate broad kinds or families of artwork with some degree of conformity to our everyday conception of broad similarities between art forms - e.g. the visual arts - it does not give us a categorisation which matches in any finer grained way our usual categorisation of art forms. Additionally, there are art forms which simply cannot be distinguished, even into broad kinds, in these terms. How, for example, would we think of the performing arts in this way, even as a broad category, let alone as consisting of separate art forms such as dance, opera, theatre, and so on. Making these distinctions in terms of sense organs just seems a hopeless non-starter. The same it seems clear, is true of the non-perceptual arts - we cannot distinguish one non-perceptual art as such from another in *perceptual* terms

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 116-117

precisely because they are *non-perceptual* arts. We will, for example, get nowhere trying to distinguish poetry from prose in terms of their relationship to one or other of the senses, not just because they appeal equally to any given sense, but because, as literary arts neither seem to be essentially tied to any given mode of sense perception, even in terms of the involvement of sensory experience as a means of access to the work via some form of text.¹⁰⁴

Now, one could suggest that this is just too bad for our actual art form concepts, and suggest replacing them with new ones consisting in perception-type/art-type equivalencies. For example, it might be suggested that we call anything which appeals primarily to vision ‘sight-art’, anything which appeals to the touch ‘touch-art’, anything which appeals to the hearing ‘hearing-art’, anything which appeals to taste ‘taste-art’, anything which appeals to olfaction ‘olfactory-art’, and the non-perceptual arts as “non-perceptual” art. This would give us six basic art forms (and more if there are more senses - proprioception? extrasensory-perception? other art forms for non-human appreciators with different forms of sensory perception?), and perhaps we could create mix and match sub-categories. But why would this be a good idea? Why prefer this over other ways we might systematically categorise art forms - for example in terms of the kinds of materials used (wood-art, stone-art, paint-art, sound-art, food-art, smell-art, etc.), or the kinds of audiences to which works are directed, emotions aimed at, the cultural location of its production, the ways in which works are produced and are appreciated, and so on? There might be a reason, and I think it is true that we very often do employ a variety of different categorisations in thinking about different kinds of problems concerning art. But if the aim is to better understand the arts as they are actually regarded, produced, appreciated, and as they have actually developed through tradition over history, then perceptual-essentialism does not seem a promising approach. Indeed, we might wonder why any monological systematisation would succeed in this

¹⁰⁴ This is not to say that some *particular* literary works might be closely, and perhaps necessarily, tied to particular modes of sensory experience. I refer to the examples cited earlier.

regard, for it could well be that the features that distinguish or are specifically characteristic of sculpture, or painting, or music, or literature, are of plural kinds.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, it could still be the case that sculpture *is* the art form which gives preference to tactile sensations, and it might be that *anything* which does give preference to tactile sensation is, thereby, sculptural. But if this is true it is not because type/type perceptual-essentialism in general is the right way to go. So we should consider this narrower thesis, and in doing so we shall encounter Read's views again, for although he appeals to type-type perceptual-essentialism he need not do so.

3.5 Intended touch and motivated touch

A second kind of position might be the teleological view that sculptures are just those artworks which are *made to be touched*, either taken, (a), as a form of intentionalism: the claim that we are *intended* to touch sculptures; or, (b), as a form of motivationalism: the claim that the production and/or appreciation of sculpture is somehow *motivated* by touch. These stances might be questioned on three principal grounds. Firstly, we might ask whose intention counts and who the relevant object of the intention is, *who* is motivated,¹⁰⁶ and what might be the relevant sense in which sculpture is motivated by touch¹⁰⁷. Secondly, we might wonder whether such an intention or motivation is in truly characteristic of sculpture and sculptural works, and whether this motivation or intention is a necessary or a sufficient condition for the sculptural. Thirdly, we might doubt how explanatory, in any case, such an account of the nature of sculpture could be.

¹⁰⁵ For example, one might be made out in terms of a relationship to given sense-modes, another in terms of materials used, or of methods of production.

¹⁰⁶ It seems odd to think of sculptural works themselves, or of sculpture as an art form itself, as being motivated, at least in any literal sense of 'motivation', since it is agents rather than things which are motivated.

¹⁰⁷ Martin suggests an alternative sense in which motivation might be held to be essential to sculpture. Martin's theory concerns the phenomenology of perception more than touch or any other perceptual mode itself, and employs a phenomenology of perception derived from Merleau-Ponty, and a Heideggerian concept of motivation as essence or origin. I address his view in some detail in 4.3.

Firstly, then, *whose* intention that an artwork be touched would be relevant to the conferring of sculptural status on the work? The obvious candidates are the producer of the work or the appreciator of the work. To begin with, it seems intuitively clear enough that if an appreciator were to intend to touch a Mark Rothko canvas, such as his *White and Greens in Blue* [fig.29], this does not thereby make that work a sculpture. Perhaps one could say that for the appreciator to touch such a work, or have an intention to touch the work, would be for the appreciator to treat the work *as if it were* a sculpture. This might be true, but only if one assumes already that there is some unique link between touch and sculpture, such that one could never have legitimate occasion to touch a painting while still regarding it as a picture. Such an assumption not only seems to introduce a question-begging circularity, but also seems plain false, since there are occasions on which we might wish, as appreciators, to touch a painting, not just in order to move or position the painting, but as part of appreciating the work as a painting. For example, one might want to explore more closely the manner in which paint has been applied to the surface in creating a certain visual surface effect.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps, then, the best candidate for the relevant intender is the producer of the work.¹⁰⁹

The producer of the work or the appreciator of the work are also candidates for the relevant object of the intention that the work be touched. It seems clear that producers

¹⁰⁸ For example, in order to appreciate how it is that had the paint not been applied with those three-dimensional characteristics the storminess of the sea or the clarity of the sky could not have been seen as being as it is

¹⁰⁹ Any answer to a question of this sort, however, will be beset by the usual objections faced by intentionalist accounts of the properties of artworks. If anti-intentionalism is true, then it would seem that intentionalist touch-essentialism must be rejected along with intentionalism in general. But the truth of any form of intentionalism leaves intentionalist touch-essentialism of this sort a live possibility. Rather than explore the wide range of familiar philosophical arguments on issues of this sort at this stage, I think it is better at this point simply to read in to the argument whichever is your favourite account of the role of intentions in the determination of the properties of the artwork. I will explore some arguments concerning intentionalism in Chapters 6 and 7.

of sculpture intend to touch the work¹¹⁰, at least in its production, but then this seems true of any art form in which the artist must interact physically and deliberately with a material medium in producing a work, so there is nothing particular to sculpture in this. This way of touching a work is technical and instrumental - the artist touches the work in so far as the techniques used to produce the work require this - and is responsible for a work's being sculpture in the causal sense that it is touch which creates any work at all (just as this is true of paintings in which touch is productively involved). But productive touch does not seem to explain the work's status as *sculptural* except in this causal sense. Of course, artists are appreciators as well, and their appreciation of a work forms an important part of the creative process, amongst other things guiding the employment of technical skills in the production of the work. So perhaps if it is an intention that some particular person or kind of person touch a work that makes it specifically sculptural, then the idea that it is the appreciator (including the artist in so far as the artist is also an appreciator of their own work) who is the most promising candidate. Either this, or there will have to be a clear distinction drawn between the kinds of ways in which producers touch their raw materials in producing works when producing sculpture as opposed to any other kind of work. But if we take this latter option, we lose already the notion that sculpture is unique as a kind of artwork in its being intended in some sense that its producers touch the work in producing it. There might well be some use in distinguishing the kinds of ways in which sculptors typically interact with their physical raw materials, and such a survey might reveal statistical associations between sculpture and various productive techniques - for example, carving, modelling, and casting - but this is far from establishing some essential relationship between such techniques and the nature of sculpture as a kind of art form since we might use carving, modelling, or

¹¹⁰ Intending to touch the work may not be quite the same as it being true of a work that it is intended to be touched, except in so far as in intending to touch the work it is also true that one intends that oneself touch the work and therefore that the work be touched at least by oneself. The problem here is not the same as the general problem of intentionalism as a form of explanation of the properties of a work. This problem concerns the appropriate content of a productive or determining intention rather than its productiveness or determiningness as such.

casting techniques in other art forms. For example, in painting an artist might build up, push around and mould the thick paint, and so on, as Van Gogh did in many of his works, such as *Wheat Field under Threatening Skies with Crows* [fig.30], or as is typical of Frank Auerbach's painting [fig.21]. One might say that what matters is appreciative touching in production and appreciation with an interest in the three-dimensional properties of the material, but then I think it is the latter rather than the touch which carries the explanatory load.

If the motivation by touch takes as its subject the sculptor or the appreciator, doesn't this at least give a *prima facie* plausible possible account of the nature of sculpture? If one is motivated by touch to the extent that one's *concern* is with touching, with the way things feel when touched, and with the perceptual experiences and information which may be acquired or made available to us through touching, then it seems fair enough to think that artists might, in producing works, be so concerned, and that appreciators might also in this sense be motivated by touch? But why think that such motivations are either necessary or sufficient for a work's being sculptural? After all, this kind of motivation by touch is simply one of many motivations which producers and appreciators might bring to works of sculpture, some of which might also be perceptual in nature (such as, for example, a concern with the way the work looks). There may also be myriad non-perceptual motivating concerns, most obviously, for example, a concern with spatial form and with properties of mass, the expressive and representational content of the work, its general aesthetic qualities, and so forth. Of course, the motivationalist-touch-essentialist might acknowledge this, but hold that it is the motivational concern with touch, rather than, or over and above, any other motivation of producers and appreciators which determines, or explains/accounts for, the nature of sculpture and/or the status of works as sculptural. But why? What makes a motivational concern with touch *the* motivation which counts?

Perhaps at this stage the advocate of motivationalist thesis might suggest that it makes more sense to think of producers and appreciators of *sculpture* as being motivated by touch than it does producers and/or appreciators of other kinds of art. For example, how far could it make sense to think of producers or appreciators of photography, or film

, or painting, or dance, or theatre, or music as being motivated by touch in this kind of way (i.e., being concerned with touching, with the way things feel when touched, and with the perceptual experiences and information which may be acquired or made available to us through touching)? For types of works such as film, touch simply could not give us any access to the work, since the work emerges from the base properties of the moving visual image rather than in any tangible materials. I suppose someone might say that touch, or a motivation by touch, might have some valuable or informative role in appreciating film, at least in a negative sense - trying, we might discover that it is no use to touch the screen or get our hand in the way of the projector, and that not only does this obscure or obstruct proper appreciation, but is incompatible with it rendering it impossible. Thus, if we didn't know this about film before, or in encountering a film were uncertain of the kind of thing we were faced with, this sort of interaction with a work could tell us something about the nature of the work. This is, of course, true, but not in any interesting sense - touch still gives us no appreciative *access* to the *work*.¹¹¹ There does seem to be something in this idea, so it could be suggested that this motivation is in a sense distinctive of sculptural works and sculpture as an art.

The weight of the issue can now be shifted to the question of the necessity or the sufficiency for a work's status as sculptural of the relevant intention or motivation to touch. Is it in fact true that sculptures must be intended to be touched by appreciators, and is the existence of such an intention sufficient to determine a work's status as sculptural? In so far as intentionalist touch essentialism seeks to give a general definitional account of the nature of sculpture, then it seems that it must hold that such an intention is not only sufficient, but also a necessary condition for sculptural status. If only some works are sculptural in virtue of such an intention, then an additional account is required to explain the sculptural status of works in respect of which there is no such intention.

¹¹¹ It is possible that tactile imagining and hypothetical tactile sensations (i.e., imagining how something shown in the film feels, or would feel if touched) might have a role in appreciating cinematic works, but this is a different matter. I say something about the role of hypothetical and imagined perceptions, below.

In response to the suggestion that the intention that a work be touched by appreciators is a necessary condition for a work's status as sculptural it should be sufficient to point out that it is simply not true of all sculptures that they are intended to be touched by appreciators. One need only think of the many sculptural works which are situated, and which are designed to be situated, such that it is not possible for appreciators to touch them. For example, many public statues are mounted on high bases, on buildings, or in the middle of fountains. Similarly, there are sculptures the dimensions of which simply do not make it possible for appreciators to touch their complete surfaces. How, for example, could one be intended to touch the head of *David* - are we to use a step-ladder? Similarly there are works where it is plainly the case that they are not intended to be touched by appreciators even though they *could* be touched. To fully touch each of Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* [fig.31] would require an act of contortion both unnecessary and undermining of an appreciation of the work's portrayal of the raggedly draped townspeople's staunch resignation to their heroic martyrdom. Dan Flavin's neon sculptures [fig.32], are no more to be touched than the everyday fluorescent tubes from which they are constructed, and concern themes, such as the relationship of modular components to one another and to architectural space, which can hardly be illuminated (in these instances) via touch. Although significantly different in form, construction, and subject matter, Giacometti's standing female figures [fig.15], are also clearly intended to operate and be appreciated primarily in terms of their visual effects. It is not that we couldn't touch such works, just that touching such works would not only not be very helpful (if it could be helpful at all), but could constitute, in effect, a failure to understand. There is no doubt, however, that such works are sculptural. In so far as it is not necessary that appreciators be intended to touch such works, and indeed are intended *not* to touch such works, works of this kind must create a serious problem for intentionalist touch-essentialism.

Of course, a touch-essentialist might simply stipulate that any work which is not intended to be touched by appreciators just cannot be a sculpture, and that if we normally think of such works as being sculptures, then we are just wrong about that. Such a manoeuvre, however, would be inappropriate for just the same sorts of reasons as I

appealed to in rejecting the perceptual-type/art-type equivalencies of a perceptual system of the arts: there just seems little reason to prefer an account of the nature of sculpture which is an account of the nature of a body of works which when grouped together differs substantially from the set of works which we normally group together as sculpture/to which we normally apply the concept 'sculpture'. The more substantially an account of the nature of sculpture gives an account of the nature of a group of works which deviates from those normally thought of as sculpture, and from the puzzle which motivated the theory, the more reason we have to prefer alternative accounts which more closely accord with works which we normally conceive of as sculpture. Of course, it is possible that we might have to end up altering our actual conception of sculpture, and think of the works we normally think of together as instances of sculpture as in fact being works of quite distinct kinds. We would need relatively strong grounds for doing so, and the closer to the core of our actual conception of sculpture are works which are excluded from the new conception of sculpture, the stronger our reasons for rejecting such a conceptual shift, at least as an explanation of *sculpture*. It seems clear that the nature of the intentionalist touch-essentialist position is such that works very close to the core of our conception of sculpture, works which are almost paradigmatic of sculpture, risk being excluded from explanation.

Perhaps intentionalist touch-essentialism could be modified to claim that although it might be the case that not all sculptures are in fact intended to be touched by appreciators, nevertheless what makes them sculptures is that they are works of the same kind as works which *are* intended to be touched by appreciators. For example, it might be suggested that although not all sculptures are intended to be touched by appreciators, their sculptural status is parasitic upon the fact that the works emerge from a tradition of production and appreciation of works a defining characteristic of which is that works are (generally) intended to be touched by appreciators. This explanation seems unsatisfactory, however, in so far as the factor which is now being taken to account for a work's status as sculpture is no longer the intention "that it be touched" as such, but rather that a work stands in a certain relation to a tradition of appreciation and production. The nature of this relation would need specification, however, and it does not seem

plausible that this relation could itself be perceptual or touch-essentialist in nature. Naturally, the idea that intended touch *and* a particular relationship to traditions of production are jointly necessary fails to get off the ground in light of the fact that intended touch, by itself, lacks necessity.

Even if it were the case that such intentions were *necessary* for a work's being a work of sculpture, if it were not *also* the case that such intentions are sufficient then another important element in the nature of sculpture and sculptural works remains unaccounted for by the intentionalist version of teleological touch-essentialism. Perhaps intentionalist touch-essentialism might be rescued by limiting it to claims of sufficiency rather than necessity. I already gave one reason, above, for thinking that a version of intentionalist touch-essentialism which sacrificed necessity would be unsatisfactory as an explanation of a work's status as sculptural. But there are further reasons for thinking that an intention that a work be touched by appreciators is insufficient to confer or account for sculptural status. If we were to assume that such an intention were sufficient, then *any* object in relation to which there existed such an intention would qualify, or be constituted as, a sculpture. Two approaches present themselves at this point: either one accepts *this* consequence, or one rejects it and along with it rejects the sufficiency version of the thesis. There are, as I suggested, good grounds to think that *this* version of the thesis fails. It simply doesn't seem *true* that any and all objects in relation to which there is an intention of this sort are sculptures - think, for example, of Braille texts, or switches on kitchen electrical appliances - unless one is prepared to adopt a stipulative rather than an elucidatory approach with respect to concepts and the works which we are seeking to make sense of in the first place.¹¹² If, on the other hand, we modify the thesis by holding that intended touch is jointly sufficient with a particular relationship of a work to a tradition of production, but without holding the conjunction of these factors also to be necessary, then even if it were successful as far as it goes in

¹¹² Furthermore, if such an intention were *sufficient* for a work to be a sculptural work, then this is tantamount to claiming that the intention "that a work be touched" is somehow *equivalent* to the intention "that a work be a work of sculpture", an equivalence which does not generally seem to hold true.

accounting for the sculptural nature of some works, we are left with an incomplete account of the nature of sculpture as such.

While it might often be the case that sculptors and appreciators of sculpture are motivated at least partly by a concern with touch, it does not seem to be necessary to a work's being sculpture. Think again of sculptures which cannot be touched by appreciators because of their size or situation, or of sculptures which it would just seem inappropriate or uninformative to have a concern with touching or with the perceptual experiences made available to us through touching. Dan Flavin's neon sculptures [fig.32], monumental statuary in general, and indeed entire sculptural genre such as the constructivism of Naum Gabo [fig.33] and Antoine Pevsner [fig.34], are good examples of such works, yet works of this kind are still paradigmatically sculptural.¹¹³ Made from modern architectural, design, and engineering materials, Gabo's flimsy and convoluted forms consist almost entirely of surface, as do Pevsner's more weighty, textured forms. Rather than anything which we might wish to touch, these works concern the spaces of the materials and the spaces created by the material configurations. While surface texture (such as the smoothness of the plastic) does have an importance, it is largely a conceptual matter and given for us, in any, case by vision. Parasitic necessity claims fail for the same reasons already addressed in relation to intentionalist versions of touch essentialism: the motivation by touch would no longer be the factor taken to explain a work's status as sculptural, but rather that the work stands in a certain relation to a tradition of production and or appreciation, a relation which is not itself one consisting in a touch-motivation. Nor, of course, can the idea that motivation by touch *and* a particular relationship to traditions of production are jointly necessary surmount the fact that motivation by touch, by itself, lacks necessity. Nor does it seem that a motivation by touch on the part of appreciators (or producers in their role as productive appreciators),

¹¹³ Perhaps it could be said that although it doesn't seem to make sense to touch these works, and hence to be motivated by a concern with touch, nevertheless appreciators might well be concerned with the way surfaces would, or seem that they would, feel *if touched*. This might be right, but then appreciators are motivated not so much by actual touch and the experiences which actual touch provides, but with hypothetical or imagined touching - see below.

can be sufficient for a work's status as sculptural for reasons similar to those given above in relation to intentionalist versions of the thesis. Firstly, if we were to assume that such a motivation were sufficient to determine a work's status as sculptural, then *any* object in relation to which there existed such a motivation would qualify, or be constituted as, a sculpture, and this seems to open the field far too wide to be plausible - it is either false (including objects which we would not normally consider to be sculptures), or, if one were to adopt a stipulative approach, shifts our concept of sculpture too far. Secondly, if we opt for sufficiency without necessity, which would imply that some other feature could also sometimes be a condition for the sculptural, this other important factor explaining the nature of sculpture, and sculptural works, remains unaccounted for. Making motivated touch jointly sufficient with a particular relationship of a work to a tradition of production, without holding the conjunction of these factors also to be necessary, even if it were successful as far as it goes in accounting for the sculptural nature of some works, we would be left with an incomplete account of the nature of sculpture as such: what other features might be sufficient?

So, I have argued that touch-essentialism is an inadequate account of the nature of sculpture in so far as the intention that a work be touched by appreciators is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for a work's status as sculpture, and because any attempt to save either sufficiency or necessity can be achieved only at the unacceptable cost of altering substantially the application of our actual concept of sculpture. But even assuming that it had been true that all sculptures are such that they are motivated by touch or intended to be touched by appreciators, how far would this go in accounting for the nature of sculpture as an art-form? Supposing that all my criticisms so far fail, I still think that the intentionalist touch-essentialist thesis is inadequate in so far as it tends to conflate explanation of artworks with explanation of art forms. In Chapter 1 I argued that there is a difference between accounting for the nature of an art form on the one hand, and accounting for features of art works. Intentions 'that a work be touched' could at best explain why particular individual works have particular features, but they do not in themselves then account for the nature of sculpture as an art form as such, and hence why those particular works belong to the category of sculpture. What would

account for the nature of the art form? Not the intention 'that a work be touched', since this intention attaches to works, but perhaps it could be suggested that the essential constitutive feature of sculpture as an art practice is that it involves the production of works which are intended to be touched by appreciators, or for which appreciators are motivated by touch. But then it seems that it is this element of the terms of the art practice (rather than the intention or motivation which attaches to particular works), which accounts for the nature of sculpture, and it is the relationship of originating from such an art practice which accounts for the status of individual works as sculpture, and only indirectly, in virtue of this relationship, the fact that a work is motivated by touch or intended to be touched. This might not seem such an unpromising way of modifying the account, were it not for the considerations I gave earlier for thinking that the intention to or motivation by touch could not be either necessary or sufficient for sculpture.

Perhaps it may seem more promising to suggest that in fact sculpture is the practice of producing works which *are to be touched*, with the status of an individual work as sculpture being accounted for by its relationship to such an art practice, and with the intention that a work be touched having a role only genetically in accounting for how this particular work came to be at all and hence to be in this category. I look at this approach further below, but it should first be noted that the motivationalist thesis, as well as facing analogous difficulties, also raises the question of *why* we are motivated by touch in appreciation of sculpture given that this is not meant to be characteristic for other kinds of work. The same is true if instead we think that what is important to notice is that appreciators are motivated *to* touch, rather than *by* touch, in appreciating sculptures (although being motivated by touch might be part of an explanation of why they are motivated *to* touch). One approach would be to ground the motivation in physical features of the work, a version of the Physical Thesis, and something which I have already argued against on a number of grounds. Alternatively, it could be grounded in some claims about the distinctive phenomenal properties of sculpture, something I will explore in the following Chapter. But whatever it is, in so far as there is something which can account for this motivation, then it might seem more promising to ground an

account of the sculpture in those more basic features rather than in the motivations to which they give rise.

3.6 Actual touch

Actual-touch essentialism is the idea that actual touch is involved in the appreciation of sculpture in such a way that this involvement determines and explains the nature of sculptures and of sculpture as an art form. Read suggests that we ought to adopt a version of the position. We have already seen in Chapter 2 that according to Read “it is space itself as a *perceived* quantity that becomes the particular concern of the sculptor”¹¹⁴. Read says, “a very real confusion has always existed between the arts of sculpture and painting ... a confusion due to the psychological fact that no clear separation is made in experience between the faculties of sight and touch.”¹¹⁵ As we saw in Chapter 1, Read couples this with a general claim about the relationship between the aesthetic independence of art forms and our perception of artworks. Earlier in this chapter we saw Read’s views on the systematic relationship between art types and perceptual types. Read claims that sculpture is the plastic art which gives preference to tactile sensations¹¹⁶ because sculpture as an art, unlike painting, “creates a three-dimensional object *in space*”¹¹⁷, making sculpture “primarily an art of “touch-space” ... whereas painting is primarily an art of “sight-space”.”¹¹⁸

Read acknowledges an ambiguity in his use of the word “primarily”:

though a complexity, or rather a complicity, of sensations is always involved in the creation and appreciation of a work of art, one and only one of these sensations “touches off” the process. This is the sensation I call primary. ... we

¹¹⁴ *The Art of Sculpture*, p.46. (Italics mine).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48

must remember that the peculiarity of the artist is that he deals with primitive facts, with sensations in their state of innocence. He works on the basis of direct feeling and not on the basis of concepts, which are secondary intellectual constructions.¹¹⁹

While emphasising the centrality to sculpture of direct tactile sensation, Read admits that “there is, perhaps, a mental process of this secondary kind that the phrase “tactile imagination” describes”¹²⁰, and which might be found in relation to painting which can seek to stimulate this imagination, but thinks that to seek the “keener sense” of reality associated with effects which call upon such imagination undermines and confuses painting as such - it is the aim which “gradually corrupted the artistic consciousness and led the art of painting into the morasses of academicism and sentimentalism”.¹²¹

According to Read:

For the sculptor, tactile values are not an illusion to be created upon a two-dimensional plane: they constitute a reality to be conveyed directly, as existent mass. Sculpture is an art of *palpation* – an art that gives satisfaction in the touching and handling of objects. That, indeed, is the only way we can have direct sensation of the three-dimensional shape of an object. It is only as our hands move over an object and trace the lines of direction that we get any physical sensation of the difference between a sphere and a square; touch is essential to the perception of subtler contrasts of shape and texture¹²².

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 48.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 49. This is part of what he means in his normative claim that “sculpture is primarily an art of “touch-space” – is and always should have been – whereas painting is primarily an art of “sight-space”; and that in both arts most of the confusion between theory and practice is due to neglect of this distinction.”

¹²² Ibid., p.49-50

If we merely “look at” sculpture, even with our sophisticated vision, which is capable of reading into the visual image the conceptual knowledge we possess from previous experience of three-dimensional objects, still we get merely a two-dimensional impression of a three-dimensional object.¹²³

Read’s central series of linked consequential claims – that sculpture is primarily an art of “touch-space” rather than “sight-space”¹²⁴; that it is “an art of palpation”¹²⁵; that the sensibility required by sculpture involves a sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces, a sensation of volume as denoted by plane surfaces, and a synthetic realization of the mass and ponderability of the object¹²⁶; and that there are qualities that can be conveyed only by the art of sculpture¹²⁷ – is founded on his initial assumptions about the physical nature of the sculptural art object. He takes one claim in this series to follow one from the preceding claim, and it seems that he also takes each claim to be supported independently by sculpture’s peculiar physical nature. The claim that sculpture is an art of palpation, for example, is justified by Read on the grounds that touching and handling “is the only way we can have direct sensation of the three-dimensional shape of an object”¹²⁸. Read takes there to be a causal relation between the three-dimensionality, mass, and other spatial properties of sculptures and our perception of them primarily in terms of “touch-space”. The two-dimensional insubstantiality of paintings appeals, by contrast, to our perception of them primarily in terms of “sight-space”. According to Read, “it is space itself as a perceived quantity that becomes the concern of the sculptor”. Nevertheless, it is clear that on Read’s view the perceived qualities (volume and bulk, ponderability) presuppose quantities (space, mass) to be perceived. If perceived mass

¹²³ Ibid., p. 50

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 48

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 49

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 71

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 68

¹²⁸ Ibid. [note that what we touch in any literal sense is the material!!, not the represented content - we may touch the object as medium but this is highly metaphorical ‘touch’ (pencil in hand representing car)]

and space are of most interest to Read, it is nevertheless physical space and mass to which Read refers in his initial claims about the peculiarity and uniqueness of sculpture as an art and which is foundational for his theory. Read does not seek to justify the physical claims upon which his larger thesis is built, and I argued in Chapter 2 that his version of the Physical Thesis fails. However, I think his claims about the role of touch in sculpture, and views of a similar kind, should be taken seriously since, although inadequately founded in Read's case, they may yet be found to either stand alone or to rest on other less physical, but more secure, foundations.

Read's views, and considerations of the same general sort, appeal to putative aspects of the nature of the role of touch in the appreciation and production of sculpture, which can be summarised/categorised in the following kinds of ways¹²⁹:

(a) the claim that there is a *necessary* relationship between touch in the appreciation/production of sculpture and the sculptural;

¹²⁹ The structure of Read's argument, then, seems to be something like the following:

1. There is a distinction between sight-space and touch-space.
2. Each space is constructed (in a primary way) by the intelligence from sensation derived from the different senses.
3. Vision is two-dimensional. Our visual knowledge of the three-dimensional is a (secondary) construction not a direct perception, by combining touch and sight space.
4. Touch gives us direct sensation of the three-dimensional. Three-dimensional "touch-space" is a primary construction from touch sensation.
5. Sculpture is essentially three-dimensional.
6. As such we can only have direct sensation (three-dimensional) of sculptures through touch.
7. Sculpture belongs primarily to the world of "touch-space". We construct this space and the sculptural object in a way which gives priority to the tactile over the visual.
8. Sculpture is to be appreciated directly by touch. (Maybe it is not so much that we can't appreciate it other ways, just that any other way must be an indirect form of appreciation since they will always involve secondary, conceptually based, constructions of space).

(b) the claim that productive/appreciative touch is by itself *sufficient* for the sculptural;

(c) the claim that touch is the *only* sense mode relevant to the appreciation and production of sculpture;

(d) the claim that, although other senses may have some role as modes of perceptual access in the appreciation and/or production of sculpture, touch is the *primary* mode;

(e) the claim that the role of touch in appreciation and production is *unique* to sculpture.

Different combinations of these considerations might underlie versions of touch-essentialism of differing strength. Read's position seems to involve claims of each kind, but each might be made on its own. These claims concern matters of fact about which senses are involved in appreciating sculpture independently of the truth of motivational or intentionalist claims.¹³⁰ I will examine these theses one by one, both in view of Read's position, and also as a potential position in its own right.

(a) The claim that there is a *necessary* relationship between touch in the appreciation/production of sculpture and the sculptural, seems to be either false or, even if true, trivial, uninteresting, or unexplanatory. As I have suggested already, any relationship between touch and the production of works which is common to all sculptures, or characteristic of sculpture as an art, will only be of the technical or strategic variety in so far as it is via touching, often through tools, that sculptors model, carve, cast, and so forth¹³¹. Any deeper relationship between touch and production will be specific to individual sculptural works (or groups of sculptural works), and not

¹³⁰ Although teleological grounds of this kind are among the theoretical resources which might be appealed to in order to ground claims (a) through (e). For example, it might be claimed that the reason we need to touch sculptures is because they are intended to be touched.

¹³¹ Touch might be more or less closely involved in different productive processes. Think of the contrast between modelling and carving, for example.

necessary to all sculptures or to sculpture as such. For example, for *this* work (or *these* works), the sculptor has judged various of the properties of the material via touch; for this work the sculptor has, via touch, created properties which are available and accessible only with touch, and so on. Further, any relationship between production through touch of this sort of property of works, and the appreciation of such works and properties through touch, will not be necessary to the sculptural as such, but will be contingent and specific to particular works and groups of work. For example, for *this* work we must touch the materials to appreciate the properties created by touch.

My point here is twofold: firstly, that there is no automatic link between works and properties of works having been created through touch, and these works and properties having to be appreciated through touch. Why would it be that appreciative touch is required *because* of productive touch? Surely this would depend on the particulars of each case, and the story would have to involve something like an appeal to intentions, or similar criteria, a notion which although inappropriate as a sculpture-determining criteria may nevertheless have a role in grounding a link between productive touch and the appropriateness of appreciative touch (whether or not this appropriateness is to be cashed out in terms of necessity). Secondly, irrespective of whether or not there is some productively based reason for properties to be appreciated by touch for some works, it just seems false that appreciation by touch is universal or necessary to sculptural works. I have already outlined several examples of sculpture which cannot be touched but can nevertheless be appreciated [fig.31], and cases of sculpture for which it is not appropriate to touch the work in appreciating it [fig.32]. Even if it were the case that we needed to touch sculpture in order to appreciate sculpture, this seems to be an interesting fact about sculpture which is itself in need of explanation rather than something which might in itself be an explanation of the nature of sculpture as such. After all, if it were true, what we want to know is what it is about sculpture that makes it true, and the touch-necessity thesis has nothing to say about this.

(b) The claim that productive/appreciative touch is by itself *sufficient* for the sculptural, such that it is enough that touch have an appropriate appreciative role for a

thing to be (to that extent, at least) sculptural, also seems false and explanatorily inadequate. First, the technical/strategic involvement of touch in the production of sculptures seems equally to characterise other varieties of artwork which involve the use of physical materials, (such as, for example, painting), and yet we do not consider all such works to be sculptural on that basis. At this point it is worth noting again that the role of touch in production has no clear link with the appropriateness of appreciative touch independently of factors determining the relevance of touch to the appreciation of properties - if the appropriateness of appreciative touch were to be sufficient for sculpturalness, then this won't be just because the work or its properties were produced by touch. Secondly, it does not seem true either that the appropriateness of appreciative touch is sufficient for a work to be sculptural - think of all those non-sculptural works for which touch may have an appropriate appreciative role, most notably painting (consider again works like those of Van Gogh [fig.30] and [fig.21]) for which touch can sometimes play a role in providing us with an appreciation of the work's surface qualities and their relationship to visual effects. Perhaps at this point it might be suggested that not any sort of touching counts here, but only a particular kind of appreciative touching which, if appropriate, is sufficient for a work's being a work of sculpture. Which kind of appreciative touching? It seems that this could only be delineated by specifying certain properties of works which are touched, or the particular relevance to be attached to these properties, or to aspects of our touch-derived perceptual information about them. But if this is the route that is taken explanatory questions are raised once again, and it seems that it is these properties, or the fact that in sculpture they are to be given a particular kind of relevance, which explains the role of touch and which seems to explain something about the nature of sculpture as an art, rather than the role of touch being a good grounds for explaining the relevance of these properties or the nature of sculpture.

(c) The claim that touch is the *only* sense mode relevant to the appreciation and production of sculpture or of the sculptural elements of works also seems to have little to recommend it. If we consider paradigm cases of sculptural works it is clear that, even in cases where touch has an appropriate appreciative role, other senses and the experiences

they provide are also involved in appreciation. There will be very few sculptural works for which touch is the only appropriate mode of appreciative perceptual access. Perhaps it could be claimed instead that although our appreciation of sculptural works may involve the use of other sense modes, it is the appropriateness (within the mix) of touch which marks such works out as sculptural not in the sense of the sufficiency claim in (b) above, but in the sense that touch is the only sense mode appropriate to the appreciation of those aspects of the work which are sculptural, whereas other sense modes might well be appropriate to non-sculptural aspects of the work. But unless aspects of a work were to be determined as sculptural simply in virtue of the appropriateness of appreciative touch (a view already addressed in (a) and (b) above), there needs to be some independent account of *which* aspects of the work are sculptural. But then the real explanatory work would seem to fall upon these criteria rather than upon the role of touch, a role which would be explained by the criteria. Further, when considering paradigm sculptural works, it does not seem true that all and any of those aspects of the work to which appreciative touch is not inappropriate are non-sculptural features. Artworks may indeed involve a mix of sculptural and non-sculptural features, but it does not seem to be the case that the distinction can be made in terms of touch (for the reasons explored above).

Alternatively it might be claimed that whereas it is conceivable that a work of sculpture could be produced for which the *only* sense mode appropriate to appreciation of the work is touch, this is not a conceivable possibility for other kinds of artwork. There does seem to be something in this suggestion, but if the idea of paintings, photographs, movies, or other pictorial works, or of music or architecture, to be appreciated by touch alone seems extremely odd, they may nevertheless not be impossible.¹³² In any case,

¹³² See, for example, the discussions of the possible relationships between touch and pictures in Dominic Lopes, "Art Media and the Sense Modalities: Tactile Pictures", *Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 189, 1997, pp. 425-440; and Robert Hopkins, "Touching Pictures", *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 40, no. 1, Jan. 2000. Whether there could be pictures which can be appreciated, as pictures, via touch alone, and which are designed to be so appreciated, clearly depends upon whether the pictorial is

again, there is an issue of explanatory efficacy and priority. Why wouldn't this just be an interesting fact about sculpture, something which itself seems to need accounting for rather than something which should be taken to explain anything fundamental about the nature of sculpture? *Why* would it be true of sculpture? *What* is it about sculptures which would make this true? Answers to these questions will be more illuminating about the nature of sculpture than the recognition of the peculiarity itself.

(d) It may seem promising to suggest that, although other senses may have some role in the appreciation and/or production of sculpture, touch is the *primary* mode. But in so far as this claim is weaker it is also less capable of pulling the explanatory weight required of an account of the nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art. What exactly would it mean for touch to be *primary* to sculpture? It could perhaps mean something like the latter versions of (c) above. On the other hand it could mean something like "most significant" or "most important" or "least dispensable". It could be held that although other sense modes are involved in appreciating sculpture, the most important, or larger, part of the appreciative process involves touch. Again, for reasons already explored in this chapter, I think such a claim is simply not universally, or even generally true of sculptures or of sculpture as an art, for even in paradigm cases of sculpture the role of touch in appreciation seems at best limited when compared, with, for example, the role of vision. Alternatively, the claim could be that even if it is held that other sense modes are involved, and perhaps involved to a greater extent, touch comes first or has priority in relation to perceptual processes or appreciative processes. There doesn't seem to be any way in which touch could sensibly be held to come sequentially first in these processes, as more often than not sculptures are seen before they are touched, and we have already briefly explored the suggestion that touch has priority in the sense of being more important to appreciation.

A further possibility is that touch is primary in that it gives us direct access to important sculptural properties, whereas the other senses give us only indirect access to

taken to be essentially visual, and if it is essentially visual, upon the relationship in human psychology between tactile forms of perceptual access and visual experience.

these properties (even though they may give direct experience of other properties of sculptural works). It might be suggested, for example, that it is only with touch that we get direct knowledge of a work's status as sculpture whereas sight, for example, leaves us only inferring this from visual evidence. Such a theory, however, assumes some prior conception of the nature of the sculptural, and hence it is this prior conception which would do most of the work in explaining (successfully or unsuccessfully) the nature of sculpture and which would explain why touch has this significance (if indeed it does). For example, the Physical Thesis (which I have already rejected) holds that sculpture is essentially three-dimensional, and it could be because of this that touch provides us with direct access to sculptural properties, whereas vision only gives us an indirect picture of what they look like. But it also assumes a certain view of the nature of touch and of vision according to which touch somehow more directly related than vision to the three-dimensional. Read, as we have seen, holds to a version of this thesis, erroneously holding that vision is essentially two-dimensional (as if there were a projection inside our heads), whereas, in fact, both sense modes give us impressions of the three-dimensional¹³³. If we were to hold that touch has this kind of direct role, then we will need a better account of both the reasons for this and of the nature of the senses and of sense experience. But in any case, such a feature of sculpture requires more, than gives, an explanation of sculpture's nature.

(e) The claim that the role of touch in appreciation and production is *unique* to sculpture might be made even while acknowledging the role of other sense modes in the appreciation of sculptural works and the sculptural elements of artworks. The suggestion here would be more to do with the general configuration of our perceptual faculties, a configuration which affords a particular role to touch (whether or not this role is dominant). But, as we have already seen, there are too many examples of non-sculptural works for which touch may have a role in appreciation. Further, as in (b) above, it seems that the role of touch within the configuration of the sense could only be meaningfully delineated by specifying such things as kinds of properties of works which

¹³³ Sense impressions themselves are not dimensional, but may be impressions of dimensionality

are touched, or the particular relevance to be attached to these properties or to aspects of our touch-derived perceptual information about them. And again, it seems that it is these properties, or the fact that in sculpture they are to be given a particular kind of relevance, which explains the role of touch and which seems to explain something about the nature of sculpture as an art, rather than the role of touch explaining the relevance of these properties or the nature of sculpture.

3.7 Hypothetical touch and imagined touch

It remains possible that although actual touching is not essential, there nevertheless is a role in appreciation for imagined or hypothetical tactile sensations which is explanatory of the nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art. What matters, on this account, is not so much that sculptures are touched in appreciating them, but what they would feel like if touched, or the tactile sensations we imagine in relation to them. The ways in which this might be held to be essential to the nature of sculpture can be made out in ways analogous to the actual touch thesis, and generally analogous responses are appropriate. It is not clear how claims about hypothetical or imaginary touch substantially avoid these problems in the long run, but there are some interesting differences.

There are some advantages to the analogue of (a), above, in so far as it is not claimed that it is necessary to actually touch sculptures in order to appreciate them appropriately. It seems true that when appreciating most sculpture we do in fact either become concerned with what they might feel like if touched, or with imaginary tactile sensations. But is it the case that a work cannot be sculptural if hypothetical or imaginary touch is not appropriate to its appreciation? I don't think so. We can well imagine works which are sculptural but which nevertheless do not involve the appreciator in this kind of activity. Consider, for example, Dan Flavin's work with neon tubes [fig.32]. For these works the role of imagined or hypothetical tactile sensations is at best minimal, and hardly central, extending perhaps at most to a recognition of the glassiness of the glass tubes. Imagined or hypothetical tactile sensations are no more prominent (and indeed less so) than in much painting, and shares with painting a similarly abstracted attention to

surface textural qualities. The role of imaginary and hypothetical touch, I suggest, is not necessary to sculpture as such, but is relative to the particular works and kinds of works concerned, and the kind and extent of imaginary work required of appreciators will vary from case to case.

Similarly, the analogue of (b) has the advantage of not suggesting that actual touch is sufficient for the sculptural. But nor does it seem that imagined or hypothetical touch can be sufficient either, since we often engage in such imaginary work in relation to other kinds of artwork without those works being considered sculptural. For example, in appreciating some paintings we might wonder what the surface of the paint would feel like if touched [fig.21, 37], and we might imagine various tactile sensations concerning the content of the painting, such as Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode* [fig.16] or the texture of cloth and the smoothness of skin in works like Giorgione and Titian's *Venus Sleeping in a Landscape* [fig.35], or, in a different way, in super-realist painting as well as the photographic arts. Perhaps it might be suggested that we are intended or otherwise prescribed to imagine touching sculptures, but not pictures. But again this seems false, for we are often intended to imagine touching a painted or depicted surface, and hence insufficient to determine the sculptural nature of a work.

Clearly, the analogue of (c), the claim that imagined or hypothetical touch is the *only* mode relevant to the appreciation and production of sculpture, is false since we might also often use actual touch, vision, imagined visual sensations, and so on. For similar reasons it cannot be claimed (e) that the role of imagined or hypothetical touch is unique to sculpture, as it is also often involved in the appreciation of other kinds of artwork, even more clearly than is actual touch - consider again and film. Perhaps there is something to be said for the view that the role of imaginary or hypothetical touch has (d) a special, or primary, role in sculpture (as opposed to other arts). But again, this seems something which will depend upon the particular artworks involved, rather than the art form to which they belong. It is quite conceivable that imagined or hypothetical touch has a larger role in some paintings than in some sculptures, or an equal role in painting in general as in sculpture in general.

Perhaps there are indeed some important differences in the way that hypothetical and imaginary touch enters into the appreciation of sculptures, as opposed to other kinds of artwork, and which is characteristic of sculpture as such. But the difference here can only be made out by giving an account of what it is that is done differently, and this requires either some account of the specifically sculptural features of works which enter into these appreciative processes, or of the respects in which the same kinds of properties enter differently into appreciative practices. Once we have given such an account, it is this account which seems to bear the explanatory load, not only with respect to the nature of sculpture, but with respect to the fact that imaginary and hypothetical touch enters into appreciative processes in *this* way in sculpture as opposed to other artworks and art forms.

3.8 Conclusion

Perhaps more significant than the historical presupposition of a “visual prejudice” or the “eminence of the eye”, is the historical presupposition of the pre-eminence afforded to perception in sculptural theory. As I noted at the start of this chapter, there clearly is something about perception which is central to sculpture, and indeed to most art forms. After all, our perceptual faculties provide our only direct experiential access to sculptural works, and our interest in sculpture is largely with regard to its perceivable and perceived qualities. But it does not follow from this that sculpture’s distinctiveness as an art lies in the way it is perceived, either in respect of the general metaphysics of perception or the sense-faculties involved in perceiving sculpture. Such issues really concern a more general problem about perception rather than one specifically concerning sculpture and will not in itself help us distinguish the sculptural from the pictorial since, in this sense of “way of perceiving”, we perceive sculpture in just the same sorts of ways we perceive other things.

A descriptive account of which sense faculties are characteristically involved in the perception of sculpture may produce some statistical variations relative to other art forms. But we do not generally think that the nature of an object (e.g. a solid) is determined in any interesting sense by our mode of perceptual access (e.g. touch), but

that the nature of the object determines facts about our having access to it via this or that sense faculty. We are more likely to make some limited progress by asking what it is about sculptures that makes them perceivable, or appropriately perceived, in these various ways. The problem is, however, that we can perceive a sculptural object in as many ways as we have sense faculties, the content of our experience will vary correspondingly, and this can be accounted for in the same terms as our perception of non-sculptural objects. For example, we can smell the metal, wood, clay or plaster of a sculpture if we get up close to it; we can hear the sound it makes by tapping it or listening to any moving parts it might have; we can taste it with our tongue; feel it with our bodies; see it with our eyes. Answers to descriptive questions of this sort about the psychology of sculptural perception are unlikely to be particularly philosophically enlightening about the particular nature of sculpture. As I suggested in Chapter 2, the failure of the physical thesis means that if the relationship between a particular sense organ or set of sense organs and sculpture, or between the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience and sculpture, is to do any work explaining the nature of sculpture as an art it will require an intentional rather than a causal account of the nature of the relationship.

It is my suggestion that, rather than being located in perception, the differences between sculpture and the other arts which give rise to distinct problems of explanation lie in the way that we appropriately regard as sculpture the sculpture we perceive, and in corresponding differences in the nature of sculpture considered as a medium. The pre-occupation with accounts of perception, and with accounts of the physical differences between sculptural and non-sculptural works, has been such that these issues have been largely ignored or distorted. The more interesting questions are less about the general nature or the particular mechanisms of perception than about how we regard, as sculpture, the sculptures we perceive. As such, these questions ultimately find their place, and can only be adequately answered, in terms of a wider theory of what it is to regard and make sense of sculpture *as* sculpture, something which has largely been missing from the modern history of sculptural theory. Such a theory will need to be consistent with the way we perceive sculpture, but it would be a mistake to think that to

give an account of perception would at the same time be to give an adequate explanation of what it is to regard sculpture as sculpture.

Chapter Four

The Perceptual Thesis II: The Phenomena of Perceptual Experience

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Sculpture and primary perceptual phenomena

4.3 The sculptural sensibility

4.4 A phenomenological theory of sculpture

4.5 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding Chapter I argued that neither general theories of perception, nor an account of the role of particular modes of sensory experience, could provide an adequate account of the nature of sculpture. But perhaps the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture can provide the basis for an account of sculpture's distinctive nature. If no explanatory headway can be made in terms of ideas about the mode or modes of perceptual access appropriate to the appreciation of sculptural works, it is nevertheless possible that the content of our perceptual experience of sculpture is of a distinctive kind which marks sculpture apart from other art forms. Even if we have access to sculptural works via the same kinds of sensory means available and appropriate to other kinds of art, it is nevertheless possible that these same modes of access may provide us with experience of quite different kinds. For example, while it is the case that although we hear both spoken poetry and music, musical and poetic works and the perceptual and perceptually based experiences they afford us seem different to us when we are appreciating works of these kinds.

Perhaps phenomenal differences like this can provide the basis for an explanation of the distinctive nature of sculptures and of sculpture as an art. On such an account that a work afforded appreciators a distinctive kind of experience, or group of experiences, would be either necessary or sufficient (perhaps both, depending on the strength of the

thesis proposed) for its being a sculptural work. In examining the merits of existing theories of this kind I will begin by attending to the views of Read, who makes certain claims about the primary perceptual phenomena of our experience of sculpture, and of Martin, who proposes a phenomenological account of the nature of sculpture.

4.2 Sculpture and primary perceptual phenomena

Read makes a number of claims about the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture and painting which he takes provide part of an explanation of the nature of sculpture as an essentially distinct and independent art. As we saw in Chapter 2, Read subscribes to a version of the physical thesis which involves a conception of space as a practical physical reality, but he also has a conception of space as *constructed* in perception, as a phenomena of perception. It is this latter conception of space which underlies his specific claims about the phenomena of our perception of sculpture. These claims include:

(i) that the content of visual experience is two-dimensional and the content of tactile experience three-dimensional¹³⁴;

(ii) that “sculpture gives preference to tactile sensations as against visual sensations”¹³⁵;

(iii) that “in sculpture space itself as a perceived quantity is of particular concern”¹³⁶; and

(iv) that sculpture as opposed to painting utilises actual rather than illusory space¹³⁷.

Read emphasises the importance of sensational experience of the ponderability and mass of the work in appreciating sculpture, and sees such experience as part and parcel of a

¹³⁴ *The Art of Sculpture*, p.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.

specifically sculptural sensibility which has “nothing in common with visual perception, i.e., with the visual impression of a three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional plane”¹³⁸. There is, he says, “in the full scale of plastic sensibility, a power attaching to ponderability and mass, to the gestated and palpable volume of a solid creation, that cannot be experienced in any other manner, by any other means.”¹³⁹

There are reasons of at least two broad kinds to reject Read’s attempts to account for the distinctive nature of sculptures and of sculpture as an art in terms of the content of our perceptual experience: firstly, some of his claims just seem false; and secondly, other of his claims, even if true, fail to have the significance which Read affords them and, further, leave his approach explanatorily inadequate.

With respect to (i), above, the claim that visual perception inherently gives us a visual impression of a three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional plane, just seems false, as does the suggestion that touch is somehow inherently more three-dimensional in terms of the impressions it gives us. Seeing things involves no projections onto two-dimensional planes - no two-dimensional planes exists in our head or anywhere else within the perceptual process (except in so far as we are looking at a flat surface). Nor, phenomenally, does vision seem this way to us: we do not feel, looking at the world, or at things within it, that our impressions of things are arranged on a two-dimensional plane surface. We could by effort of imagination see it this way if we chose, but this would hardly be a primary characteristic of visual experience, or of primary visual perception. Indeed, the nature of human binocular vision is that it provides us not only with perceptual access to a three-dimensional world, but with a sense of depth. Even when we close one eye we have an impression, although it is true that it might be harder for us to judge distances using only one eye. But the central point is that vision gives us an impression *of* a three-dimensional world, or *of* flat surfaces if that is what we are looking at, but the *impression* is not three-dimensional, or two-dimensional, or dimensional at all. The same is true, of course, of touch. Touch gives us perceptual access to a world of three-dimensional things, and to plane surfaces if that is what we are

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.86

touching, but the impressions themselves are not three-dimensional, or dimensional at all. While touch might give us different information about two or three-dimensional properties of artworks and other things, it is no more intimately connected with the three-dimensional or less intimately connected with the two-dimensional than is vision, either in terms of the way things appear to us, or in the kind of relationship between sense mode and object involved in the perceptual process. One consequence of this is that the distinction between the dimensionality of vision and touch can no longer be used to support Read's claim that our experience of sculpture has nothing in common with visual experience. Indeed, if what I have been saying is correct, then in so far as the distinction between touch and vision cannot be made out in terms of the phenomenal dimensionality of our sense-experience, then even if our experience of sculpture is essentially tactile there would still seem to be something common between vision and our experience of sculpture.

I have in the preceding Chapter dealt to some extent with the issue, (ii) above, of whether or not our experience of sculpture gives preference or priority to tactile over visual sensations, but as a matter of the involvement of sense modes rather than a question about the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience. Even if we now consider it in the latter way, it still seems to be a largely empirical matter about which empirical psychology will have more to say than philosophy. Either our perception of sculpture is such that the tactile element predominates within our phenomenal experience, or it does not. If we consider a wide range of kinds of sculpture and the phenomenal content of our perceptual experiences in appreciating them, it seems that our experience is characterised by a considerable variety of kinds of perceptual content. This variety exists not only in relation to individual works, but also between our experience of different sculptural works, in such a way that there seems little basis to the suggestion that the tactile always (necessarily or contingently) takes precedence within our experience over the visual. There are further reasons for thinking that Read's claim (ii) is not well founded. It would be a consequence of Read's view that no sculpture can be appreciated without tactile experience, but this seems false if we consider the many cases of sculptures which can be experienced, as well as those which ought to be experienced,

without the involvement of touch and hence without the involvement of tactile sensations. There may well be a great deal of imaginary (secondary) work done with tactile sensations in appreciating even those sculptures which we cannot, or ought not, touch, but this is not a feature unique to our experience of sculpture for it is also true of paintings with respect to which we may also both feel something and imagine the way something feels. Perhaps tactile sensations and other perceptual information is involved in our appreciation of sculpture in distinctive kinds of ways, or perhaps different kinds of tactile experience, but this needs to be outlined and explained, and a case made for why and how this somehow accounts for the nature of sculpture. To some extent Read seeks to do this with his discussion of the tactile sensibility. Before I discuss Read's idea of a sculptural "sensibility", I want briefly to address the issue of illusory and actual space.

In Chapter 2 I gave some reasons to think that Read's suggestions (iii) and (iv) above were flawed in so far as they formed part of a Physical Thesis concerning the nature of sculpture. But if we look at this view as a claim about the phenomena of perception rather than the nature of space as such, is it true that, whereas painting gives the *illusion* of space, what matters in sculpture is *actual* quantities of volume and mass and their respective qualities of bulk and ponderability. There are a number of familiar arguments which establish quite successfully that the pictorial is not a matter of illusion¹⁴⁰, that to see a painting or photograph as representing a three-dimensional space is not to have the illusion of seeing a three-dimensional space any more than to see a picture of a moose is to experience the illusion of seeing a moose. In terms of the phenomena of our experience, things just don't seem that way to us. Of course, some kinds of pictures do give us the illusion of space, for example *trompe-l'oeil* paintings [fig.36]. But in this respect, there is no difference essentially between this kind of illusion in paintings and the same kind of effect in sculptures, which may also present us with spatial illusions. Sometimes, looking at a sculpture, the body may seem to be located differently or to have components of a size which differs from its actual physical location or size. In George Rickey's *Two Lines Leaning X* [fig.37], for example, it is hard to

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Richard Wollheim's arguments in *Painting as an Art*, Thames & Hudson: London, 1987, pp. 37-39.

judge from any perspective the length and angle of projection of the twin offset blades, and effect enhanced by their gentle movement in the wind. James Turrell's *Afrum Proto* [fig.38] achieves the illusion of form and material presence with the use of light projected into a gallery corner so that what appears to be a bright cube extending into the room toward the viewer is in fact the opposing angles of the room. Further, there is no reason why such spatial illusions need be confined to vision, for things may also feel to us differently than they are. Consider, for example, the comparative sensations of hot and cold which sometimes means that water with a low temperature feels hot to the touch. Apparent dimensional properties can also be distorted in this way, as can mass and weight. Just think of sculptures, such as Marcel Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* [fig.39], which, when the cage is lifted, turns out to be heavier than expected since the sugar cubes it contains are in fact made of marble. Not all such cases involve illusion in a strict sense, but the point remains that in sculpture our concern is not always or only with the actual.

4.3 The sculptural sensibility

The most promising aspect of Read's account of the nature of sculpture lies, I suggest, in his account of the sensibility required by sculpture. Read develops his idea of a sculptural "sensibility" largely in terms of the distinctive kinds of perceptual content he takes to characterise our experience of sculpture *as* sculpture. He takes this specifically plastic sensibility ("more complex than the specifically visual sensibility") to involve three factors¹⁴¹:

- (i) a sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces;
- (ii) a sensation of volume as denoted by plane surfaces; and
- (iii) a synthetic realisation of the mass and ponderability of the object.

¹⁴¹ *The Art of Sculpture*, p. 71

While he bases these claims on a causal account of perception which depends on the truth of the failed Physical Thesis, the idea that the nature of sculpture might be explained in terms of a distinctive sensibility necessary to its appreciation remains an attractive possibility. Nevertheless, Read's formulation of this sensibility is inadequate to the task. While I believe that an explanation of the nature of sculpture can be found in an account of what is involved in appreciating sculpture, any attempt to ground this account in a *perceptual* sensibility is bound to fail. The key to understanding the nature of sculpture lies not at the largely non-intentional level of the content of our perceptual experience, but at the intentional level of what relevance this content has and what use we make of it in appreciating sculpture. As such, an account of the sculptural "sensibility" must be rooted in practice rather than in the psychology of perception.

Read admits that (i) a sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces is not in itself specifically sculptural¹⁴², so at least in this respect, there is something in common with other arts such as painting or drawing, but he presumably thinks that it is the way this sensation is integrated with the rest that makes the difference. Nevertheless, as it stands, there is no way which this aspect of the content of our perceptual experience of sculpture can be, by itself, sufficient for the sculptural, and Read no doubt sees this. But can it be a necessary feature? In other words, is it the case that for any sculpture, such a sensation must form a part of the content of our perceptual experience of the work? Well, as I argued in the previous chapter, I think it possible that there are sculptures for which the tactile surface quality is no relevant part of the appreciation of the work: sculptures which are intended to be looked at rather than touched, sculptures which cannot be touched, and sculpture for which even imagined surface qualities are of no significant appreciative relevance. Of course, surface qualities very often will be relevant, but as Read concedes, in this respect there is no difference as such with painting.

Perhaps the sensation of the tactile quality of surfaces figures in our experience of sculptures in a way which differs from its role in our experience of paintings? There is of course a causal story to be told according to which, for example, rounder objects feel different from flatter ones, but these seem to be differences of degree rather than kind

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 73

and, besides, hardly seem explanatory of the nature of sculpture, especially considering the failure of the physical thesis. On the other hand, there may also be a story which could be told about the kinds of surface qualities of a work which might function in a certain kind of way only in sculpture, but Read does not tell such a story. In any case, were the idea to be grounded in this way, it would be the grounding features, rather than the phenomenal content of our perceptual experiences, which then carried the explanatory load with respect to the nature of sculpture. The content of our perceptual experiences of sculpture is something about sculpture to be explained, and which can be explained in terms of an account of the nature of sculpture, rather than something which itself provides an explanation of the nature of sculpture.

Read regards (ii) the sensation of volume as denoted by plane surfaces as more specifically sculptural. In illustrating what he means Read quotes the following from Rodin:

Instead of imagining the different parts of a body as surfaces more or less flat, I represented them as projectures of interior volumes. I forced myself to express in each swelling of the torso or of the limbs the efflorescence of a muscle or of a bone which lay deep beneath the skin. And so the truth of my figures, instead of being merely superficial, seems to blossom from within to the outside, like life itself.¹⁴³

Of course, Rodin is talking of the way of thinking he employed in *producing* sculptures rather than simply in appreciating them, and Read's point is that this same kind of perception "from depth to surface or from surface to depth" is a characteristic and distinctive part of our appreciative experience of sculpture. It seems true that in appreciating sculpture we very often do have sensations of this kind, but are they necessary or sufficient for the sculptural? It seems they cannot be necessary, for very often we do not in fact experience sculptures in this way. Whether we do, and whether we ought to, rather depends upon the individual sculptures, or kinds of sculpture,

¹⁴³ Ibid., quoting Rodin *Art*, tr. Mrs Romilly Feden (Boston, 1912), pp. 63-65.

concerned. It may fit well with Rodin's sculptures, such as the twisting and contorted forms of *Burghers of Calais*, or the dramatic realism of *Age of Bronze* [fig.40] which captures both the tensed and relaxed state of muscles so effectively that we cannot help but see them as belonging to limbs or and a torso with an energetic depth. But while it may be a feature central to Rodin's sculptures, and others of their broad kind, it is in no way necessary to sculpture as such. It does not, for example, seem to fit very well the sculptures of Giacometti, such as his *Four Figurines on a Base* [fig.41], since he is trying to achieve a quite different kind of effect from that with which Rodin is concerned. Rather than being the projectures of interior volumes, Giacometti's figures seem instead to be eaten away, to lack interior volumes almost entirely, presenting instead the impression of a distant sighting which never resolves into focus on a solid form. The appropriateness of seeing from depth to surface, or from surface to depth, must depend on the particular sculptures concerned.

Nor, I believe, can such a sensation be sufficient for the sculptural. Read is trying to show a way in which the way we experience materials in appreciating sculpture differs from the way in which we experience them in other arts, such as painting. Read's idea is that although surface qualities may be aesthetically important in painting as in sculpture, the illusionary nature of the space of a painting means that we cannot be concerned with seeing planar surfaces as denoting volumes in the same way as we can in sculpture where volumes are real.¹⁴⁴ But there *are* works of other kinds an appreciation of which might involve similar experiences or ways of perceiving, and these include many paintings. It is not always simply our experience of the surface qualities of the paint that counts in our appreciation of painting. For one thing, a two-dimensional surface only appears to us the way it does because, among other things, of the way in which paint has been applied to its surface. It is also the case that the texture of the paint may make a contribution to the representational content of the picture in so far as the storminess of the sea or the clarity of the sky represented is counterfactually dependent upon the paint having been applied with those very three-dimensional characteristics.

¹⁴⁴ I argued earlier in the Chapter against making a distinction between painting and sculpture in terms of the actual/illusionary space distinction.

Consider again the works of Van Gogh [fig.30] and Auerbach [fig.21], or the role of surface texture in works like Rembrandt's *Polish Rider* [fig.42], where the application and carving of paint with a palette knife contributes so strongly to the intensity of the representation. Seeing a painting may involve seeing from depth to surface or to surface from depth to the extent that a grasp or feeling of the thickness of the paint is integral to our experience of the painting, rather than simply of its contribution to the appearance of the surface considered as a projection onto a completely flat two-dimensional plane. Often in painting what counts is not treating it as if it were a flat two-dimensional surface - the appropriateness of this will rather depend on the particular painting or kind of painting concerned - but seeing its three-dimensional surface qualities as having volume. If there is some difference in the ways in which three-dimensional properties enter into sculpture and into our perceptual experience of sculpture, then this needs to be delineated and explained. As it stands, however, there seems to be no real difference in kind between painting and sculpture in *phenomenal* terms here. Even if there were such a difference of kind, what would explain it? Not different physical natures, and not differences in our perceptual apparatus. Whatever did explain such a difference, were there one, would have more potential as an explanation of the nature of sculpture than simply noting this phenomenal feature of our appreciative experience.

Read explains (iii) "a synthetic realisation of the mass and ponderability of the object", in terms of the sensation of "palpability". According to Read this kind of sensation is comparatively easy to convey in the case of small objects – "We feel the hard roundness of the ping-pong ball and may even get an aesthetic satisfaction from that sensation. We react aesthetically to the feel of the handle of a stick and to many other solid objects that we habitually use." – but is "felt by the sculptor toward his carving, *whatever its size*"¹⁴⁵. Read illustrates what he means with a quote from Henry Moore, in which he says that the sculptor:

gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head – he thinks of it, whatever its size, as if he were holding it completely enclosed in the hollow of his hand. He

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

mentally visualizes a complete form *from all round itself*; he knows while he looks at one side what the other side is like; he identifies himself with its centre of gravity, its mass, its weight; he realizes its volume, as the space that the shape displaces in the air.¹⁴⁶ [fig.43]

The precise nature of this “apprehension” remains rather curious and obscure. While it makes sense to think of us having sensations of this kind of small objects, it doesn’t make sense that we *actually* have them of ones larger than we can hold, or lift. For example, while we may well imagine what such experiences of would be like if we could somehow grasp works like Richard Serra’s *Tilted Arc* [fig.44], made of a vast and immensely heavy curve of plate steel, we cannot actually do so. Indeed, it seems quite clear that what Moore has in mind is an imaginative process of visualisation. But in so far as such sensations are imagined rather than actual, the idea doesn’t fit well with Read’s claims about the importance of direct touch, and yet, curiously, Read does not take Moore’s explicit reference to visualisation to exemplify the visual prejudice.

Further, any significant differences are eroded with arts, such as painting, for which it is also true that we may imagine what surfaces or represented objects would feel like if touched. Read might respond that although we may imagine what *represented* objects would feel like in pictures, what we imagine in the case of sculptures is what the *material* of the sculpture would feel like, which would not be relevant to appreciating a photograph (who cares how heavy the paper is?). There seems to be something in this, but the differences are overstated. Firstly, as I noted in the previous chapter, it is sometimes not the actual feel of the material of the sculpture that is relevant for us but rather the feeling we are intended to imagine it to have. But although there are many sculptural works for which Moore’s idea of holding seems inappropriate, it is also true that there are works for which this form of imagined experience seems inappropriate even if some form tactile imagining might have a place. Take for example Caro’s *Early One Morning* [fig.25], which is principally concerned with an arrangement of abstract line and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., quoting from Henry Moore, “Notes on Sculpture”, and *Drawings* (2nd ed., New York, in Herbert Read, *Henry Moore: Sculpture* 1946, p.xl.

form which is antithetical to the metaphor of the enclosed hollow of a hand. Still further removed from this notion are works like Michael Heizer's *Double Negative* [fig.45], constructed entirely by the removal of mass rather than the creation of anything of 'graspable' form, or Robert Smithson's rubble construction on the shore of the Great Salt Lake, *Spiral Jetty* [fig.46].

Nor do works like Lothar Baumgarten's *Terra Incognita* [fig.47] fit well with Read's use of Moore's statement. There is no perceivable centre in this work. Instead, Baumgarten presents us with a situation of disarray, the aftermath of the cultural and environmental destruction of the Amazon and its original peoples. The discarded machete sticking upright from one of the persil wood splinters indicates the source of the despoilation. Each disorderly pile of wood is perhaps an abandoned village, linked by the wandering thread of electrical cable along paths which once linked the settlements but which became the conduits for progress, an earlier wave of 'civilisation bringing the plates, a later wave the wonder of electrical lighting when now there is no longer anything to illuminate. Similarly, for works such as Hans Haacke's *Condensation Cube* [fig.48]), considerations of material weight, actual or apparent, and the identification of oneself with the work's centre of gravity, seem scarcely relevant. More conventionally sculptural than either Heizer's, Smithson's, or Baumgarten's works, the closed system in which the process of condensation occurs mirrors the social structures and institutions within which we ourselves make our lives. The form and glass construction of Haacke's *Condensation Cube* echoes minimalism, but the movement and change inherent in the process of condensation, and the reactivity of the system to external factors (such as temperature, dislocates this association by introducing the dynamic contrast between the transparent rigid glass and the also transparent, but flowing, water. There is nothing here, in the construction or the content of this work, to suit Moore's metaphor.

A second consideration is that sometimes in appreciating non-sculptural works we are, at least in respect of some properties, concerned with either the actual or the imagined feel of the materials in ways which may be more or less related to Moore's idea of visualisation - think again of the weightiness of Auerbach's or Van Gogh's paint. Whether or not such experiences are part of appreciating a sculpture really depends upon

the work concerned, and the same is true of the role of this kind of experience in our appreciation of other kinds of artwork. It cannot be either necessary or definitive of the sculptural, nor sufficient. There might be some statistical variations in kinds of experience of this kind in relation to the sculpture/painting distinction, but in so far as this is the case it is something to be explained rather than something which itself explains the nature of sculpture.

4.4 A phenomenological theory of sculpture

The attempt to give an account of sculpture's distinctiveness as an art in terms of the phenomena of perceptual experience is perhaps best exemplified by Martin's theory. I noted earlier that Martin thinks that sculptural theory has been dominated by set of assumptions which he calls the "eminence of the eye". Whereas Read saw this kind of "prejudice" as being at the expense of an understanding of the role of touch in sculptural appreciation, Martin uses a phenomenology of perception derived from Merleau-Ponty to argue that it lies elsewhere. I have already made some general comments about this kind of approach, but Martin also appeals to a Heideggerian philosophical phenomenology in making his claims about the "origin" or "essence" of sculpture (where we "allow the work to be a phenomenon, to unfold into its fullness, its thingliness, or individuality"¹⁴⁷), claims which although resting upon general claims about the phenomena of perception can be more or less cleanly divorced from such a theory without threatening what appears to be his central thesis.

Against what he calls the subject/object model of perception which goes along with a division (such as the one made by Read) between touch and sight, and between the worlds of touch and sight, Martin opposes a view of human perception derived largely from Merleau-Ponty. According to Martin,

Merleau-Ponty, more than anyone else, has challenged the eminence of the eye with penetrating analyses. He insists on sight as the feeling of distance, on the intimate synthesis of sight and touch, that "sight-space" and "touch-space" are of

¹⁴⁷ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p. 33

the same world, and that our bodies with all their senses are immersed in that world.¹⁴⁸

Martin quotes the following passage from Merleau-Ponty's essay "Eye and Mind":

My body simultaneously sees and is seen. It touches itself touching. It feels itself moving through the inherence of sensing in the sensed. Because it moves itself it sees, it holds things in a circle around itself.¹⁴⁹

and further:

The senses lead over into one another by opening themselves up to the structures of the thing. One sees the rigidity and fragility of the glass when it is broken with a crystal sound, this sound is carried by the visible glass. ... The form of objects is not their geometrical contour: It ... speaks to all our senses at the same time as to sight. ... In the swaying of a branch from which a bird has just flown, one reads its flexibility or its elasticity, and it is in this way that a branch of an apple tree and one of a birch tree are immediately distinguished.¹⁵⁰

Martin holds that the "if Merleau-Ponty's description of perception is accurate, and I believe it is, then surely a sculpture, especially in the round, illustrates the point far more convincingly than a painting, even the most powerful by Cézanne".¹⁵¹ According to Martin, sculpture reveals our physical "withness" with things, our "being -with", much

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 26

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 26-27. Martin's quote abridges the original text, which can be found in "Eye and Mind" (1960), trans. Carleton Dallery, in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M Edie, Northwestern University Press, 1964, pp. 162-163.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 27. Martin provides no specific reference to the source of this quote from Merleau-Ponty.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.28

more vividly than painting, and this suggests that sculpture is autonomous.”¹⁵² The irony here, of course, is that when Merleau-Ponty does relate his phenomenology of perception explicitly to art, he does so primarily in relation to painting, and in particular to the painting of Cézanne, such as his *Mont Sainte Victoire* [fig.49].¹⁵³ Further, while it is true that Merleau-Ponty denies vision primacy in so far as primacy implies its operation on a Cartesian model and in isolation from integrated bodily and perceptual experience, rather than as part of a unity of sensory experience, his discussion of perception in relation to art nevertheless primarily concerns the role and nature of vision in our perceptual experience of painting. Martin recognises this, and sees in it a devaluation of sculpture by Merleau-Ponty.¹⁵⁴

It is true that Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of art is largely illustrative his view of perception.¹⁵⁵ But, while it may be that Merleau-Ponty could have better illustrated his points if he had discussed sculptures rather than painting, it is nevertheless surely the case that, in so far as it is intended to be a general account of perception, his phenomenology ought to be equally consistent with and explanatory of the phenomena of our perception of painting as of sculpture. Indeed, this perhaps somewhat undermines Martin’s claim that sculpture should somehow “best” illustrate Merleau-Ponty’s views. But whatever the case may be, that kind of putative special relationship between sculpture and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is one in which sculpture demonstrates the theory, rather than one in which the theory of perception itself is somehow decisive in showing something special about the nature sculpture. The latter is something which I argued earlier we shouldn’t expect from a general theory of perception. That Merleau-Ponty’s views has no decisiveness of *this* kind is perhaps well illustrated by the fact that Martin ascribes to sculpture as uniquely essential phenomenal experience of the same general

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁵³ See, for example, Merleau-Ponty’s “Eye and Mind”; and his *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1986.

¹⁵⁴ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p.27.

¹⁵⁵ See, in particular, his “Eye and Mind”. Merleau-Ponty sees much painting, and art in general, as exploring or expressing various aspects of the nature of our relationship to the world in perception.

kind as Merleau-Ponty attributes to our experience of painting, and to vision in general, as we would expect given the unity of sensory experience to which he holds.

Martin seems to recognise that subscribing to Merleau-Ponty's theory of the unity of perception implies that sense perception in general shares certain characteristics. On the other hand, he thinks there are important differences in our perception of sculpture and painting, and asks us to compare typical cases:

It seems obvious, at least in a preliminary way, that with most sculptures there is a much stronger sense of their carnal presence than in the case of most paintings, of sight-space and touch-space as being of the same world, of our bodies immersed in that world.¹⁵⁶

Martin claims that "the autonomy of sculpture follows from the distinctive way sculpture manifests itself in our perceptions, and this distinctiveness is determined especially by the most distinctive feature of sculpture: its impact into the surrounding space, its "activation of its surrounding space - its enlivened space or "impacting between"."¹⁵⁷ The presence of this feature makes a work "sculptural" as distinguished from "pictorial".¹⁵⁸ According to Martin "the perceptual dynamics of sculpture and painting are significantly different and, therefore, sculpture and painting are autonomous arts."¹⁵⁹

Martin spends little time explicitly developing the notions of "impacting between", "enlivened space", and "witness-with-things", but the following passages help give us some idea of what he means by the former two:

¹⁵⁶ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p.27-28

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13

unlike a painting the space around a sculpture, although not part of its material body, is still an essential part of the perceptible structure of that sculpture.¹⁶⁰

the perceptual forces in that surrounding space visually appear as impacting outward from the material body, giving to that space a thickness that is missing from the space in front of a painting.¹⁶¹

Unlike our perception of painting, we invariably perceive the forces of a sculpture as if they were pressing on our bodies.¹⁶²

When we see the material body of a sculpture and its enlivened space, we see them as directly continuous with our space. Thus our tactile mental associations (that bronze, for example, would feel smooth) are reinforced by all the physical tactile sensations of environment that our perceptual systems are experiencing.¹⁶³

With the space around a sculpture, on the other hand, we are aware of its transmission of impacting forces into real space, even though that space is not actually solid but only a conductor, and even though we do not touch the material body of the sculpture that is the base for the projection of these forces. The visual projections of a sculpture ... are felt as having force behind them because they are grounded in a three-dimensionality with significant mass that is not concealed and because the impacted space is perceived as part of and continuous with real space. Thus we perceive the between of sculpture much more tactually than the between of painting.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 71-72.

As I suggest above, and in Chapter 3, we can assess Martin's claims about the distinctive *phenomena* of our perception of sculpture independently from issues concerning the veracity of Merleau-Ponty's *phenomenology* of perception. Are Martin's claims about the phenomenal content of our perception of sculpture true? Are they necessary or sufficient conditions for the sculptural? Are they in any case capable of fulfilling the kind of explanatory role Martin affords to them? On the face of it (and bearing in mind the unity Merleau-Ponty ascribes to perceptual experience), Martin's position can seem like an appeal to the statistical distribution of kinds, or intensities, of perceptual experiences. Even if there were such differences in distribution it is not clear how this in itself is supposed to justify making an essential distinction between sculpture and painting in terms of the phenomena of perception. But it is clear that Martin does want to make such a move. Maybe it is the case that such features of perceptual experience are more common to sculpture than to painting, but I don't think it is true that there is a necessary or hard and fast relationship between kinds of phenomena and kinds of artwork. I think that there are general differences, but that these are associative and depend upon facts concerning the contingent nature of the collection of all existing paintings and sculptures rather than a reflection of some essential fact about the art forms which determines both their distinctiveness and the membership of works to kinds.

The phenomenon of "impacting-between", is not unique to sculpture, and hence neither necessary nor sufficient for a work's status as sculptural, albeit that there may be generalisations we can make about the distribution of these experiences between the arts with respect to the degree or strength of the effect. Such perceptual phenomena are common to other art forms, such as architecture, theatre, and dance, to mention the most obvious cases, as well as film and photography, most obviously the kind of illusions we might experience in viewing 3-D photographs or movies. I think Martin is wrong to say that impacting between never occurs in paintings, that the forces of the work are always confined within the borders of the frame, that the three-dimensional qualities of painting are irrelevant, and that whereas sculptures are continuous with our space paintings are discontinuous such that our perceptual systems as a whole is involved in sculptures in a way which it is not in paintings. *We do* seem to get the same kinds of things happening

in paintings with respect to “impacting between”, most obviously in *trompe-l’oeil*, and works like Masaccio’s *Holy Trinity with the Virgin, Saint John, and Two Donors* [fig.50], which creates an apparent space which imposes itself upon us in perception, not so much a space into which *we* might move, as one inhabited in real presence by holy figures. Indeed some of the large abstract colour-field paintings, like Barnett Newman’s *Who’s Afraid of Red, Yellow, Blue III* [fig.51], seem to impose themselves upon us physically in virtue of both the size and the consistency of their coloured expanse. As Martin himself admits, many paintings, at least with respect to colour, seem to project out into the space between us and the work, citing Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. M.)* [fig.52] as an example.¹⁶⁵ This is true not only of colour, but also of lines of force and other aspects of both representational and non-representational paintings. Given his admission on this point, it is curious why he should then say that although such projections “fill” space in painting they do not “energize” it¹⁶⁶. It seems to me that the way in which such projections fill space in painting often is accompanied by an impression of energy or materiality, even if this “filling” and this “energising” is representational or imaginary or apparent rather than actual. In any case, it is not clear how the “filling” or “energising” in sculpture can be any more real in sculpture, since materially the space between is equally empty. Such effects are necessarily a matter of the effects a work has on us and how things seem to us. With regard to this sort of phenomena, I think painting is no different from sculpture as a matter of kind. There might be a difference in degree between different kinds of uses of materials associated with painting and sculpture with respect to the forces and effects achievable, but this is an association which is statistical and contingently associative rather than essential as either a necessary or sufficient feature. There are, after all, some sculptural works which do not seem to give rise to this kind of perceptual content. Think for example of some of the very frontal works by Giacometti which often also seem to fall away from space rather than energise it, as in his *Standing Women* [fig.15].

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.71.

Perhaps it might be suggested at this point that we recall Martin's point that in sculpture, as opposed to painting, our visual sensations of "impacting-between" and of the physical nature of the work, are reinforced by our other senses in virtue of sculpture's location in a space continuous with our own. The space of painting fails to provide such reinforcement, on this view, because it is discontinuous with our own. But while it might be the case that the space of sculptural works is often continuous with our own space, in so far as there is no represented space involved in abstract works, this is not always so, for apparent non-actual space is often important in sculptural works as much as in painting. Consider, for example, Giacometti's *Four Figures on a Stand* [fig.41] which represents figures as seen across an 'unbridgeable' distance. Further, sometimes the space of the painting is also our space - think for example of abstract paintings where there is no space represented or referred to other than our own. Besides, the space of the work and our space are things which may both be relevant in a variety of ways in both painting and sculpture. Sometimes it is the actual spatial qualities of the work which are relevant to appreciation, and sometimes the represented or apparent spatial qualities. I don't think that there is any sense in which the space, or world, of the work is any more or less essentially continuous with our space in the case of sculpture than in the case of painting. After all, in so far as in both arts a space is represented (e.g. a fictional location, or Venice, Paraguay, wherever), it is not actually located in our space at all, and both art forms utilise the real spatial characteristics of the materials employed in order to carry out the representation. And the material of both paintings and sculptures are alike located in the same spatial continuum occupied by their producers and appreciators. The fact that walking around a sculpture generally makes more appreciative sense than walking around a painting does not reflect any essential difference in terms of the relationship between our space and the space of the work, but rather a general difference in the kind of configurations of materials which are of interest to us as appreciators given the artistic functioning of the work. In sculptures representation tends to be in the round, so that if we go to the back of the figure of Adam we see the back of Adam represented, whereas in painting artists in general, confine their representational activities to one side of the material.

In her book *Feeling and Form*, Susanne K. Langer outlines a view of the relationship of sculpture to space which is in many ways similar to Martin's, but without the underlying phenomenological motivation. Unlike Read and Martin, Langer recognises that there is no distinction of kind to be made between painting and sculpture in terms of actual versus illusionary space. Langer is concerned with what she calls "virtual space" in both painting and sculpture, and holds that sculpture is characterised by a distinctive variety of virtual space. Virtual space is a feature of the way in which our experience of space is structured or organised in our experience of the work, something which on her account is largely visually derived in both sculpture and painting. According to Langer "a piece of sculpture is a center of three-dimensional space. It is a virtual kinetic volume, which dominates the surrounding space, and this environment derives all proportions and relations from it, as the actual environment does from oneself."¹⁶⁷ But while Langer identifies an interesting and important feature of the aesthetics of many sculptural works, this sort of effect does not seem to be either universally or uniquely characteristic of sculptural works. Space is not structured in this kind of way in our experience of many sculptural works (think of statuary high up on buildings, or of much of the work of Giacometti), and some other kinds of artwork are characterised by something very similar if not the same (think of *trompe-l'oeil* for example, which by illusion structure space for us in just this kind of way until we discover their true nature, or of some of the great religious cathedral paintings such as Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* [fig.50] which are so powerful precisely because of the way in which they become a kinetic centre around which our experience of the space of the church is, at least partially, structured).

Even if it were the case that there are significant and distinctive phenomenal differences in our perception of sculpture and other arts such as painting, Martin, and proponents of similar approaches to the philosophy of sculpture, will have to give an account of how and why it is the case that these phenomenal differences exist. Further, they must establish that this phenomenal difference itself should be considered the key

¹⁶⁷ *Feeling and Form*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1959, pp. 91.

feature of sculpture which marks it out as a distinctive, or autonomous art form.¹⁶⁸ But if such a basis for the phenomena could be found, it would seem more logical to treat that as the appropriate ground for an explanation, not only of the phenomena, but of the nature of sculptural works as *sculptural* works and of sculpture as an art. But in the absence of such a ground, the phenomena thesis is left adrift.

If instead a claim is made about differences of degree in the phenomena of perception between painting and other art forms, such a difference would itself require explanation, and as such cannot itself provide necessary and/or sufficient essential criteria for the sculptural of a non-arbitrary or ad hoc kind. Wherever else the explanation for differences in perceptual phenomena between sculpture and other kinds of artwork lies, and whether such differences are absolute (as I deny) or a relative matter of degree (as seems possibly true on a contingent, statistical level), then it is *there*, rather than in the phenomena themselves, that the explanatory load is best placed with respect to the question of the nature of sculpture. I think that although the phenomenal content of our experience of sculptural works plays an important role within our appreciation of sculpture, it is something about sculpture that requires explanation in terms of an account of what is involved in appreciating sculpture rather than something which itself provides an explanation of the nature of sculpture or our appreciation of it.

¹⁶⁸ One approach would be to ground the phenomenal differences in differences in the physical nature of the material bodies supporting the work, but as I have already argued, the physical thesis fails. Martin, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, links causally the differences between the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture and of painting and differences in the physicality of the material bodies of artworks. I argued in Chapter 2 that Martin's version of the physical account either fails for the same reasons as the basic physical thesis or collapses into a phenomenological account. The collapse into a phenomenal account is of no help to Martin here, since it is precisely in view of problems with such an account that an appeal to the physical might be made. Further, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, the way Martin draws a link between the physical characteristics of art objects and the phenomena they give rise to in our perception of them undermines rather than supports a phenomenological explanation of the differences between sculpture and painting. No solid ground is provided by a circle of this kind.

On witness-with-things Martin quotes Husserl: “In every experience of spatial objects the body, as the perceptual organ of the experiencing subject, is co-perceived.”¹⁶⁹ Martin’s use of Husserl’s conception of co-perception seems to add little to Merleau-Ponty’s, and just as Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology adds no real additional weight to Martin’s position, nor does a Husserlian conception of sense perception seem decisive in this regard. A clear first point, with respect to the Husserlian view of perception, of course, is that co-perception of the body is taken by Husserl to be a feature of all sensory experience of spatial objects, presumably including paintings. This begs the question (as does the same fact about Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the unity of perception), of why witness-with-things should be the essential motivation or subject-matter of sculpture given that it is a feature of our perception of sense-perception in general and hence of all varieties of artwork which involve perceptual experience? Nor is there anything in the general conception of witness-with-things to support Martin’s claim that our experience of sculpture involves a stronger co-perception of the body than does our experience of painting. Although this claim could be true, it is something to be supported by the evidence, and is a claim about the phenomena of perception which can be assessed without reference to the details of any phenomenological account of the nature of perception, Husserlian or other. Martin continues:

In the aesthetic experience of anything, the perceived and the perceiver lose their separate static identities and emerge as polarities within the process of perception. ... the aesthetic experience of sculpture – more than any other thing – involves an emergence of physical presencing that is unique. The aesthetic experience of sculpture brings out our being with things physically in an exceptionally vivid way. This special kind of emergence is possible because on the most fundamental level we are always a unity with things, beings-in-the-world.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p. 53

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52. Martin makes a distinction between primary perception - what is given to us prior to conceptualisation or abstraction, the presencing of the thing to us in our perceptions; and secondary perception - our constructions of perceptual experience. In this passage, Martin is referring to primary

Martin claims that:

the distinctive, underlying, and all-pervasive subject matter of sculpture is our togetherness or physical “withness” with things, and that the origin of sculpture consequently is located in the drive to reveal that mode of existence with a clarity that is usually lacking in everyday experience, for in everyday experience our unity with things usually is either confused or forgotten¹⁷¹.

He holds that this instinctual need is the Heideggerian “origin” of sculpture. Heidegger develops his notion of the origin or essence of art works in his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art”, where he says that “origin ... means that from which and by which something is what it is and as it is. What something is, as it is, we call its essence. The origin of something is the source of its essence”¹⁷². According to Heidegger the essence of the art work lies essentially in its opening up, or revealing, of the truth of beings, its setting up of a world and its setting forth the earth: “in the art work, the truth of beings has set itself to work. Art is the truth setting itself to work”¹⁷³. Martin also refers to this as the “motivation” of sculpture: the forces which impel us to create, cherish, and preserve sculpture¹⁷⁴. Employing Heidegger’s terminology, Martin claims that the:

perception, and he sees the aesthetic experience as involving a sustained perception that is primary in orientation (p.60). Usually, of course, and this is also true of the aesthetic experience, we have primary and secondary perceptions all at once, but we can approach if not realise pure primary perception if we adopt a certain stance to our own perceptions - i.e. try to avoid secondary constructions, or then to build explicitly upon them. (pp. 52-53).

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 14

¹⁷² *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1977, pp.149.

¹⁷³ Ibid. p.166-178

¹⁷⁴ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p. 12

origin of sculpture – the essential motivation that has moved human beings most basically to create and treasure sculpture – lies in the instinctual and essential need it satisfies: vivifying and clarifying our physical withness with things. That is the ultimate cause of the existence of sculpture. In turn, sculpture is an autonomous art because sculpture, by means of its special ways of enlivening space, reveals with special and informing vividness the spatial withness basic to being-in-the-world, to being the kind of beings we are.¹⁷⁵

Because sculpture comes forth into real space without the distancing that painting and most of the other arts as well as most practical and theoretical work require, sculpture returns us to our anchorage in our world, our primordial community with things – that which holds everywhere, for everybody, at all times. No other art rivals sculpture in bringing us into direct contact with things.¹⁷⁶

Sculpture is not just another thing among other things but a thing that reveals the emergence of other things. Sculpture presents things in a way which breaks up the customary perception, returns us to things as they unfold anew, to the primitive roots of perception Sculpture more than any other art reveals the primal foundations of our perceptual experience: that is why sculpture is an autonomous art.¹⁷⁷

Martin does little himself to clarify the substance of Heidegger's view of art and of art works, or to demonstrate explicitly how it connects with his own central claims. Heidegger holds the origin of the work of art is art, and that the essence of art is the letting happen of truth, the unconcealing of the Being of beings¹⁷⁸, and it is difficult to see how this view, given its concern with art works and art as such rather than with

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 135

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 77

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 80

¹⁷⁸ *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, p.184-187

particular categories of art or art work, provides decisive support for Martin's claim that the "need to bring forth our witness with things as thingly" is uniquely the origin or motivation of sculpture. Heidegger does not himself seek to associate the revelation of the truth of particular kinds of beings with particular varieties of artwork as Martin does in claiming that the revealing of one aspect of the truth of one kind of being - i.e. bringing forth the thingly nature of our witness with things - is achieved peculiarly by sculpture. Indeed, besides the fact that what Heidegger seems to be concerned with in discussing the occurrence of truth in art works is the way in which, in revealing the being of the portrayed thing - e.g. the peasant's shoes - they "unconceal" beings as a whole (Being).¹⁷⁹ Further, Heidegger spends considerable space in his essay discussing Van Gogh's pictures of peasants' shoes [fig.53], seeking to show how this painting reveals the thingly nature of the shoes, and how this thingly nature is bound up with the world of the peasant,¹⁸⁰ so it seems that Heidegger might in any case hold that painting can and does do just the kind of thing Martin sees as uniquely essential to sculpture. There seems little reason why this should be the unique origin of sculpture, and why painting cannot also bring forth this feature of our being. Martin's assignment of the origin of sculpture is grounded on his phenomenal and physical claims, which, as such, can be seen to be prior to his Heideggerian claims. I have already looked at his physical claims, and at some of his perceptual and phenomenal claims, and I think that whatever one's views of the merits of Heideggerian underpinnings or conclusions of Martin's thesis, some serious shortcomings of such a view can still be seen in his claim that the phenomena of "impacting between" and the "motivation" of "witness-with-things" are the distinctive and defining essential characteristic of sculpture.

With respect to the issue of the essential motivation of sculpture, it is not clear whether Martin means that "witness-with-things" is the essential motivation of the *art* of sculpture, or of each and every *work* of sculpture. It seems likely that Martin holds both views, for although he only develops his views about "subject-matter" in relation to *artworks*, he holds this essential motivation to be the distinctive feature of sculpture

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.177-178.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p.162-164.

which makes it an autonomous *art*. Even if it is the case that sculpture is a particularly effective way of realising certain artistic objectives, or of expressing and perhaps satisfying some set of values or human needs, it is difficult to see how or why it follows from this that sculpture as an art form is essentially motivated by needs or objectives, or that it is in some sense about them. Other art forms, although perhaps not so *effective* in this regard, might also be equally *motivated* by such considerations, both in production and appreciation. Why think that sculpture as an art form is motivated by, or is in some way about, some single essential value or human need? Sculpture, and other art forms, might be motivated by a plurality of other kinds of concern, none of which might be essential.

Indeed, I think it makes sense to question in what sense art *forms* can really be motivated, or about something. Motivation and aboutness seem rather to be features of *artists* and *appreciators*, or of *artworks*. I suppose it could be claimed that an art tradition is motivated in something like the way we might say for example, that science as a tradition of enquiry is motivated by our desire to form reliable beliefs about the natural world. But even in this kind of parallel case it doesn't seem true that this motivation is essential to or distinctive of science as a practice or tradition, for it might equally be motivated by many contingent and non-essential ends. It seems more accurate to say that particular scientists, or scientists in general, are or were motivated in their participation in this practice by particular desires or ends, but even so it would seem very tenuous indeed to suggest that such a motivation were somehow essential to science as such.

Martin's claim regarding artworks that "every work of art has a subject-matter", and that in the case of sculpture this subject matter is "withness with things", should be rejected for reasons of this kind. According to Martin, the subject matter of an artwork is "what the work is about, something of basic value, an objective of some vital human interest"¹⁸¹, and is distinct from both the form and the content of a work. Martin makes the distinction between content and subject matter in the following terms:

¹⁸¹ *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, p. 121

the subject matter is never given directly in the work of art, for the subject matter has been transformed by the form. Whereas the subject matter is a value prior to artistic interpretation, the content is the significantly interpreted subject matter as revealed by the form¹⁸².

What makes such a claim plausible? Martin thinks that it is a fact, “attested to by the history of art and an overwhelming consensus in the critical literature and statements by artists, as well as some consensus in aesthetics”¹⁸³, that “every work is about some basic value”.¹⁸⁴ Martin lists in support of this Longinus, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Schopenhauer, Schleiermacher, James, Dewey, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty¹⁸⁵, but provides no actual argument for the thesis. In fact, on the face of it, there seems little reason to suppose that every artwork must have a subject matter in Martin’s sense. While it makes sense to think that many but the most abstract artworks will have what might be called a content, I can’t see any good reason to assume that all works must be *about* something *independently* of their content or in a non-contentful way. What, for that matter, is it to have contentless aboutness?

The kind of aboutness to which Martin appeals here is quite vague, and I see no reason to think that it makes any less sense to think of paintings, or photographs, or theatre, or architecture, or music, as also being about “withness-with-things”. Maybe sculpture is an especially good vehicle for this kind of aboutness, or may be the qualities of sculptural media are such that people motivated by certain values may be motivated towards sculpture as a means of expression. But, as I suggested above, this kind of association, even were it to exist, does not carry with it any implication that it is the necessary or essential feature which makes a work sculptural. If there is something about particular motivations such that these are more closely or more often associated with sculptural works, then this is something to be explained about sculpture rather than

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 122

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.122 -

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.122

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.244, in note to his reference mark 8 on p.122

something which really explains sculpture as an art or what makes individual or collected artworks sculptural. To use my analogy with science again, to point out that there is some kind of association between the motivations of individual scientists or of their particular research and their participation in scientific practices does not mean either that their research into particle physics is somehow about, or has as its subject matter the desire or need to find out about and have reliable beliefs about, the natural world. Nor, more importantly, does it mean that science is science, and individual participations in scientific practice are scientific, in virtue of their being so motivated, or about, such a subject matter. Rather, what would be interesting is an account of what it is about science that makes it appropriate to such desires, needs, values, or motivations.

Nor is it clear whether Martin's view is (a) that withness-with-things is the essential feature of the art form *in virtue of* withness-with-things being essential to all or each and every work of sculpture; or (b), conversely, that withness with things is essential to every work of sculpture in virtue of being a member of the set of works which belong to the art form sculpture to which withness with things is essential. I have already, in Chapter 1, made some remarks about the relationship between claims about the nature of artworks and claims about the nature of art *forms* which apply here again to Martin's thesis. If the claim is that every work of sculpture has withness-with-things as its essential subject matter because it is a work of that art form (sculpture) which has as its essential subject matter withness-with-things, then there are at least two things which need to be pointed out. Firstly, it is not clear why there should be such an entailment from withness with things being essential to the art form to its being essential to the works of that art form. Secondly, membership of the class of works which belong to the sculptural art form would have to be determined in virtue of some property other than the work having as its subject-matter withness-with-things, in which case it would be nice to know which property, and why it isn't *that* property, rather than withness-with-things, that explains a work's being sculptural. If the claim had simply been that a work is sculptural in so far as it belongs to an art form to which withness with things is essential, then this not only seems false (as I argued above), but also fails to mention Martin's claims that withness with things is essential to sculptural works. This latter fact would

be fine were it not the case that the essentialness of withness with thing to works would have no role in explaining their being works of sculpture (i.e. belonging to sculpture as an art form), but would simply be an independent fact about sculptural works, albeit something which they all held in common.

Perhaps instead Martin means that it is in virtue of withness with things being essential to all sculptural works that withness with things is essential to, and definitive of, sculpture as an art form. But again, there are two things to observe straight away. Even if it were true that withness with things is essential to sculptural works, this does not establish any entailment of this being true also of the art form. Secondly, if possession of this property accounted for membership of the set of things which belong to the art form of sculpture a theory of the nature of sculpture as an art would be effectively lacking, having been reduced to an account of the collection of all sculptural objects. No such reduction seems warranted, for there seems more to understanding an art form and its essential features than to give an account of the properties of its objects whether or not these properties are essential to membership of that art form. If the claim had simply been that to be a work of sculpture it is enough to be a work to which withness with things is essential, then not only does the claim seem false, as I argued above, but further, it gives us an account of the kind I discussed in Chapter 1 which does not seem to tell us anything non-recursive and interesting about the nature of sculpture as an art form. To be informative a theory must go on to say something more about the characteristic and distinctive features of the art-practice of sculpture. If it is true that withness with things is a distinctive feature of all sculptural artworks, *why* is this the case? What is it about the artistic practices of sculpture as an art which explain this interesting 'fact', and why isn't it the answer to this question which gives us the most appropriate account of the nature of sculpture as an art and of sculptural works?

4.5 Conclusion

As I noted earlier, our interest in sculptures is largely with respect to their perceivable and perceived qualities and with the way sculptures appear to us in our perception. But it does not follow from this that sculpture's distinctiveness as an art lies in the phenomena

of our perceptual experience of sculpture. We are likely to find some characteristic differences between sculpture and other art forms with respect to the phenomenal content of the perceptual experiences of appreciators. But we do not normally think that the characteristic phenomenological content of our experience of a class of objects makes them objects of a particular kind, except in the uninformative sense of being the kind of objects of which we characteristically have this sort of experience. Rather, we generally think that it is the object's being an object of a particular kind (e.g. a dense solid) which accounts for us having that characteristic sort of experience (e.g. sensations of hardness and heaviness).¹⁸⁶

As we have seen, attempts to locate fundamental contrasts with the pictorial at the level of perceptual level phenomena have resulted in an overestimation of the significance of actual properties in sculpture, and an underestimation of the significance of apparent and imagined qualities. This is a somewhat peculiar state of affairs given what would seem naturally to be a close relationship between a concern with perception and concern with appearances, but it is largely due to the fact that attempts to ground perceptual claims have appealed to one or other version of the Physical Thesis. As I suggested in Chapter 2, the failure of the physical thesis means that if the relationship between the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience and sculpture is to do any work explaining the nature of sculpture as an art it will require an intentional rather than a causal account of the nature of the relationship. It is the way the phenomena of our perceptual experiences

¹⁸⁶ This is true even of so-called "response-dependent" properties of objects, such as colours. To the extent that the 'red' phenomenal content of our experience of an object makes it a red object, this is only in the trivial sense that our having such an experience makes it true that the object is the kind of object which gives us 'red' experiences. That something has a red colour, and that it appears 'redly' to us, is explained not just in terms of the nature of our perceptual systems but by the relationship between these systems and other, non-response-dependent, features of the object. If an object is apt to appear red to us, and our perceptual systems are such that they are apt to see the object as red, then there are features of the object and our perceptual systems, and their coming together, which explain these features. It is this which explains both redness and why it is that this object is a red object, rather than the phenomenal content of redness itself somehow explaining the nature of the object.

of sculpture figures in our appreciation of sculptural works, rather than the kinds of perceptual phenomena which may associated with sculptural works, which is central to an understanding of the nature of sculpture, something which needs to be developed in terms of a wider theory of what it is to regard and make sense of sculpture *as* sculpture.

Chapter Five

A New Approach: The Sculptural Medium

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Essentialism and the nature of the sculptural

5.3 Mechanism, material, medium, and work

5.4 An alternative account of the nature of the sculptural

5.5 Use and appreciation - advantages of the alternative thesis

5.6 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction:

So far I have concerned myself primarily with arguing three main points: firstly, that there is a distinctive space for the philosophy of sculpture and, in conjunction, that philosophical theories of the nature of sculpture ought to be characterised by a particular kind of explanatory structure with respect to the relationship between artworks and art practices; secondly that the Physical Thesis fails as an account of the nature of sculpture; and thirdly that the Perceptual Thesis fails as an account of the nature of sculpture. I have already given, in the preceding chapters, some indications of the kind of approach I favour and of how it differs from the theories I have examined so far. As I have already argued, the failure of the physical thesis means that if the relationship between a particular sense organ or set of sense organs and sculpture, or between the phenomenal content of our perceptual experience and sculpture, is to do any work explaining the nature of sculpture as an art it will require an intentional rather than a causal account of the nature of the relationship. In this chapter I propose a positive theory of the nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art form which is both consistent with the explanatory criteria and objectives I argued for in Chapter One, and which avoids the shortcomings of the Physical and Perceptual Theses while making sense of those insights which these approaches do have to offer.

My view, put very succinctly, is that the sculptural is essentially an art-practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium. On this view, such a use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art object is necessarily relevant to the appreciation of the work. The category sculpture, I argue, refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard.

I argue that this account of the nature of sculpture, which is inherently intentional, avoids the shortcomings of the Physical and Perceptual Theses. The account deals well with the two *prima facie* differences I outlined in Chapter One, and is appropriately focused at the level of art practices rather than artworks, and has a critical relevance which is not overly prescriptive. At the same time it gives facts about the physical and perceptual nature of sculptural works a role in explanation, albeit, in terms of the structure of explanation, a role of dramatically different significance. Whereas the accounts I have looked at so far seek to explain the nature of sculpture in terms of unique physical and perceptual characteristics of sculptural artworks, I hold that it is the distinctive way in which materials are used as an artistic medium which accounts for the characteristic physical and perceptual features paradigmatically associated with sculpture (in so far as such features exist) and explains their place in and relevance to our appreciation of sculptural works.¹⁸⁷

5.2 Essentialism and the nature of the sculptural

To some extent the question of whether it makes sense to think that there is, in any significant sense, an “essence” of the sculptural has so far been begged. Indeed, it might even be suggested that the failure of the Physical and Perceptual Theses counts against the possibility of such an account of the nature of sculpture. Needless to say, I do not

¹⁸⁷ As I have argued, the Physical Thesis and the Perceptual Thesis propose as the explanation of the nature of the sculptural features which are rather things to be explained in terms of the nature of sculpture. Failure of the theses leaves us with these questions: if there is no physical difference as such at the level of material, then how do you account for these differences, and if there is no perceptual difference as such, then how do you explain these differences?

think that the inadequacy of two proposed accounts of the nature of the sculptural makes implausible the possibility of there being an adequate account. The question of the appropriateness of seeking to provide an account of the nature of the sculptural at all is perhaps the more pressing issue. But unless we were to think that “essentialist” accounts are in and of themselves inherently and always inappropriate, the appropriateness to sculpture of such an account is something which can only be evaluated or established by the strength of the arguments given in favour of the proposed account.

There seems to be little to rule out “essentialist” claims *as such*. On this issue I agree with Gregory Currie when he states, in his *Image and Mind*, that:

“Tired of the ponderous prescriptivism that dogged much film aesthetic (and, until recently, much aesthetics in general), film theorists frequently tell us they have put aside “essentialism”. Why bring it back? My essentialism is not particularly prescriptive: no more so than the claim that water is essentially H₂O. Films, like samples of water, have something in common that makes them films rather than something else. It’s more than just being films, and its more than just family resemblance. It’s an essence, but knowing what that essence is doesn’t help much in figuring out what films are good, typical or paradigmatic.”¹⁸⁸

I shall argue that something very similar happens also to be true of sculpture. A similar prescriptivism has characterised much of recent sculptural theory also. Read’s and Martin’s theses tend not only towards the definition of an essence of sculpture but also towards the drawing of normative claims and conclusions concerning sculpture in terms of this essence. Thus, for example, Read holds that sculpture is better and more sculptural in so far as it tends towards the tactile, and worse and less sculptural in so far as it tends towards the visual; and Martin holds that sculpture is better or worse, and more or less sculptural, in so far as it tends towards or away from enlivening space. Indeed, as I shall argue shortly, Read and Martin’s views of the nature of sculpture can

¹⁸⁸ Gregory Currie, *Image and Mind: Film, Philosophy, and Cognitive Science*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.1

best be recast as evaluative or normative prescriptions (or recommendations) about properties that might be held to be valuable for sculpture, or particular kinds of sculpture, to possess rather than as capturing an essence as such.

The essentialism of my thesis is no more prescriptive than Currie's. While I argue that there is something in virtue of which sculptural works are sculptural works, something which is more than just being sculptural works, and which is more than just family resemblance, and which is a distinctive feature of sculpture as an art, like Currie I do not think that having an account of this essence helps us much in knowing or deciding which sculptures are good, typical or paradigmatic. Such questions are complex ones which require us to exercise our judgement as appreciators or scholars with respect to a number of relevant factors, most of which have little to do with the nature of sculpture as such. A theory of the nature of sculpture comes, in a sense, prior to such judgements: judgements of that kind can be made only once (logically, perhaps, if not temporally) a work has been identified as sculptural, and it is only with respect to that general (classificatory) question that a philosophical account of the essence of the sculptural might be of direct value in judgement. Given the basic nature of philosophical theories, I do not think that we should expect such accounts to be of more direct usefulness to appreciators in their judgement of works than this.

This is not to say that an account of the nature of the sculptural has *no* relevance to evaluative questions of the kind Currie mentions. I think Currie may undersell his thesis when he says that his account of the essence of cinema "has some bookkeeping significance for what follows, but not much intrinsic interest. This is the boring part; let's get it over with".¹⁸⁹ If this were true, and an account of the essence of cinema had no important or interesting bearing upon other matters concerning film such as the evaluative issues he highlights, then this would be very disappointing and we might wonder what the point of developing such a theory was - why would anyone then be interested in the issue of whether film has an essence and what that essence might be? Of course, when we read Currie's book, his thesis about the essence of cinema does turn out to be relevant to understanding how a variety of artistic, communicative, and other

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.1

features function in film. But to the extent that his essentialism fails to throw any light on the evaluative issues, then, at least in so far as these kinds of things (cinema, sculpture) are considered as art forms or as just the kinds of things which have a special connection with evaluation, I think that is a shortcoming of his account. If to regard something as art, or as cinema or as sculpture, necessarily involves adopting an appreciative stance towards that thing, then it would seem odd that a theory of the thing's nature had no relevance at all to evaluative issues. Even for kinds of thing which do not have this kind of relationship with evaluation, but which we may sometimes appropriately adopt an evaluative stance towards, it seems that knowing the kind of thing it is must have at least some relation to the evaluation - its value will be the value of a thing of that kind, and our evaluation of it will be in terms of the kind of thing we take it to be.

Whether we are discussing film, sculpture, or any other object of evaluation, there is potentially a middle ground between an essentialism which is overly prescriptive with respect to evaluative issues, and an essentialism which is of little significant relevance to and has nothing interesting to say about them. Although a philosophical account of the nature of sculpture may be of little practical help to appreciators in *judgement*, in the sense of answering such evaluative questions, I think that it may have an interesting and important role to play in (theoretical) *understanding* what it is about sculptural works that is the basis of what makes it good, typical, or paradigmatic of sculpture *as sculpture*, and which can locate the ground (rather than identify the qualitative extent), of the value of the art practice of sculpture as *sculptural* art-practice. Whether an account of the nature of sculpture can have such a role is, I suggest, contingent upon the kind of thing the essence of sculpture is held by that account to be. The account which I propose can have such a role - (and in my view that this is an additional feature in its favour, albeit at least something to recommend it in view of utility and interest, rather being a consideration which itself might be taken to independently count towards establishing the correctness of the account) - and in Chapters 6 and 7 I develop my account in this direction.

5.3 Mechanism, material, medium, and work

It is useful, in clarifying and supporting my claim about the nature of the sculptural and showing how it differs from, and is an improvement upon, the positions I have already examined and rejected, to draw upon a set of conceptual distinctions concerning the relation between ontological elements of artworks. The distinctions I want to make are between the mechanisms, materials, media, and works of an art-practice. Most of these distinctions will be somewhat familiar, but there are most likely some differences both in the ways in which I conceive of these elements and the ways I see them relating to each other. These distinctions may be usefully employed in characterising the various positions I have examined so far and contrasting them with the account I advocate, and in identifying weaknesses and strengths in these accounts. Briefly, then:

Mechanism:

What I mean by mechanisms here are the basic perceptual and cognitive faculties, capacities and abilities which make possible, in their relation (of perception and cognition) to materials, the use of materials in productive and appreciative art-practices. Mechanisms are non-conceptual and non-intentional, and they may be either “hard-wired” or acquired. These include our visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, and taste faculties, capacities, and abilities, as well as our basic recognitional, discriminatory and other capacities and abilities. While mechanisms themselves are non-conceptual and non-intentional, they nevertheless can provide the basis for (but are distinct from) experiences with conceptual and other intentional content. For example, mechanisms are integral to our perceptual and cognitive access to the material world, and their configuration and deployment determine in a primary sense how things appear to, or are given for, us as being. For example, it is the fact that we have an aural capacity (and of course others too) and that our aural faculties are configured in the way that they are that enables us to hear sounds and which determines that sounds sound to us the way they do, something which makes possible the use of sound in appreciative (and productive) art practices such as music. The notion of a mechanism, as I employ it, is closely associated with the concept of materials, a link which will become clear (directly below).

Material:

The concept of material is a familiar one - material is the “stuff” used in making (and appreciating) artworks. I think this is good as a general definition of “material”, but such is the familiarity with this concept, and perhaps the generality of the definition, that the issue of where the boundaries of what counts as material lie (in art-practices) has been given little close thought. Usual examples of material include substances such as paint, stone, canvas, bronze, wood, and so on, and these certainly are materials. But there is, I think, more to material than is indicated by thinking in terms of these very general substance categories. To put it another way, I think there is more to stone than stone, or at least there is when it comes to considering it as material which can be used in productive and appreciative art-practices. What I mean by this is that it is not just the stone *as stone* that may be used in appreciative and productive art-practices, but also the various properties of stone, including but not limited to the *stoniness* of stone. For example, the size, density, mass, shape, and number of pieces of stone count as materials (things used) for art-practice, as do their solidity and rigidity, perhaps their temperature, and other properties such as colour, texture, and hardness.

So far this all seems straightforward enough - after all, all I have been doing is being more specific about what materials amount to by attending to the properties of a substance (such as stone) which might be employed in productive/appreciative art-practices rather than just to the substance-category itself. What we notice already, however, once the properties of the substances as well as substance-categories of material are explicitly considered, is an inherent connection with mechanisms. What counts as material is not just the brute (non-relational) physical stuff, whatever that is independently of any actual or hypothetical relationship to a perceiver or cogniser. Of course, whether something is stone, or cardboard, or steel is not something which depends upon or involves mechanisms, or is dependent upon facts about cognisers/perceivers. I don't want to get too deeply into the metaphysics of properties and substances (or the deeper question of whether these are even appropriate ontological categories), but it should be noted that there is a sense in which property-materials are

always already a matter of the relation between the substance-materials and mechanisms, and are to this extent relational¹⁹⁰. What I mean here is that the properties of a substance-material, even the non-perceptual ones, are the properties they are for us, and hence are the materials they are for us, because of the relationship between our mechanisms (capacities, abilities, faculties) and the brute physical substance. Stone, steel, canvas, paint, and whatever other substances might be used in art-practices, have the properties for us that they do, in a primary (i.e. non-intentional) sense, because of the way in which our cognitive and perceptual mechanisms are configured. For example, the hardness of stone, the colour of the steel, the size of the canvas, the texture of the wood, and so on, are all features of the relationship between brute physical substances and our perceptual and cognitive faculties, capacities, and abilities. This what I meant when I said earlier that mechanism and material are closely connected, both ontologically and conceptually.

Possibly more controversially, I think that another kind of property should also be included under the concept 'material'. As well as including relational properties of substances such as colour or texture, I think that phenomenal properties and other recognitional and discriminatively based properties, for example looking-like, should also be considered as features of material (or as property-materials). For example, just as the colour of a stone might be used by an artist in producing an artwork and by appreciators in appreciating an artwork, so too the fact that a stone looks like a bird might be used by an artist and by appreciators) in, for instance, the representation of a bird. The kind of looking-like I have in mind here is still non-intentional, (and certainly sub-representational), even when conscious recognition of a resemblance would involve the use of concepts, and does not depend upon anyone actually recognising this resemblance, but is simply the fact that given our perceptual and cognitive systems (and their proper functioning) this stone looks to us, or strikes us as, or would if looked at strike us as, looking like a bird (i.e. recognisable rather than recognised¹⁹¹). Similar

¹⁹⁰ even if only counterfactually

¹⁹¹ At the level of material the fact of recognition is irrelevant - what matters is recognisability, and it is this feature of a stone which might be used by artists wishing viewers to recognise the bird-likeness and hence help them to understand that it is being used to represent a bird.

properties of substance-materials would also qualify as materials in this sense in virtue of other hard-wired (and perhaps acquired) recognitional and discriminatory mechanisms/faculties, capacities, and abilities - for example, primary visual effects, something just seeming to us far away, and so on. Although the issue is seldom addressed explicitly, these kinds of features of substance-materials are commonly thought of (by both Read and Martin, for example) as belonging to art-media or to artworks rather than to art-materials. I think that this is mistaken (for example, in so far as it attributes to them an intentional character which they do not possess¹⁹²), and leads to theoretical confusions (as we find, for example, in heavily psychological theories which purport to be explanatory accounts of pictorial representation, such as illusionism, seeing-in and seeing-as¹⁹³), something which I shall say more about shortly.

Medium:

A medium is not another sort of “stuff” that lies somehow between material and work. Rather a medium is the material used, or being used, in the transforming way which brings it (the material used) from the non-intentional into the intentional world. It is the thing that is being transformed in its being transformed (rather than the thing considered independently its being so transformed), the thing that is used in its being used (rather than the thing considered independently of its being so used) within an intentional activity, or agency. It is the use of materials with an orientation towards a product, (perhaps an action or, in the present case, an artwork) which constitutes its being a medium. This orientation is inherently intentional, not just in these sense of the emergent work being the result of intentional action or that work having intentional properties, (although this might be how the comes into the intentional world and acquires given properties), but also because the intentional use of materials is something intelligible in

¹⁹² Or perhaps, at times, conversely, fails to attribute intentionality to intentional features.

¹⁹³ I have more to say about these theories, and theories of this kind, in Chapters 5 and 6 - I take seeing-as and seeing-in to be accounts of the mechanisms and features of material which might be involved in some pictorial representation, but I think an explanation of representation must lie at the intentional level, at the level of medium and the *use* of materials, rather than at the level of material as such.

more than a primary way - *understanding* the use is inherently intentional because use is intentional. To use something is to give that thing an intentional orientation towards the thing (product, action, etc.) it is used for. This *use* of materials is the transformative intentional moment in which the work emerges from the material; or, in the realm of action, the transformative intentional moment in virtue of which the movement of an arm *becomes* a wave. Thus, for example, we speak of carving, or engraving, or painting, or sculpting as art-media, as the activities in which materials (wood, steel, paint, stone) are used and through which they are transformed to produce artworks, (just as speaking - i.e. language *used* - itself might be a medium of/for communication in so far as it is the transforming use of sounds related to linguistic conventions as the vehicle for a message).

Work:

If materials are what is used, and the use of these materials is part of an art-practice, then the work is what emerges from the use of materials. If we think of, for example one of Giacometti's busts, then the clay and the bronze and their various properties are the material, their representational and expressive use of material (via casting etc.) is the medium, and the work is the bust and what is represented and expressed. If media are the bringing of material into the intentional world, then the work is the material brought into the intentional world. Works are located in the intentional world, not only because they exist only in virtue of the intentional use of materials as media, but because the properties which they possess in virtue of the intentional use of materials and which are distinctively properties of *works* as opposed to materials, are intentional in nature. Artworks are in this sense, as Joseph Margolis puts it "physically embodied and culturally emergent entities"¹⁹⁴ - they have properties (such as representational and expressive content) which go beyond the physical properties of the materials which bear them.

¹⁹⁴ Joseph Margolis, "Works of Art as Physically Embodied and Culturally Emergent Entities", in *The British journal of Aesthetics*, 14, 1974.

Facts about the material, and intentional facts about the way it has been used, not only have an ontological role in determining the content and identity and other properties of a work, but also play an epistemological role in appreciation as evidence for the work, for what is to be understood. An important part of appreciating artworks is an appreciation of the relationship of material to work, or work to material. Very often, in appreciating artworks, we are conscious of, or pay special attention to, the medium - that is, to the relationship between material and emergent work - for example when we see *how* colour in an image has been used to express a mood. Something of this is referred to by Wollheim in his notion of two-foldness, but his concept is heavily psychological and really captures the phenomena of the awareness of this relationship rather than emphasising the inherently intentional nature of the relationship.¹⁹⁵ Two-foldness and the phenomenal content of our awareness of this, only takes place, or is appropriately grounded, in virtue of the intentional transformative *use* of the material which underlies it. Of course, Wollheim does emphasise the intentional use of materials in his account of painting, and specifically addresses the issue of what determines the content of the work, but while his answer is an intentionalist one (intentions plus standards), it is, again, also heavily psychological. This is not quite the same issue as what grounds the phenomena of two-foldness, but it is related. I will say more about these kinds of questions in Chapters 6 and 7.

Characterising the positions:

So, how do these distinctions come together in giving an account of the basic ontology of art? To take the example of film, perhaps Currie's claim about the essence of cinema can be paraphrased in the following way: the essence of cinema is the depictive use of moving images. It might be claimed that the moving image (and not just the celluloid) is the material of cinema, that the cinematic medium is this material (including, for example, images which resemble things)*used* (representationally, expressively, depictively, and so on), and that the cinematic work is that which emerges (in or through which things are represented, expressed, depicted, and so forth) from and in virtue of this use.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, his *Painting as an Art*.

These distinctions may be usefully employed in characterising the various positions I have examined so far and contrasting them with the account I advocate, and in identifying weaknesses and strengths in these accounts. In terms of these distinctions, Read's theory can be understood as proposing that the essence of sculpture lies in features of the *material* which is used in sculpture, such as three-dimensionality, actual space, mass, primary phenomenal properties such as sensations of volume and palpability; and in facts about the *mechanisms* involved in the perception of sculpture, such as the role of touch as a means of perceptual access. Martin similarly can be seen as proposing that the essence of sculpture is to be found in features of *material*, such as the physical properties which give rise to certain primary perceptual phenomena, and these phenomena themselves, for example "impacting between" and enlivened space; and of *mechanism*, such as the facts about human perception he appeals to from a phenomenological perspective. In large part the failure of the Physical and Perceptual Theses is due to an attempt to locate the essence of sculpture as an art and of sculptural artworks at the wrong ontological level - at the non-intentional level of mechanism and material, when artworks are essentially intentional in nature.

My alternative thesis that the sculptural is essentially an art-practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium, and that sculpture refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard, can now be understood a little better. To regard something as sculpture is to regard, or use, the properties of material in this way. For something to be sculpture is for it to be used, and appropriately regarded (as being used by the producer) by appreciators, in this way. Now, something needs to be said about what it is that makes it the case that materials are used in this way and makes it appropriate to regard them in the fashion, something I will address largely in Chapters 6 and 7. But first, more needs to be said about my alternative thesis.

5.4 An alternative account of the nature of sculpture

I want to further explore and develop this alternative account of the nature of sculpture by considering some of the sculptural works of Giacometti, in particular the

Miniscules[fig.54], the *Busts of Diego*[fig.13, 14], and the *Standing Figures*[fig.15, 48].

This can be a useful approach since although Giacometti's works are certainly sculptural, they do not fit well with existing philosophical theories about the nature of sculpture and are often compared by theorists and critics with painting.

Typically the modelling in Giacometti's work involved the heavy accretion and drastic cutting and pulling away of clay, so that the casts seem to be gnarled and eaten away [fig.15, fig.41, fig.54, fig.62]. The figures always seem to remain at a distance from us no matter how close we approach, never fully resolving into focus or crystallising into the "realistic" form of a person which we might normally take to underlie the appearance, and never solidifying for us as presences of their own. Nevertheless, there is an underlying realism and naturalism at play, and a direct link between the way materials have been used to give rise to these kinds of visual impressions, and the content of the sculptures. Giacometti's concern was to represent and give expression to the way people and spaces appear to us across a distance - a room, a street, from a stage. But rather than seeming to catch a moment in time, or freeze the fleeting character of perception, in remaining unresolved and diffuse the figures are imbued with an energy and tension which both emphasises the role of the viewer and makes explicit their inherent separation from the viewed. They give expression to the distance inherent in visual perception, and in their portrayal of the situation of the figures, attribute to our interaction with other people a related and persistent underlying distance. These works show us that the worlds and lives of others are always independent from our own, our only access to them always necessarily mediated in such a way that we only ever get the appearances, and never their underlying realities. Giacometti's women are more confined, immobile, and disintegrated than his male figures, but there is no pretence here that this is life as it should be. The immobility of some of the figures does not seem to indicate a rigidity or lack of independence on the part of the beings whose appearances are modelled, for they still seem full of capacity, to be people who are engaged in the world. But we find ourselves become complicit in Giacometti's view of the world: one in which we find both a respect for others and a resignation to circumstances which make respect impossible to consistently give or receive. Sometimes it is almost as if it is the gaze of our eyes which

reduces these figures to chimera, as if as well as looking across a distance we are also at the same time penetrating so deeply into the soul of these people that we find nothing concrete, if that is what we were expecting to find.

Statements of the following kind concerning Giacometti's sculptures are typical:

"For Giacometti, sculpture is no less an art of illusion than is painting."¹⁹⁶

"One way of describing Giacometti's unique achievement is to point out the way in which he has caused sculptural and pictorial features to intersect. He imbues his sculpture with an illusionism of a special kind. The frontality of his figures is both the frontality of an ancient sculptural tradition and the frontality of a picture. His figures are as much figures *seen* as they are solid effigies in bronze."¹⁹⁷

The idea that Giacometti's sculptures somehow exhibit features which are characteristic features of pictures, especially features relating to perception, raises some interesting questions about the key differences between pictures and sculptures and between pictorial and sculptural art forms. It is precisely in creating or capturing visual impressions of distance, of perspective, and other spatial attributes which do not equate with the actual spatial characteristics of the material sculptural object, that many of Giacometti's sculptural works fail to fit well with many commonly held assumptions about, and theories of, the nature of sculpture and its characteristic differences with the pictorial. Comparisons of his sculptural works with pictures not only rely on a certain notion of the differences between the pictorial and sculpture, but in drawing the comparison also seem paradoxically to undermine the distinction as it is made, leading one to question the very basis of the thought. Either this or we should wonder about the status of these works by Giacometti. Yet Giacometti's works, I think, are clearly

¹⁹⁶David Sylvester, *Looking at Giacometti*, Pimlico, 1995 p.36

¹⁹⁷Andrew Forge in Herbert and Mercedes Matter's *Alberto Giacometti photographed by Herbert Matter*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1987, p.57

sculptural, and must be able to be easily accounted for as such by any adequate theory of sculpture.

What are the underlying assumptions about the natures of the pictorial and sculpture operating in the comparison, and how ought we to think of these differences, and of the features so characteristic of Giacometti's works, in a way which will offer both conceptual clarity and let the comparison live? As we have seen, one common idea of the difference between the pictorial and sculpture is that whereas pictures are two-dimensional, sculpture is three-dimensional. What distinguishes the pictorial from sculpture, according to some who build on this thought, is that whereas "painting may strive to give, on a two-dimensional plane, the illusion of space" the "peculiarity of sculpture as an art is that it creates a three-dimensional object in [actual] space"¹⁹⁸. So whereas the space of the world of the picture is not our space, sculptures inhabit the same space as we do. Sculptural figures, on this conception, are in the room with us in a way in which figures represented in pictures are not. The two-dimensionality of pictures, and the separation of its representational space from our own space gives rise to its so-called frontality. When looking at a picture, we do so from more or less straight on, and if we shift our position slightly it makes little or no difference to what we see and our relation to the representational space of the picture does not alter significantly. With sculpture, however, its persistent three-dimensionality and the location of its representational space within our own space, gives rise to other practices of appreciation - such as moving about the work. Touching a sculpture, it is thought for the same reason, can provide us with information in a way which is not also true of pictures - touch gives us no greater access to the qualities of a two-dimensional surface, nor provides us access to the representational space of the picture since this is in any case quite separate from us and illusionary or apparent, rather than actual, in nature. Giacometti's sculpture, in particular his *Minuscules* and his *Standing Figures*, but also in some respects his Busts, are often thought to be like pictures in so far as they are characterised by their frontality, and an associated relative two-dimensionality of aesthetically relevant elements of the material

¹⁹⁸ Herbert Read, *The Art of Sculpture*, p. 46.

object, the illusions or appearances they create of distance and perspective, and the separation of their represented space from our own.

The claim that pictures are two-dimensional and sculpture three-dimensional sounds fair enough as far as it goes, but in what sense is it actually true? Both pictures and sculptures, after all, are made of three-dimensional materials, so really both are three-dimensional. Perhaps we could say instead that although pictures are, like everything else, constructed out of three-dimensional materials, it is only the two-dimensional surface properties which are aesthetically relevant¹⁹⁹. It is with respect to the aesthetically relevant two-dimensional surface that the pictorial creates an illusion of three-dimensional space. The three-dimensional properties of sculptural objects, however, remain relevant throughout, and it is this which places sculptures in our world.

But this doesn't seem right either. It is just not true that the three-dimensional properties of a picture's surface are aesthetically irrelevant. Think of some simple cases: firstly, just the simple idea that any two-dimensional surface in painting only appears to us the way it does because, among other things, of the way in which paint has been applied to its surface; and secondly, extending this point, where the texture of the paint makes an indirect contribution to the representational content of the picture such that if paint had not been applied with those three-dimensional characteristics the storminess of the sea or the sky could not have been seen as being as it is (think again of the kind of

¹⁹⁹ The boundaries of concept of the "aesthetic" are notoriously blurry. With regard to the idea of "aesthetic relevance", for example, it seems reasonable to presume that the range of artistically relevant properties of a work will be wider than, and perhaps encompassing of, its aesthetic properties. But how narrowly, or broadly, to draw the distinction seems unclear. I use the term in a wide sense, to encompass all aspects of a work which are relevant to an appreciation of the work as an artwork. While broad, taken in this sense, the term is still narrower than the idea of the artistic, since there will be some artistic properties of a work which may be not be relevant to our proper appreciation of the work. For example, there may be artistically relevant facts concerning the preparation of paint or other materials which nevertheless, for some works, play no significant role in our appreciation of the work created using these materials. Perhaps this simply muddies the water further. The problem is a large and interesting one, but it is not one I can explore in any detail here.

thing we find in Van Gogh [fig.30] or Rembrandt [fig.42]; and thirdly, a case where the weight of the paint plays a direct representational role, as is arguably the case in some of Auerbach's works. Although in Auerbach's *Head of E.O.W* [fig.21] the use of paint seems to be of the second variety, it seems plausible that in others of his works, such as *Head of E.O.W* [fig.55], the build up of paint plays some direct representational role, with the protrusion of the ridges around the brow and cheekbones themselves representing the protrusion of E.O.W.'s brow and cheekbones). In each case the three-dimensional properties of the picture remain important to our understanding of and appreciation of the picture, so how does this differ from sculpture? I'll come back to the third point shortly.

Perhaps the answer does not lie in the dimensional nature of the materials used, or whether or not the three-dimensional properties of art objects remain aesthetically relevant, but in the kinds of effects produced by the use of materials of the same kind. Hence the suggestion that pictures create an illusionary or apparent space whereas sculpture uses actual rather than creating apparent space. But this cannot be right. As Giacometti's sculptures show us, sculptural works may also create illusionary or apparent spaces, spaces and spatial effects which do not align with the actual spatial characteristics of the materials used to create these effects, spaces which seem disconnected from our own in pretty much the same way as in pictures. It would be a mistake to think that sculptures are somehow confined to real space, for they can produce and operate on appearances every bit as much as pictures. Sculptures as much as pictures can represent space, or create a represented space, and they might do this, as in the case of Giacometti, by creating objects which appear to be other than they are - which appear, for example, to be in the distance.

Furthermore, the appearances sculptures might have - of distance, of perspective, and so on - can be visual every bit as much as pictures. The works by Giacometti, for example, are certainly to be viewed rather than touched. This is not to say that touching them might not provide some interest, but the same can be said for pictures (although touch tends to be a less fruitful in pictures than in sculpture). Nor can "frontality" be of much use in distinguishing the pictorial and sculpture, since it might be as much a feature of sculptural works as of pictures. While sculptures tend not to be frontal, there seems

no requirement that they must be - whether they are surely depends upon the particular work in question and the way materials and the effects they produce are utilised by artists and appreciators.

So if we take these thoughts on board, the claim that Giacometti achieves an intersection of sculptural and pictorial features does not amount to much, since the features in question are not uniquely specific to the pictorial but belong as much to sculpture as to the pictorial. Of course, there might be a statistically closer association between these features and effects and the tradition of pictorial representation than with the tradition of sculpture, and Giacometti might have been the first or the best at producing some kinds of effects in sculpture. But then this just makes Giacometti's work all the more interesting and valuable.

Of course, there is another way of going here. Rather than reject these notions of the respective natures of the pictorial and sculpture as I suggest we do, we could instead decide that in these respects Giacometti's works are painterly rather than sculptural. Although they happen to be made out of metal, or plaster, or clay rather than paint and canvas, this is just to say that they are pictures made of unorthodox materials. Or perhaps we might be more attracted to the possibility that these works are hybrid kinds - part picture, part sculpture. I don't think we need to do either - we can have an account of the nature of sculpture and its key differences with the pictorial which maintains the value of Giacometti's works *as sculptures*. What matters, I think, is neither the nature of the materials used, including the effects produced - illusionary or apparent space, frontality, etc. - but rather the broad kinds of ways in which materials and effects are used. What separates the pictorial and the sculptural is not whether three-dimensional space is represented, but rather the way in which it is represented.

If we consider paradigm examples of sculptures and pictures we notice that materials are used in certain distinctive or characteristic ways. Although both depiction and sculpting involve the use or construction of materials in three-dimensions, in paradigm cases of sculpture materials are used in three-dimensions to create shaped and weighted objects the three-dimensional material properties of which are used as an artistic medium, whereas in paradigm cases of depiction three-dimensional materials are used to

create objects the two-dimensional properties of which function as a artistic medium. This brings us almost back to the view, which I rejected, that in pictures only the two-dimensional surface qualities are relevant. After all, I argued that three-dimensional qualities of the pictorial surface are, or at least can be, aesthetically relevant in pictures. Instead, I think that we can make a distinction between the ways in which three-dimensional properties are relevant in pictures and sculpture in terms of the ways in which these features are used by artists and appreciators. But by introducing the notion here of the *use* of materials and aspects of materials as a *medium*, my theory not only gives grounds for determining relevance, but also makes these features of works explicitly intentional in a way which enables my thesis to avoid the problems of the material-relevance thesis²⁰⁰.

My thought is that in pictorial media three-dimensional properties are not necessarily aesthetically relevant - think of photographs or film or video which is perfectly smooth or to which surface textural qualities are largely irrelevant - and when their use does function as an artistic medium this is only in an indirect sense, as base properties which underlie, or support, two-dimensional formal and surface qualities. This at least seems to fit well with the first two considerations I raised above - the simple idea that a two-dimensional surface only appears to us the way it does because, among other things, of the way in which paint has been applied to its surface; and the extended point that the texture of the paint makes an indirect contribution to the representational content of the picture such that if paint had not been applied with those three-dimensional characteristics the storminess of the sea or the clarity of the sky could not have been seen as being as it is. In contrast, I suggest, three-dimensional properties are always necessarily aesthetically relevant in sculptural works, and they play a direct role in the use of the material as an artistic medium rather than the indirect role I attribute to the use of three-dimensional properties in pictorial works as bases. Such a use is necessary in the sculptural, and sufficient to make something sculptural in so far as such a use is a feature of the work. Such a use is not necessary to painterly works, and is not an essential feature of painting, but when found in a painting the work is, to that extent, sculptural.

²⁰⁰See Chapter 2.

So, on my account, an artwork is sculptural in so far as the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium for the work.

An apparent cost of this approach should be evident if we consider the third point I made earlier with respect to the relevance in pictorial media of three-dimensional properties - the case where the weight of the paint plays a direct representational role - the thick rough paint on the part of the picture representing tree-bark, or the smooth application of paint itself contributing to the representation of the still surface of a pool. The account I have just given suggests that such mode of representation should be considered sculptural (rather than pictorial). Does this cause a problem?

At this point it might also be noted that to give an account of the nature of the sculptural might not be quite the same as giving an account of what makes something a sculpture, since “sculpture” and “the sculptural” seem to refer to different categories. Even if we expect that all members of the set “sculpture” are also members of the set “the sculptural”, perhaps some members of the set “the sculptural” are not members of the set “sculpture”. On my account an artwork will be sculptural in so far as the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium for the work. But the association of this way of using materials with particular traditions of art practice is largely an historical accident. We can imagine alternative histories of art in which uses of materials are differently distributed among kinds of art form; in which, for example, painting and sculpture did not have the more or less separate history of development that they have had in the West. This association is a contingent and generalised tendency rather than exclusive definitional criteria, or set of sufficient conditions for works being classed as sculptures or paintings.

The category of “sculpture”, I suggest, refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard. I appeal here to Kendall Walton’s notion of standard and non-standard features of artworks.²⁰¹ On Walton’s account, “a feature of a work of art is *standard* with respect to a (perceptually distinguishable) category just in case it is among those in virtue of which works in that

²⁰¹ See Walton’s “Categories of Art”, reprinted in *Philosophy Looks at the Arts: Contemporary Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. Joseph Margolis, Temple university Press: Philadelphia, 1987.

category belong to that category - that is, just in case the lack of that feature would disqualify, or tend to disqualify, a work from that category”²⁰². Walton divides non-standard features into two classes: the “variable” and the “contra-standard”. Features are variable with respect to a category “just in case it has nothing to do with a work’s belonging to that category; the possession or lack of the feature is irrelevant to whether a work qualifies for the category”²⁰³. A feature is contra-standard with respect to a category, if it is “a feature whose presence tends to *disqualify* works as members of the category”²⁰⁴. To clarify these concepts, Walton gives examples of each sort of feature: “the flatness of a paintings and the motionlessness of its markings are standard, and its particular shapes and colors are variable, relative to the category of painting. A protruding three-dimensional object or an electrically driven twitching of the canvass would be contra-standard relative to this category”²⁰⁵. So, on my view, the sculptural use of materials is standard with respect to sculpture in so far as it is the case that if a work lacks this feature it is disqualified as a member of this category, but that works which do not belong to this category may well nevertheless involve a sculptural use of materials where this use is variable or contra-standard to the category to which it belongs. The sculptural use of materials may be found in jewellery and in architecture [fig.18], relative to which it is variable, and in painting, relative to which it is contra-standard.

That the sculptural use of materials is standard to the tradition of the art practice of sculpture is something which is partly determined relative to the various (historically variable) standards and conventions of the tradition of art practice. Being the product of a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard is a necessary condition for a sculptural work’s being sculptural, but the further standards and conventions of such an art practice are more or less variable and can be seen to shift over time, between cultures, between genres, and so on. Many of these standards and conventions will relate directly to the sculptural use of materials but will also concern

²⁰² Ibid., p.57.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

other matters such as, perhaps, subject matter, presentation, and so forth. The kind and degree of variation in the range of standards and conventions of an art practice such as sculpture there can be across time and culture can be sustained with it yet remaining the same practice, is another issue and one which I need not answer here. The idea that something is a sculpture is for it to be the product of an art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard, is compatible with a wide range of positions on that question: there may be many separate such traditions of art practice, or one tradition to which more or fewer works might belong depending upon whether the relevant defining standards and conventions of the practice are broadly or narrowly conceived.

This means that we can (as we in fact do) speak of the sculptural elements of mixed-media works which we would not perhaps classify as “sculptures”, and there are of course artworks which combine to varying degrees both sculptural and painterly uses of materials, as in Rauschenberg’s *Canyon* [fig.23], Anselm Kiefer’s *Isis and Osiris* [fig.56], something found increasingly in recent and contemporary art practices. It is perfectly plausible, likely in fact, that the sculptural use of materials will function differently in works normally thought of as having a close relationship to painterly traditions of art practice from the way this kind of use of materials functions in works related more closely to traditions of sculptural art practice. The same can be said of the ‘painterly’ representational use of the two-dimensional properties of materials in works with a close relationship to traditions of sculptural art practice. Of course, in addition to the problem of how to think of paintings which involve a use of materials of the kind I am calling sculptural, it might also be suggested at this point that my account allows the possibility of, for example, sculptural music, in so far as the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material function directly as a medium. It is clear that my account of the nature of *sculpture* (as opposed to the sculptural) shows why it is the case there isn’t music which is sculpture (although, perhaps, that is contingent upon the conventions and traditions of the art practice). But mightn’t music nevertheless be sculptural? I don’t know that there is much cost in conceding that, if a musical piece met these criteria, then it would be sculptural. But whether any piece of music can meet these criteria is a moot point, and depends upon what one considers the material of musical art to be. If the

material is sound, then the fact that sounds have, for example, locations in three-dimensional space, is not sufficient for it to be the case that the use of this property of sound functions directly as a medium. Nevertheless, such musical works do seem possible. Similar borderline cases might be holography, or panoramic cinema. But these kinds of puzzle are more to do with how we conceive of the particular artworks, under what categories and concepts we bring them - "is it sculptural?" - rather than a problem necessarily constituting a problem for my analysis of the nature of the sculptural. With any concept, there will always be borderline cases which we find hard to assign to the appropriate categories. Most importantly, my account makes sense of paradigm cases of sculptural and mixed-media works, and further, gives sense to (and makes interesting) problems such as how we are to conceive of holographic works.

But given the logical priority of "the sculptural" over "sculpture" the issue of real philosophical interest concerns the nature of the sculptural rather than the nature of "sculpture" as such. Indeed, generally, what's interesting about artworks, apart from what is represented or expressed or otherwise achieved in terms of content, is the way whatever has been achieved has been carried out - the ways in which materials have been used to create something, understanding and appreciating what is going on. Thus the fact that materials have been used sculpturally will be of interest even if the work is not a work of sculpture. Whether a work is sculpture may, of course, be importantly relevant to our appreciation of it, and I have more to say in this regard about sculpture and the sculptural in Chapter 6, and especially in Chapter 7.

This is one further reason to prefer the approach I suggest to one which thinks of pictures and sculptures in terms of the effects they produce and the things they achieve rather than in terms of the way they are achieved. This account allows us to see why or how it is that although the works by Giacometti we have been considering achieve effects and perform functions often achieved and performed by pictures, they really are sculptural works and not really very much like pictures at all. The ways in which they achieve their effects, perceptual effects which have been mistakenly thought of as essential to the pictorial, are specifically sculptural and can help us to clarify rather than obscure the concept of the sculptural.

5.5 Use and appreciation: advantages of the alternative thesis

I have already suggested several advantages which this alternative account of the nature of the sculptural has over the other theories already examined and as compared against a number of theoretical and explanatory criteria and objectives. I now want to explore these in closer detail, with explicit reference both to my arguments so far and to issues I address in the remainder of the thesis.

Prima facie differences:

In Chapter 1 I made two observations concerning the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation which I took to *prima facie* open a space for a philosophy of sculpture - key themes and differences with respect to the kinds of ways we regard sculpture, and to the kind of thing we treat the sculptural as being, which an explanatory philosophical theory of sculpture ought appropriately to make sense of and account for. To recapitulate briefly, these were: firstly, that in appreciating sculptures we seem characteristically to treat them as objects in a way which does not seem true of other works of other art forms²⁰⁶; and secondly, the kind of activities in which the appreciator of sculpture engages when regarding a work as sculpture (something which I think is closely related to the first point) with respect, for example, to the kinds and varieties of movement,

²⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that we can treat *any* object *as if it were a sculpture*, irrespective of whether it actually is one, in a way which does not seem so easily appropriate with respect to other kinds of artwork/appreciative stance, for example painting. For example, whereas we can take a stone from the ground and treat it as a sculpture, this can be done in a way which we cannot so easily take a stone and treat it as a painting. Of course, while we could use the stone to stand for a painting in some sort of representational game, we might, as well as taking as a sculpture in *this* way, adopt a sculptural appreciative stance towards the stone, treating the properties of the material as if they had been used in the manner properties of this kind are used sculpturally, and appreciate and talk critically of the stone in this regard. We would be stretching it to do something similar with paintings (although I suppose we could imagine the flat evenly coloured expanse of one side of the stone was rather like, for example, a Rothko painting. So this is perhaps a difference of degree rather than kind?)

stance or perspective we adopt (physically) in relation to the body of the work. These explanatory objectives were among the criteria against which I judged the degree of success of the Physical and Perceptual theses. How does my alternative account of the nature of the sculptural measure up to these theoretical goals?

If there is, as I think there is, a sense in which sculptures remain objects throughout the appreciative processes, then my alternative account of the nature of the sculptural enables us to understand and explain why and how this is the case. In Chapter 1 I eliminated five senses in which artworks might be considered objects which failed to capture this difference, nevertheless maintaining that there was a sense in which sculptures remained objects, using the contrast between Giacometti's *The Palace at 4 a.m.* [fig.12] and Cézanne's *Still Life with Commode* [fig.13] to highlight this difference. The sense in which sculptures remain objects is independent of our consideration of them as either material (in terms of which paintings are equally objects) or in terms of representational content, which is to say, at the level of work (in terms of which paintings might equally be considered objects, or at least as representing objects). The difference, as I suggested first in Chapter 1, and later again in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 lies rather at the level of medium, at the intentional level of the *use* of materials with an orientation towards the work. The sense in which sculptures remain objects throughout appreciation and can be thought of as things, in a sense which does not seem similarly true of arts such as painting or photography, can be both accounted for and explained in terms of my alternative theory of the nature of the sculptural. The sense in which sculptures remain objects can be accounted for if we take it that what it is to be sculptural is for the use of three-dimensional (object) properties of the material to function directly as an artistic medium; and the reason, or explanation, of the fact that sculptures remain objects for appreciators in this sense is that in the case of sculptural works the use of three-dimensional properties of the material so functions directly as a medium.

So on this theory, whereas the three-dimensional properties of the material remain central throughout to our appreciation of a sculptural work in virtue of being used in this way, in virtue of the intentional essence of the sculptural, in other arts such as painting and photography these properties tend to "fall out of", or "drop away" from the

appreciative process at the intentional level of medium since their use does not function directly as an artistic medium in the way it does in the case of the sculptural. Whereas in sculpture the three-dimensional properties of the material, in being used in this transforming way, are brought from the non-intentional world of material into the intentional level of the work, this does not happen, for example in painting where such properties of material remain at the level of the non-intentional. Since seeing the work involves seeing the medium (the intentional transforming use of materials), and seeing the medium involves seeing material used with an orientation towards the work, sculptures remain objects in a sense throughout, at the level of the work as well as at the level of the medium. This is why it makes sense, for example, to think of *The Palace at 4 a.m.* as a stage set and talk about it in the kind of vocabulary we usually reserve for stage sets and other objects of this kind, or to think of *David* [fig.11] as a body (and not just a representation of a body, which is something paintings obviously can unproblematically have) and to speak of it in that sort of vocabulary whereas it makes no sense to do anything similar with any of Cézanne's fruit: with the sculptures we still have a thing here (even when considering the work and its representational, expressive, and other content, but also independently of, or over and above, this content), which we can think of and use in this way without changing/seeking to change or working against the kind of thing it is as a work.²⁰⁷ The theory I propose accounts for and explains the fact that we take sculptures in this kind of way not in terms of some underlying physical difference, or perceptual difference, but rather in virtue of the way materials are used in the production and appreciation of sculptural works (as opposed to paintings, photographs, and movies). With respect, for example, to the representational aspects of works, such as sculptures and paintings of fruit, the theory identifies a difference in the kind of relationship between the material and the representational work content located at the

²⁰⁷ To attempt a similar operation with a painting, or to talk of it in this way, if we could do such a thing at all with Cézanne's fruit, would be no longer to talk of or use it as a painting, and would therefore be to change/seek to change or work against the kind of thing it is as a work. Sculptures can enter into such games of make believe without being altered (with respect to its properties as a work) in this fashion.

intentional level of medium where, in being used a particular way the relationship between material and work is produced and constituted.

This alternative theory of the nature of the sculptural is similarly useful with respect to the *prima facie* differences between the sculptural and the painterly/photographic arts in terms of the (physical) appreciative activities which I suggested were closely related to the preceding issue. In Chapter 1 I simply noted some straightforward and obvious characteristic differences in the kinds of things we do with our bodies when appreciating sculptures and paintings - facts about our orientation towards the work such as the way we characteristically move about a sculpture, adopting a variety of perspectives on it, as contrasted with the more limited range of movements appropriate with respect to paintings and the characteristically uniform frontal perspective taken. It is easy to see how my alternative theory of the nature of the sculptural, which places the distinctive nature of the sculptural at the intentional level of the use of materials as a medium, both accounts for and explains these differences whereas there is no difference in kind between sculptures and paintings considered as materials, either in terms of the physical substances out of which the works are created or primary perceptual/phenomenal properties, which could by themselves account for and explain these differences. While it is true that for both sculpture and painting we might adopt a variety of positions and perspectives when considering features of the materials *qua* material, there does seem to be a difference in the way we treat these different kinds of works in appreciating them *as works*, a process which involves attention to the intentional *use* of the materials with an orientation towards the work rather than an attention to the materials *as materials*. It is only because there is a difference at this level, the level of medium where materials are used, that there is a difference of kind between these arts (and, I would claim further, it is because this difference is an essential one that there is an essential difference between these arts). That we treat many sculptures but not many paintings in these kinds of ways is accounted for because the use of three-dimensional materials functions directly as an artistic medium rendering the adoption of a variety of positions and perspectives both interesting and valuable, if not necessary, for the

appreciation of many²⁰⁸ sculptural works in a way which is not true of arts such as painting and photography where, at the level of medium, the use of three-dimensional properties remains indirect, supporting the properties used at the intentional level of medium while remaining themselves at the non-intentional level of material; and it is the fact that the use of three-dimensional properties of the material functions directly as a medium that explains why it is appropriate that we should behave in these kinds of ways with regard to (many) sculptures as opposed to (few) paintings. So rather than taking the fact of differing physical practices in appreciation as being constitutive or itself explanatory of the nature of sculpture, the alternative theory sees this fact itself as something in need of explanation given the absence of real physical or perceptual differences of kind at the level of material and mechanism, and it accounts for and explains these differences in terms of a theory of the nature of sculpture - it is because use of three-dimensional properties of material functions directly as an artistic medium that it makes sense at all for us to move around or touch (etc.) a sculpture in appreciating it, and it is the absence of such a use of materials in painting which explains why it is seldom if ever valuable to do anything similar in appreciating works of that kind.

I should emphasise again that the difference I am concerned with here is not one which exists as a difference of kind at the level of material, for in considering some paintings it might be valuable for us to adopt different perspectives on the work in order to notice certain features at the level of the material - for example, the tendency of the skull in Holbein's *French Ambassadors* [fig.57] to become more and more realistic looking as one increases the obliqueness of the angle of viewing. Now, such procedures may indeed be necessary to the appreciation of the work, at least in the sense in which a perception of relevant material properties is always relevant to appreciation (e.g. if we closed our eyes we would have little if any possibility of appreciating the work at all), and further may involve considering the use as medium to which such features of materials have been put by the artist. But in so far as the latter is the case for some paintings the

²⁰⁸ I suggest already that such features of behaviour are in fact not universal to sculpture, but the theory of the essence of sculpture helps us understand why such behaviour is appropriate to those sculptural works *as* sculptural works for which it is involved.

explanation for this will be found at the intentional level of the use of properties as a medium, and the explanation at this level in the case of painting will be different than the explanation of similar such cases in sculpture, since the use appealed to here will be a different kind of use than in the case of sculptures. The Physical and Perceptual theses, despite being unable to give a satisfactory explanatory account of such features, nevertheless took this kind of difference to be essential to sculpture. This would lead to difficulties for these theses in accounting for the nature of works the appreciation of which involves such activities but which seem to be characteristically painterly in every other sense, or works where such activities are more or less redundant but which are in every other sense characteristically sculptural. The point is that my theory explains why we behave in these ways in terms of a theory of the essence of sculpture (and of painting), but it does not wish to suggest that the *prima facie* differences in behaviours here are somehow in themselves essential to sculpture and painting. This relationship between an account of the essence of sculpture and the explanation of these facts not only renders such cases as mentioned above non-threatening, since it does not propose such facts to be constitutive or themselves explanatory of the essence of sculpture, it also accounts for and explains cases such as these. The differences in the physical activities of appreciation are not universally exclusive to the appreciation of one or other art form but follow contingently from facts about the ways materials have been used in particular cases in the arts and are explained (where found) by the fact of this use. If it is appropriate, as in the case of a painting such as *French Ambassadors*, for appreciators to vary their perspective on the work in particular kinds of ways, then while the movements themselves might be similar to the kinds of movements appreciators might make about a sculptural work, the explanation of this in the case of the pictorial differs in so far as it is based in different kinds of uses of materials at the intentional level of media. In the case of *French Ambassadors* for example, the appropriateness of such movements is not accounted for in terms of the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material functioning directly as an artistic medium, but by other *non-sculptural* uses of material.

Now, there does seem to be some difference between the *prima facie* observations about objectness and activity in so far as it seems that while the latter kind of

activity might be contingently associated with paintings or photographs, for example, whereas it seems the former can never be a characteristic of our appreciation of the pictorial *as* the pictorial, and whereas, on the other hand, it seems that sculptures will always be objects in the relevant sense, and that it will always, at least in principle, make sense to engage in these kinds of activities in appreciating sculptures even if only to ascertain that in particular cases it is of little value to do so and contributes little further to our appreciation of the work. But this difference with respect to objectness and activity is not a problem for my account, because the relationship it proposes between essence and explanation allows it to be seen that whether or not such features characterise our appreciation of works depends, in the end, upon the kinds of things they are: in so far as these things always characterise our appreciation of sculpture this is because of the kind of thing sculptures are (i.e. the kind of use of materials at the intentional level of the medium); and in so far as the activities of appreciation might be contingently associated with paintings and photographs but objectness never, then this is for a different reason of the same kind - the different kinds of things they are (i.e. the kind of use of materials at the intentional level of medium).

General physical and perceptual associations, and property-relevance:

The alternative account I propose is also successful in giving an appropriately structured explanatory account of the kinds of features of sculpture (and other art forms) proposed by the Physical and Perceptual Theses as being essential of sculpture, and it does so in a way which avoids the shortcomings of these theses, shortcomings which are largely due to an attempt to locate the essence of sculpture as an art and of sculptural artworks at the non-intentional level of mechanism and material, when artworks are essentially intentional in nature. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 I argued that there is no necessary (or relevant) difference of kind between sculpture and, for example, painting or photography, at either the non-intentional level of physical material or the non-intentional level of perceptual material and mechanism, but at most only contingent associations and general differences of degree. More than this, I also argued that such differences (even

had they been differences in kind) cannot in any case be either self-explanatory or explanatory of the essence of sculpture.

The Physical and the Perceptual Theses seek to explain the nature of sculpture in terms of putative facts about sculpture which, given the failure of these theses on the first point, and given the non-intentional nature of the physical and perceptual facts, themselves need to be accounted for and explained. This latter explanation can itself, I claimed, be taken to give a more adequate explanation of the nature of sculpture, after all the thing which was to be explained in the first place. This is because to the extent that certain physical and perceptual properties are generally associated with sculptural works, and in so far as it is the case that such properties are generally centrally involved to our appreciation of sculpture, then this is not because of some fact about the nature of those physical and perceptual properties themselves or facts about them as such, but because they are properties which have been *used* in the production of sculptural works, an explanation which belongs at the intentional level of medium and work. If sculptures tend to be bigger, heavier, many-sided objects which give us a sensation of “impacting between”, and painting thinner, lighter objects which give much less of an impression of energising the space between viewer and object, then this is not so much because there is a basic physical difference in kind at the non-intentional level of material and mechanism, but because materials and mechanisms of the same kind are used differently by artists and appreciators. My account of the nature of sculpture, because it proposes an intentional essence which exists at the level of medium and work rather than material and mechanism, tells us how it is that materials and mechanisms are used sculpturally and enables us to understand the basis for generalisations about the contingent physical characteristics of painting and sculptures. As before, when I pointed out that the reason we may tend to adopt a variety of perspective on a sculpture whereas we seldom do so with respect to paintings lies in the value of doing so given the ways materials have been used, so too with respect to the current issue.

Of course this is not to deny that there may be, for example, a variety of “hard-wired” perceptual responses to certain kinds of material configurations of mass - “impacting between”, for example, might be just such an effect - but it is to deny that

such features are themselves explanatory of the nature of sculpture. The point here is largely one about explanatory structure. The account of the sculptural essence which I propose allows us to understand the contingent distribution of such features in terms of the ways in which these properties, and the other physical properties which underlie them, are used by sculptors and appreciators, and it does so in a way which as well fits well with the reasons properties such as these might be so used in the first place. Such features are not constitutive of the sculptural, but in so far as they are characteristic this is because they may characteristically follow from the ways materials are used, wherein the essence of the sculptural lies: the existence of such features does not make something sculptural or explain the sculptural, rather the sculptural nature of the use of materials concerned explains and accounts for the existence of these features.

Further, my account of the nature of the sculptural enables us to understand the basis for possible generalisations not just about the kinds of properties works exhibit at the material level, but also about the different kinds of properties of material and mechanism which are *relevant* to our appreciation of sculptural works (as opposed to our appreciation of other arts, such as painting or photography). Physical and Perceptual Theses are unable to provide any explanation of such differences in property relevance because they give accounts of the nature of sculpture which are limited to the non-intentional level of material and mechanism - given that there is no difference of kind at the non-intentional level of material and mechanism, such relevance differences are left utterly mysterious. The best these accounts could do, without being able to appeal to necessary property differences, would be to suppose that relevance differences were accounted for by contingent property differences (themselves inadequately explained), but this would not provide an adequate basis for a theory of an essence of sculpture, or of the differences between sculpture and the other art *as such*. On the other hand, and in contrast, on the theory I propose the sculptural essence gives a straightforward answer to this issue: relevance differences exist *because* the properties (of the same kind at the non-intentional level) have been *used* differently (at the intentional level) and it is the way materials are *used* which is essential to sculpture. At the level of art forms, if it is the case that three-dimensional properties - (such as the three-dimensional thickness of a material)

- has a certain relevance in our appreciation of a work - (such as, for example, a direct role in determining representational content) - this is because properties of this kind are used by the sculptor and other appreciators in a certain way - (such as, for example, directly to represent). Similarly, at the level of artworks, if some three-dimensional property - (the three-dimensional thickness of material) - has a certain relevance in our appreciation of a work - (such as, for example, a direct role in determining the representational content of a work vis-à-vis the thickness of an arm) - this is because the property is used by the sculptor and other appreciators in a certain way - (such as, for example, directly to represent the thickness of an arm). Independently of being used in such an such a way, independently, that is, of intentional considerations, there is nothing non-intentional which can account for a property or kind of property having *this* or that relevance in appreciation.

Artworks and art practices:

In Chapter 1 I made a distinction between object-based and practice-based approaches to asking and answering the question of the nature of the sculptural - a distinction between the question “what properties of objects make them sculptures?”, and the question “what is distinctive of sculptural art-practice?”. There I argued that the best that the “object” approach can achieve is to identify as sculpture-making some relational property or properties of the kind suggested by institutional and historical theories of art, such as the property of being in a particular relation to the “art world” of sculpture, or to earlier sculptural artworks. Such accounts are largely uninformative in so far as they recursively define sculpture in terms of sculpture, or categorise objects as sculptures in terms of their relationship to the art of sculpture while saying little of interest about the art of sculpture. To be informative a theory must go on to say something more about the characteristic and distinctive features of the art-practice of sculpture. I also argued that it would, in any case, be wrong to assume that to give an account of the properties of sculptural objects was also, at the same time, the same as giving an account of the nature of the art practice of sculpture, of sculpture as an art form. I argued that what we need, as a matter of the appropriate structure of explanation, is an account of sculpture as an art

practice rather than an account of the properties of objects which are members of the group of products of that form of art practice. I argued that the properties of sculptural works have to be explained by reference to the terms of the art-practice of sculpture, and to do this it is not enough simply to describe the properties (even the intentional properties) of sculptural objects, but requires some general account of sculptural art-practice. An adequate account of the terms of the art-practice of sculpture explains the production of art-objects and the significance and artistic role of their properties, rather than the existence of objects with particular properties determining the terms of the practice. Rather than being sculpture-making properties, they are properties which only have a certain significance and artistic role as the properties of works produced and appreciated in terms of the art-practice of sculpture. Accounts of the properties of sculptural objects (physical, perceptual) lie at the beginning rather than the end of an explanatory account of the art-practice of sculpture and how its products function artistically - they give us what needs to be explained rather than an explanation of the nature of sculpture, and require for their explanation an account of the nature of sculptural art-practice. Whereas both Physical and Perceptual Theses fall short on each count, my account of the nature of sculpture is immune to shortcomings of this sort.

Now, it will be recalled that in the first section of the present chapter, while initially discussing the variety of essentialism I favour, I suggested that “there is something in virtue of which sculptural works are sculptural works, something which is more than just being sculptural works, and which is more than just family resemblance, and which is as distinctive feature of sculpture as an art”. Now, it could be thought at first glance that there is something of a contradiction in my position here - on the one hand I criticise “object-accounts” for being uninformative, yet on the other I appear to suggest that there is after all an informative account of this general form. After all, if the sculptural is essentially an art-practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium doesn’t this imply that what makes an artwork a sculptural work is the fact that the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium *for that work*? Not only this, but doesn’t my account then begin to sound awfully like

one which seems to take an account of the nature of sculptural works to be also an account of the nature of sculptural art-practice since sculptural art-practice would surely be just that practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of material art-objects functions directly as an artistic medium for the works? If this were the case, and if my earlier arguments were correct and a sufficient basis for criticising other theories, then my account must be in serious trouble.

But I don't think that actually there is an inconsistency of this sort here and it should be clear why: the logical direction of explanation, and of the implications, here is quite the reverse of the accounts I criticised in terms of the respective *priority* attached to artworks and art practices. On my theory it is true of particular sculptural works that for those works the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium, it is true that what makes those works sculptural works is that for those works the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium, and it is true that the defining characteristic of sculptural art practice is the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium. But in my account art-practice, (specifically the *practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium*), has priority over any claims about the nature of particular artworks. In so far as we can say of individual artworks that they each share a common, and a common sculpture-making property, this property is a relational one of the sort I suggested was the only kind available to "object" accounts but answers to "object" questions for which my theory provides a basis are derivative from answers to "practice" questions (rather than being either vice versa or considered independent). Further, and unlike the uninformatively recursive accounts which relate objects to practices without giving content to the practice, my theory does give content to an account of the nature of this practice. This is in fact just the kind of relationship which I argued ought to exist between object and practice accounts.

So, the relationship of artworks to art-practices, which was problematic in Read's and Martin's theses, can be made sense of by an account, such as the one I propose, which seeks to locate the essence of the sculptural at the intentional level in terms of the

ways in which features of mechanism and material have been used. Art-practice enters as relevant at the level of medium, and persists at the level of the work, in so far as the intentional use of materials occurs in the context of, or as part of, art-practice. In so far as art practice is relevant to determining the use which is made of material and mechanism (of what is done, or going on) it is relevant to an understanding of the nature of the work. In so far as there are distinctive physical and perceptual properties of sculptural works, it is their use in sculptural production and appreciation which allows us to understand why or how they are characteristic and important features of sculptural works (even if they are not necessary). One of the shortcomings of the Physical and Perceptual theses is that they provide definitions which seem to exclude works which we normally regard and treat as sculptures, largely because of the attempt to provide a non-intentional definition of the nature of sculpture. If one locates the nature of sculpture at the intentional level, in terms of the use made of materials in the production and appreciation of sculptural works, then there is always going to be a connection between what sculptures are and what it is to regard, treat, or use something as a sculpture. The question “what is sculpture” becomes the question of “what is it to (appropriately) regard/use something as sculpture”, since for something to be a sculpture just is for things appropriately to be used in the way we use sculptures. What is at issue, when trying to understand the nature of sculpture as an art and sculptural works both in general and in particular, given the intentional nature of medium and work, is understanding what is being done, what is going on. This is where the essence of sculpture lies, I suggest, not with some set of necessary and/or sufficient physical or perceptual properties.

Critical relevance:

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that while a theory of the nature of sculpture could not be expected to have a direct usefulness to appreciators in judgement (beyond perhaps categorical questions of identification), at least in these sense of answering evaluative (and interpretive) questions, it should be expected to locate the ground of *sculptural* value (and content). I believe my theory does play this role (its explanation of the kinds of features I have been addressing in this section so far is an example of this).

But the version of essentialism I propose does more than simply make sense of and explain these kinds of features of what I have called the vocabulary of sculptural appreciative practice: it also *grounds* these differences.

I don't just mean that my theory is consistent with, and captures, the close conceptual and practical connection between sculptural criticism and the sculptural nature of the works criticised, where in the appropriate content of criticism is delimited at least in part by the nature of what is being criticised²⁰⁹. What I mean is that the kind of explanation I give of these features, while rejecting physical and perceptual explanations of the differences, does not either give an explanation simply in terms of the vocabulary of appreciative practice itself. In other words, it does not simply take these facts as ones which themselves explain the nature of sculpture as if, in the absence of real physical and perceptual differences at the level of material it is enough, or explanatorily sufficient, to put the difference down to a mere difference in ways of talking about objects which are really just the same. Of course I do, in a sense, explain these features in terms of the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation, but on my account this vocabulary is not itself a free-floating or arbitrary practice, is not simply a way of talking. Instead of floating free, these differences are rooted in real practical differences at the intentional level of the use of materials and to this extent the distinctive critical vocabulary of the sculptural is not merely noted and explained, but also grounded.

Without such a grounding, our sculptural criticism would be either misfounded on, and ill-explained in terms of, physical and perceptual differences, or left ungrounded. Whether or not the latter result would necessarily be problematic is in a sense another issue, or set of issues, but there will most likely be different ontological and epistemological consequences which may or may not themselves be problematic or felt desirable or undesirable.²¹⁰ There may well be free-floating critical (and other)

²⁰⁹ It is the fact that a work is *sculptural* that makes it appropriate to say of it the kinds of things we say about *sculptures* - if the work were not a sculptural we would expect to say different things about it since different features would be relevant to our appreciative judgements.

²¹⁰ These might include questions about the identity of works, issues of ontological and epistemological relativism, realism, truth, validity of critical judgements, and so forth.

vocabularies²¹¹, where what we are doing is essentially just talk, and if this were the case for sculpture then this and all its ontological and epistemological consequences, desirable or otherwise, would need to be addressed further. However, I think that, as it happens, this is not the case for the sculptural. Perhaps, (in so far as there might be ungrounded vocabularies), this need not have been the case, but my arguments for my alternative account of the nature of sculpture suggest that our sculptural critical vocabulary is grounded in the way I have outlined above.

5.6 Conclusion

My account of the nature of sculpture raises a number of obvious further questions. If I am correct then there will be a number of ontological and epistemological consequences, assumptions, and pre-conditions which need to be explored. For example, if the nature of sculpture is explained in terms of how we regard and use material objects and their properties, what is it that makes it appropriate to so use and regard these objects and their properties? What makes it the case that materials have been used in this way, in the sculptural way, rather than another? What, in that sense, determines the content of sculptural works, or determines a work's nature as sculpture? These are really questions which only come in at another level since what I am doing here is explaining the nature of sculpture in terms of the distinctive way in which the use of three-dimensional material properties functions as an artistic medium rather than seeking to explain the metaphysics or ontology of *use* as such. Nevertheless, I need to say something more to justify the plausibility and validity of seeking to ground the sculptural in this way, since if my theory is to be plausible then there will need to be answers to these sorts of questions.

In the next couple of chapters I address these issues (among others) about the determination of use. I am inclined to think that such facts about whether and how things have been used are explained in just the same kinds of ways in this case as in other cases of use and intentional action. The position I favour and will argue for is a form of sophisticated intentionalism. However, should intentionalism be false with respect to such questions, there may yet be some other kind of account which can ground the central

²¹¹ This is a controversial issue, and a large one, which I shall avoid getting into. See, for example, Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

core of my theory of the essence of the sculptural. It is perhaps an additional advantage of my theory that its entire success does not hinge on any particular theory being true about things at this level beyond the general position that there can be facts of the matter as regards use.²¹²

²¹² If there are no facts of the matter of this sort, then we would have to say that there is no deep fact of the matter about what is sculptural, and in the end no deeper appropriateness outside our contingent free-floating practices of regarding things in such a way. Of course, this is not a view I find plausible or attractive, but it is still worth noting that a version of my form of essentialism could be compatible with non-foundationalism of this kind.

Plates



fig.1. Antony Gormley. *Learning to Think*.

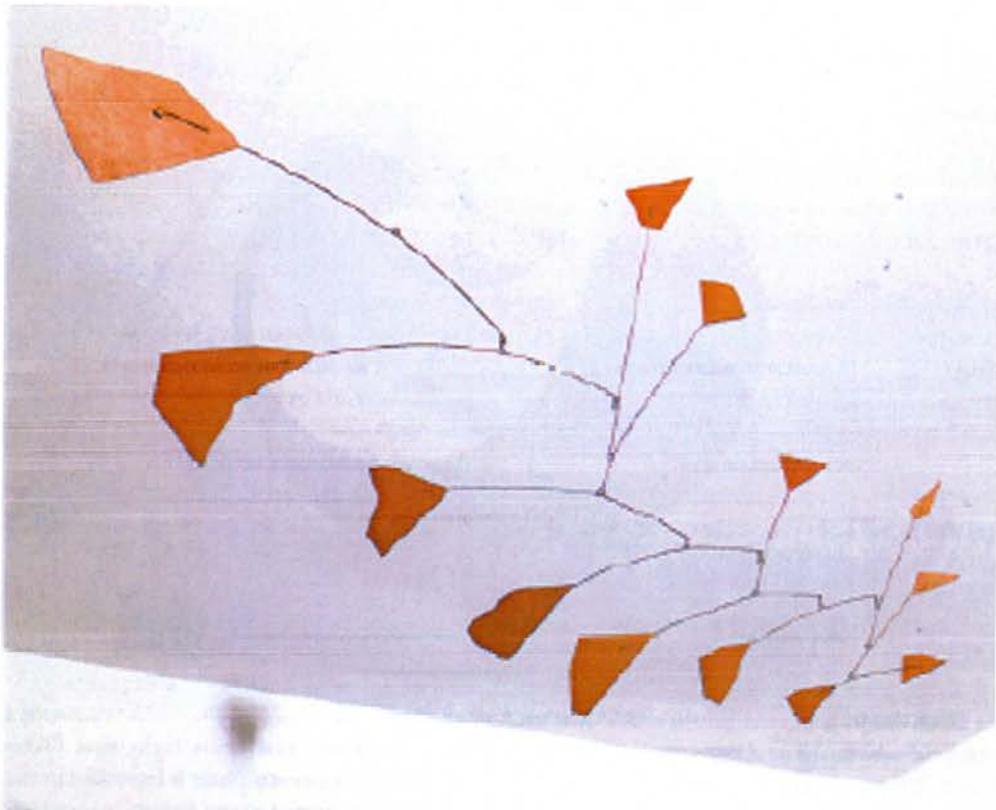


fig.2. Alexander Calder. *Red Polygons*



fig.3. Jan van Eyck *Wedding Portrait*.

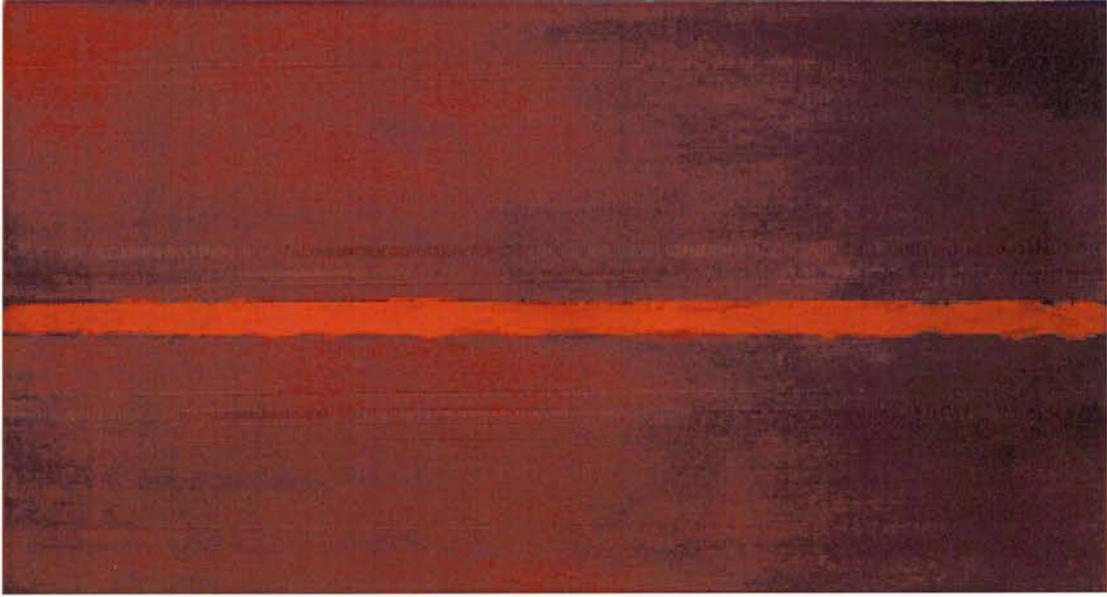


fig.4. Barnett Newman. *Onement I*



fig.5. Pablo Picasso. *Head of a Woman.*

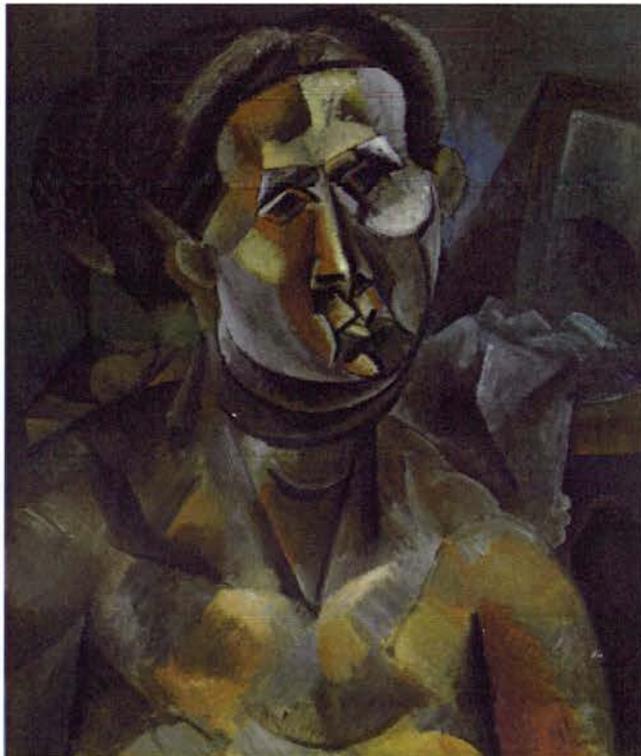


fig.6. Pablo Picasso. *Head and Shoulders of a Woman.*



fig.7. Christo and Jeanne-Claude. *Wall of Oil Barrels - Iron Curtain, rue Visconti, Paris, 27 June 1962.*

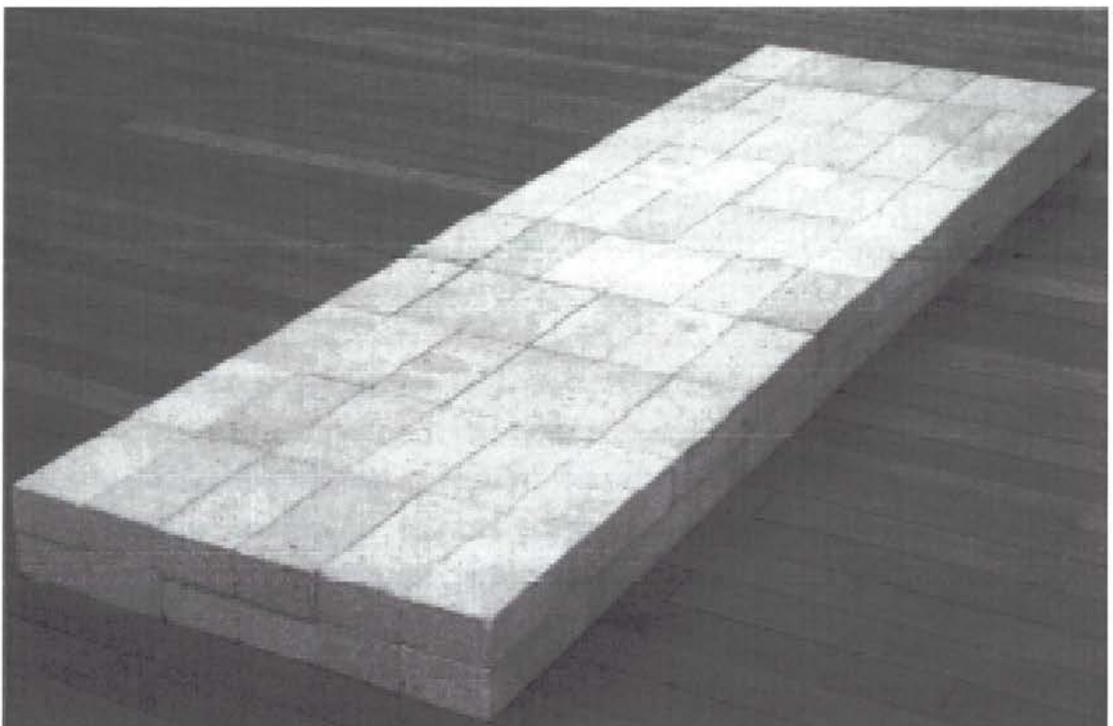


fig.8. Carl Andre. *Equivalent VIII.*



fig.9. *Kaaper*. Giza c.2400BC



fig.10. *Zeus*. c.460BC



fig.11. Michelangelo Buonarroti. *David*.

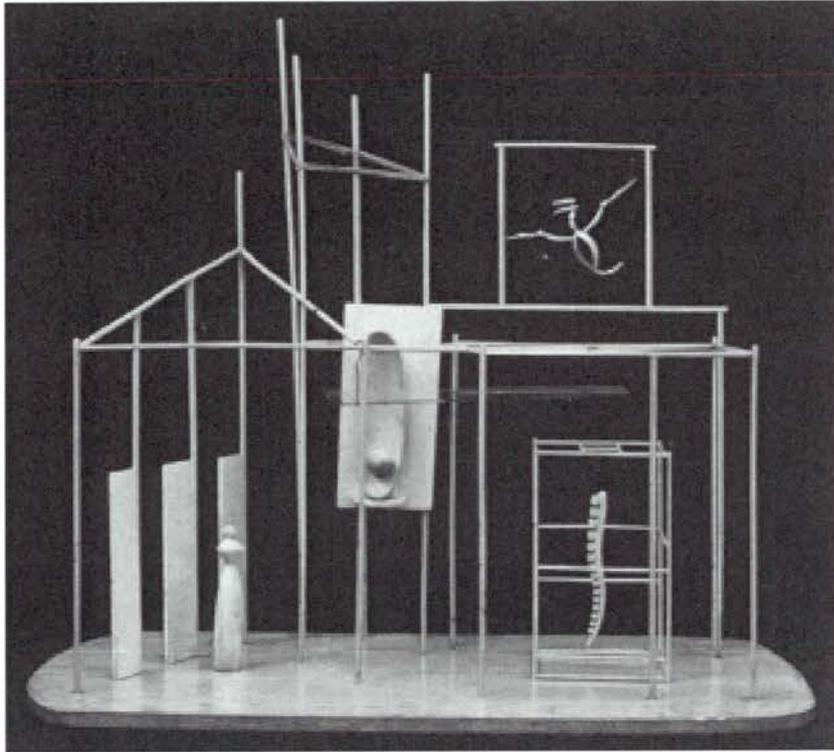


fig.12. Alberto Giacometti. *The Palace at 4 a.m.*

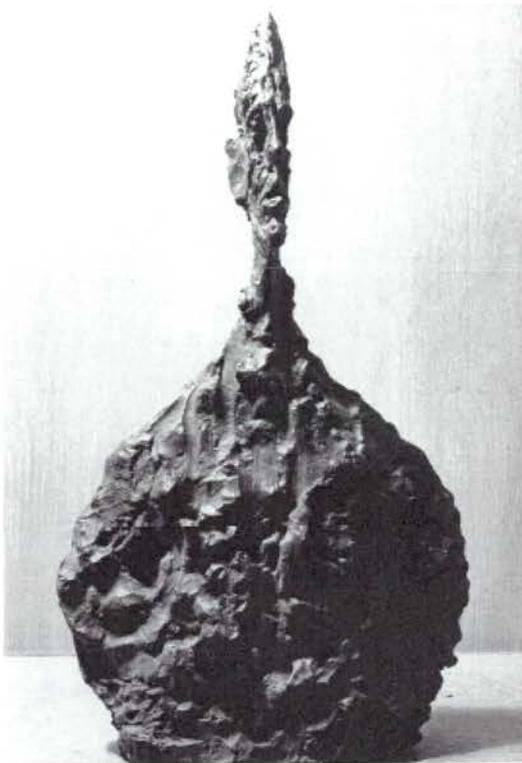


fig.13. Alberto Giacometti.
Bust of Diego. (front)



fig.14. Alberto Giacometti.
Bust of Diego. (side)

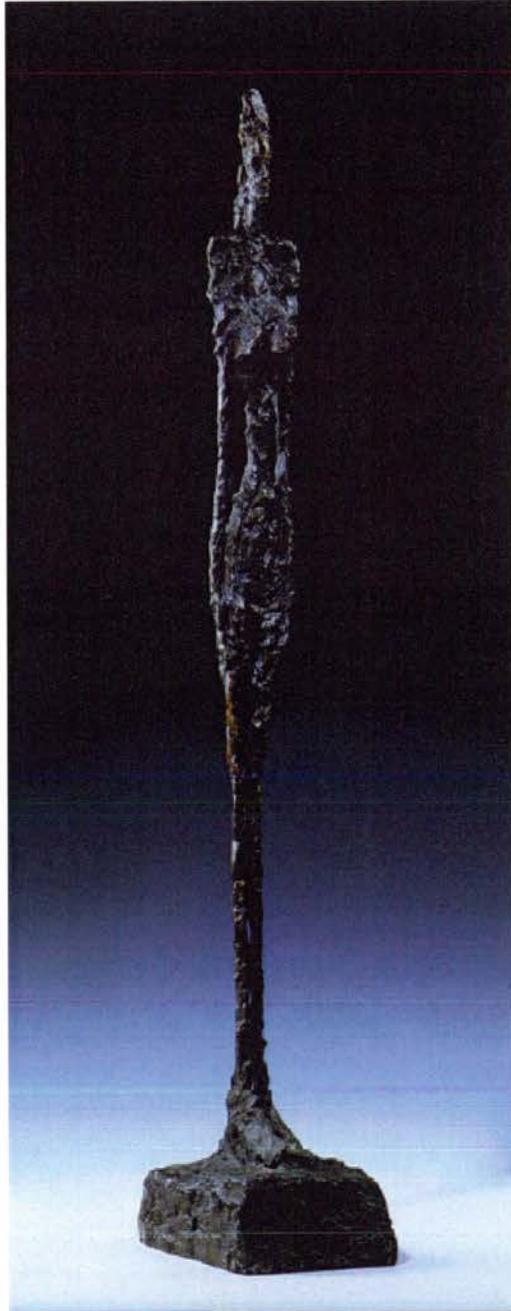


fig.15. Alberto Giacometti.
Woman Standing.



fig.16. Paul Cézanne.
*Still Life with
Commode.*

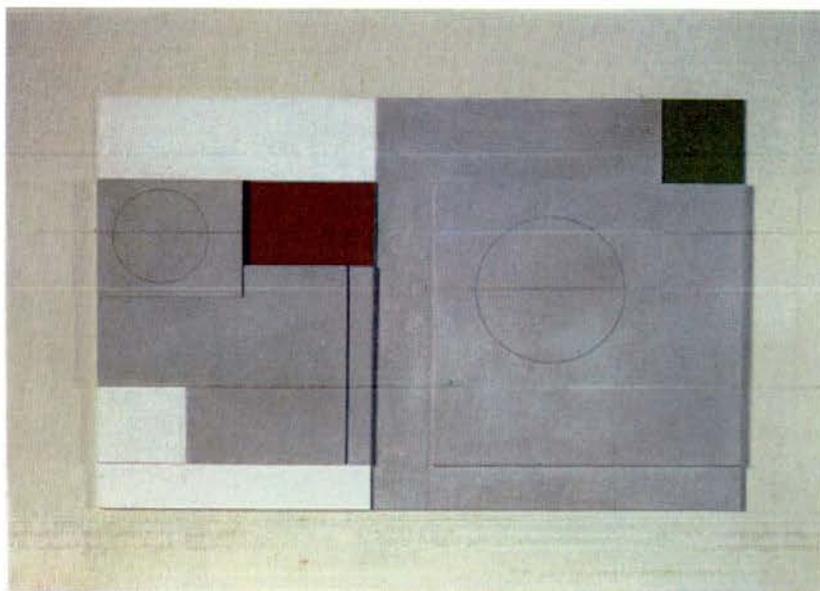


fig.17. Ben Nicholson. 1939 (*Painted Relief - version I*).

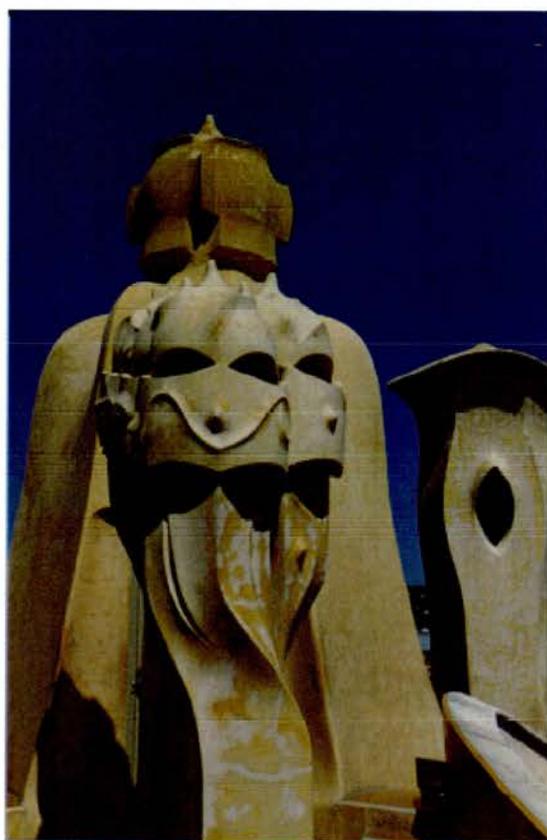


fig.18. Antonio Gaudi. chimneys of the *Casa Milà*.



fig.19. Constantin Brancusi. *Gate of the Kiss*.



fig.20.
Kurt Schwitters.
Merzbau.



fig.21. Frank Auerbach.
Head of E.O.W.



fig.22. Jean Arp. *Forest*.



fig.23. Robert Rauschenberg. *Canyon*.

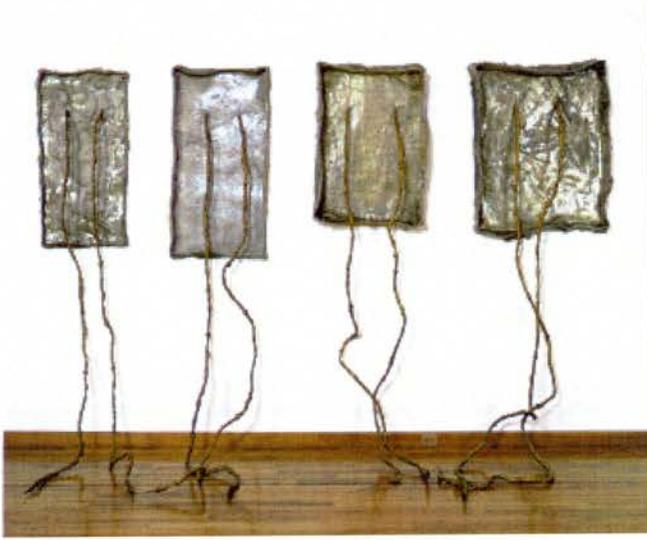


fig.24. Eva Hesse. *Untitled*.

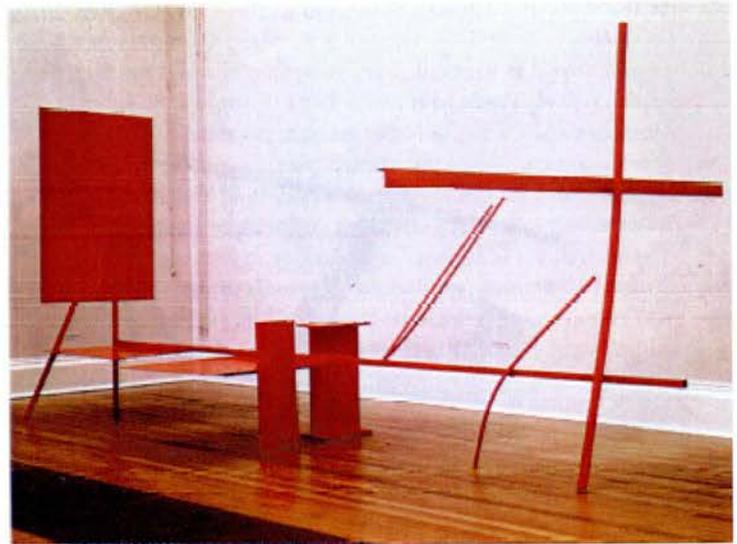


fig.25. Antony Caro. *Early One Morning*.

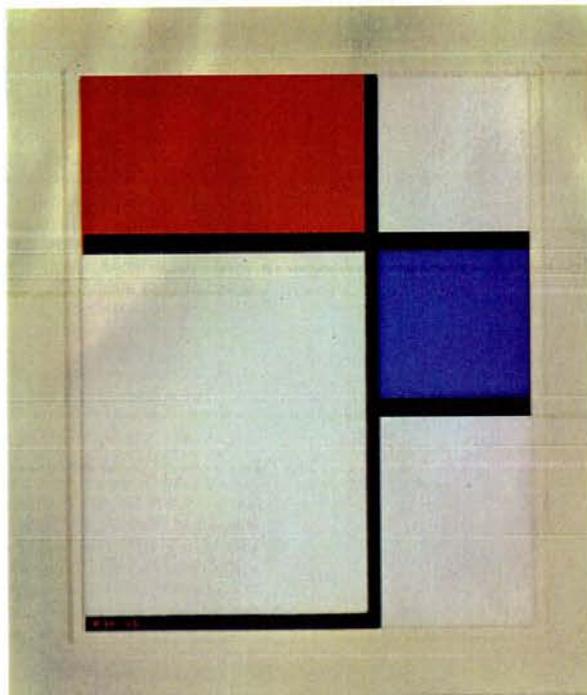


fig.26. Piet Mondrian. *Composition*.



fig.27. Alberto Giacometti. *Diego on a Stele III*.



fig.28. Alberti's *Designer*.

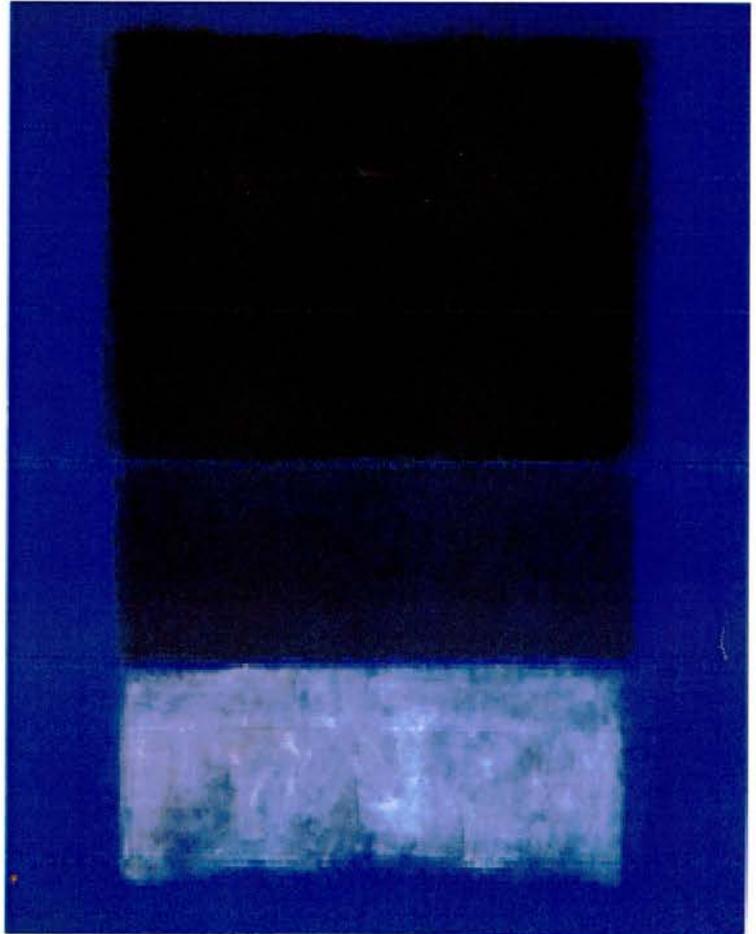


fig.29. Mark Rothko. *White and Greens in Blue*.

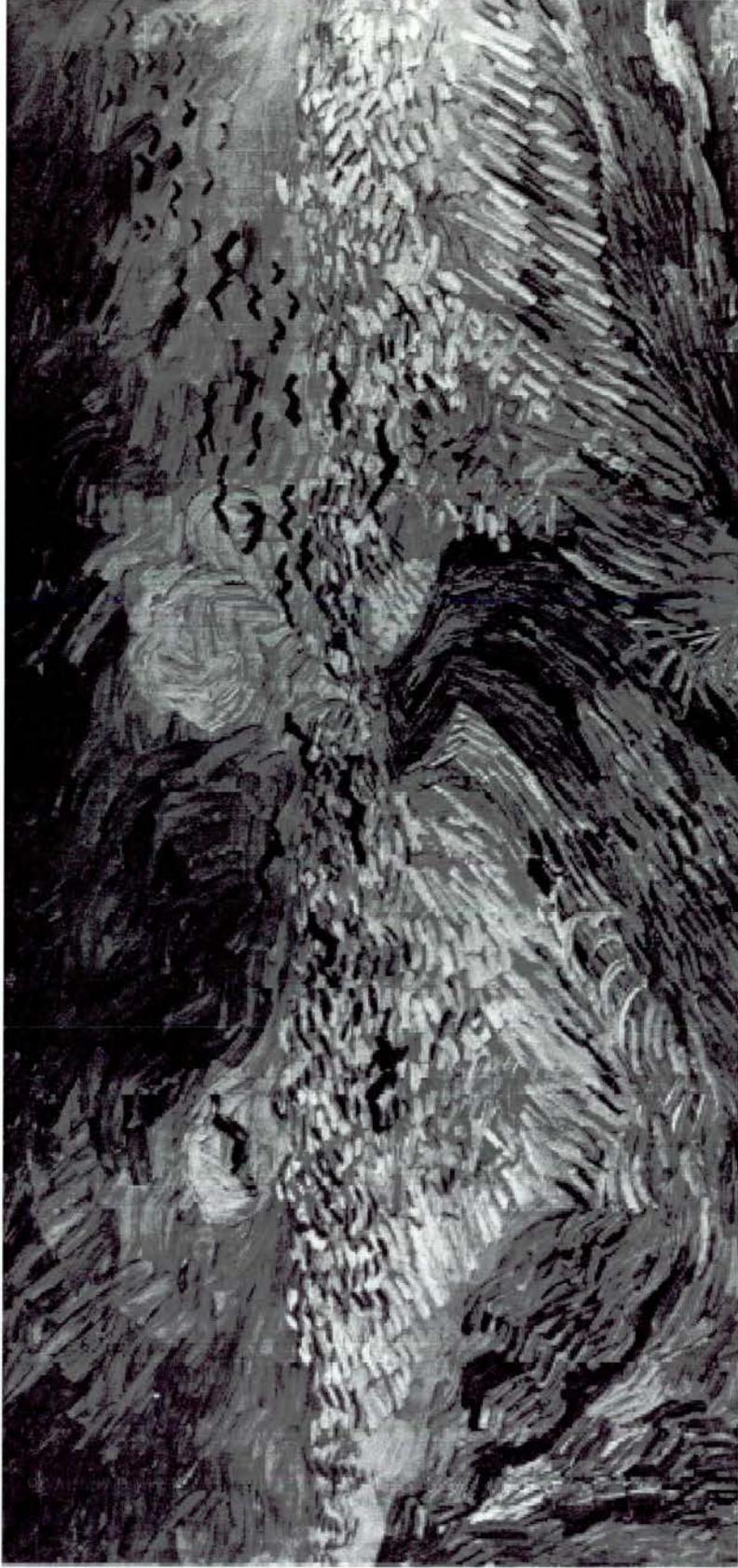


fig.30. Vincent van Gogh. *Wheat Fields Under a Threatening Sky*.



fig.31. Auguste Rodin. *Burghers of Calais*.

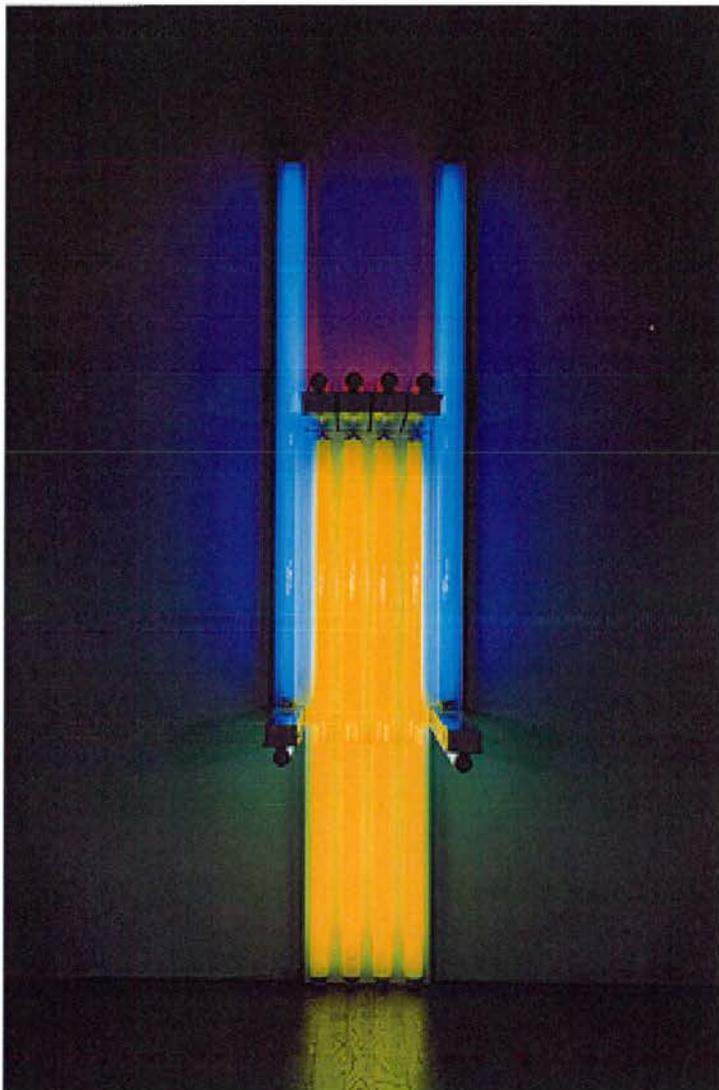


fig.32. Dan Flavin. *Untitled (to Lucie Rie, master potter) 10*.

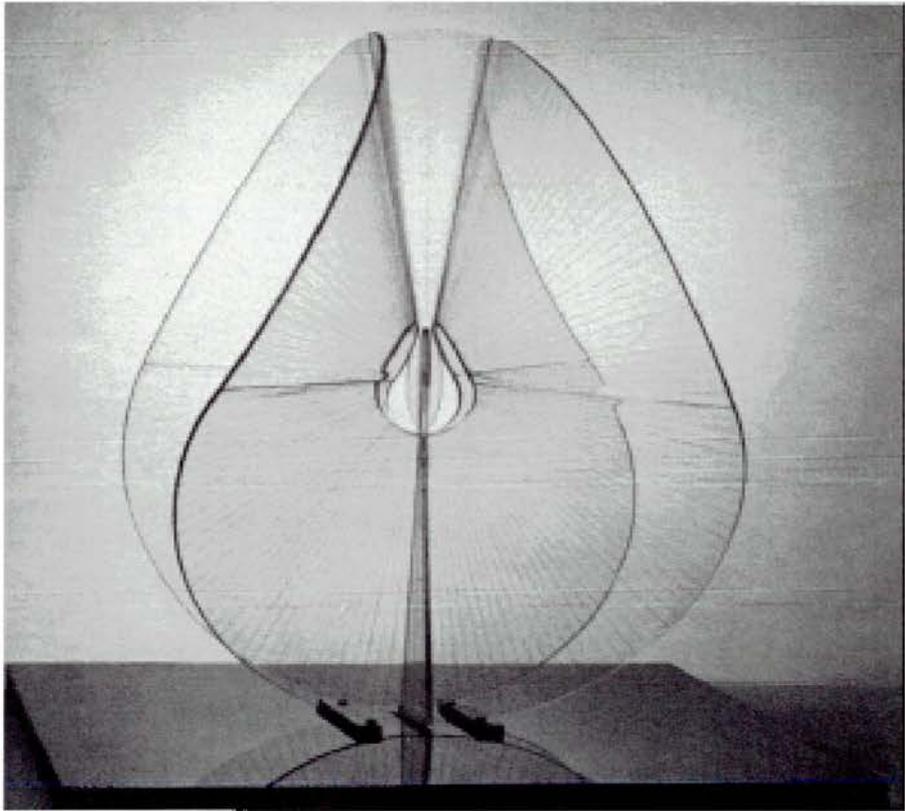


fig.33. Naum Gabo. *Translucent Variation of a Spheric Theme.*

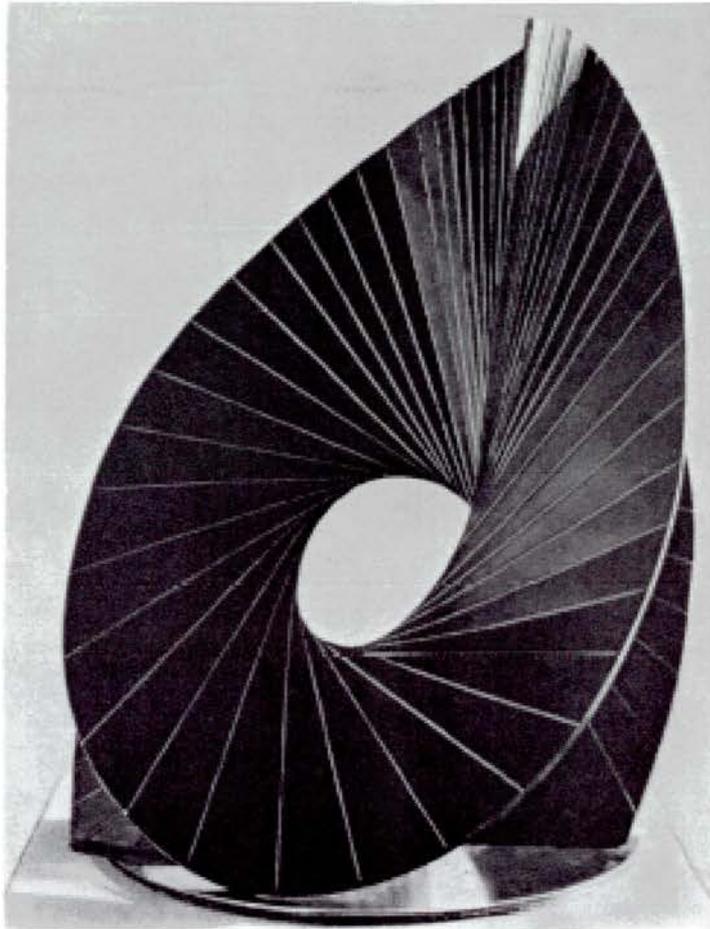


fig.34. Antoine Pevsner. *Developable Surface.*



fig.35 Giorgione and Titian. *Venus Sleeping in a Landscape.*



fig.36. Angelo Michele Colonna and Agostino Mitelli.
Wall Decoration in the Salone delle Guardie.



fig.37. George Rickey. *Two Lines - Temporal I*.

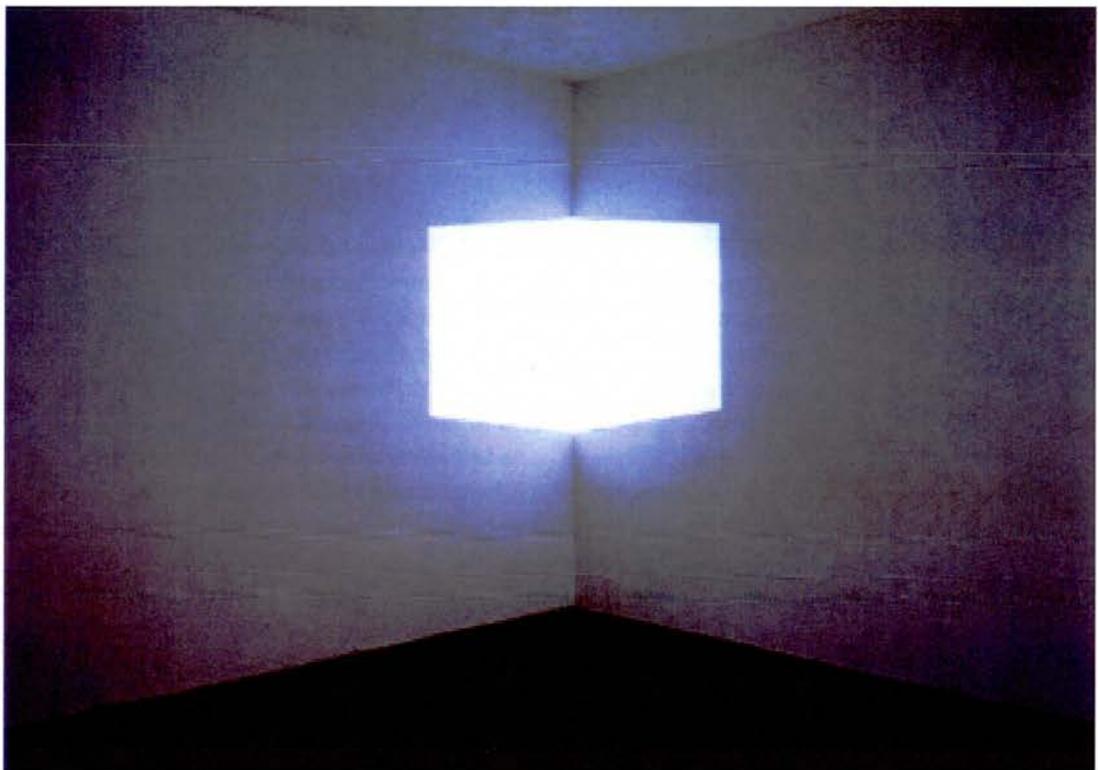


fig.38. James Turrell. *Afrum Proto*



fig.39. Marcel Duchamp. *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*



fig.40. Auguste Rodin. *The Age of Bronze.*



fig.41. Alberto Giacometti. *Four Figures on a Stand*.



fig.42. Rembrandt van Rijn. *Polish Rider*.

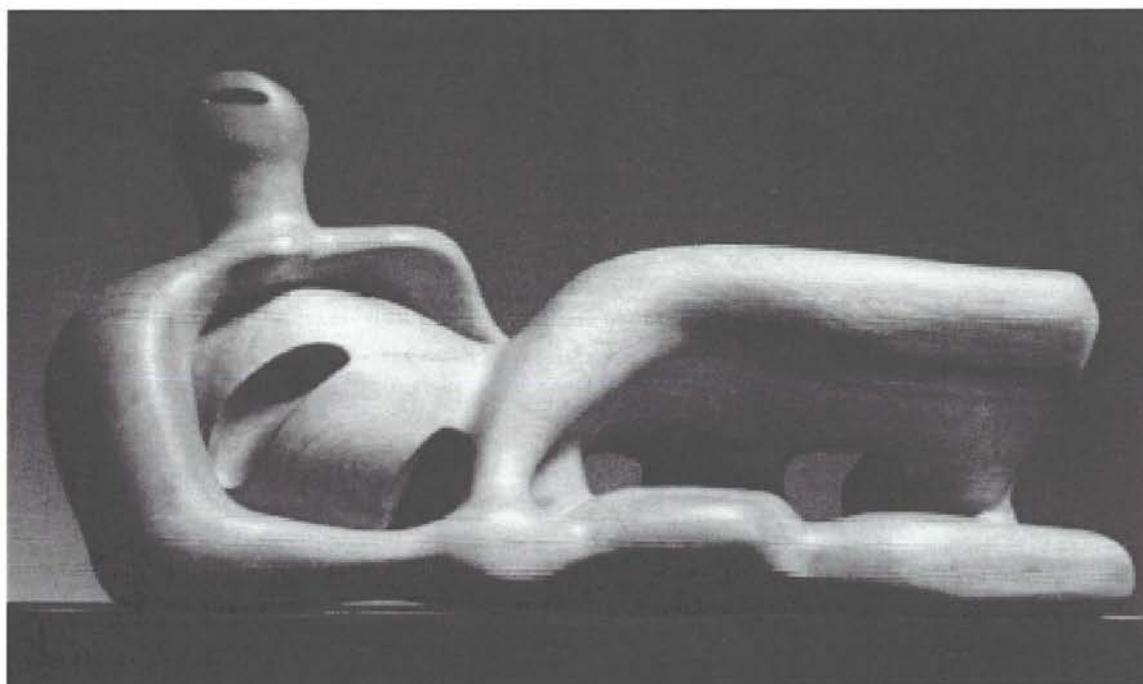


fig.43. Henry Moore. *Reclining Figure*.



fig.44. Richard Serra. *Tilted Arc*.

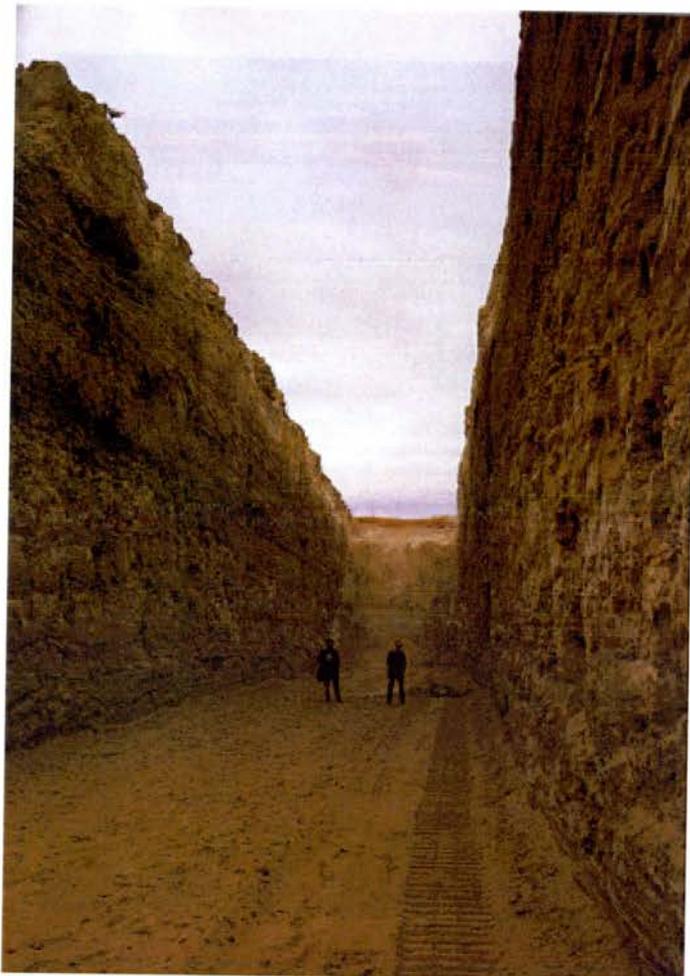


fig.45. Michael Heizer. *Double Negative*.



fig.46. Robert Smithson. *Spiral Jetty*.

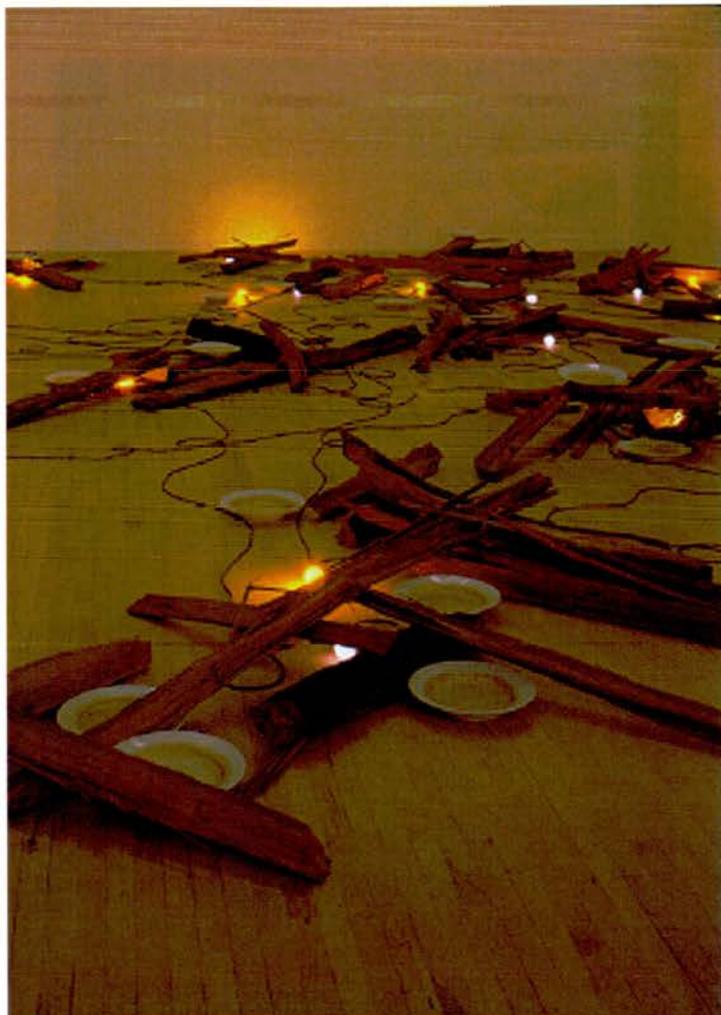


fig.47. Lothar Baumgarten. *Terra Incognita*.

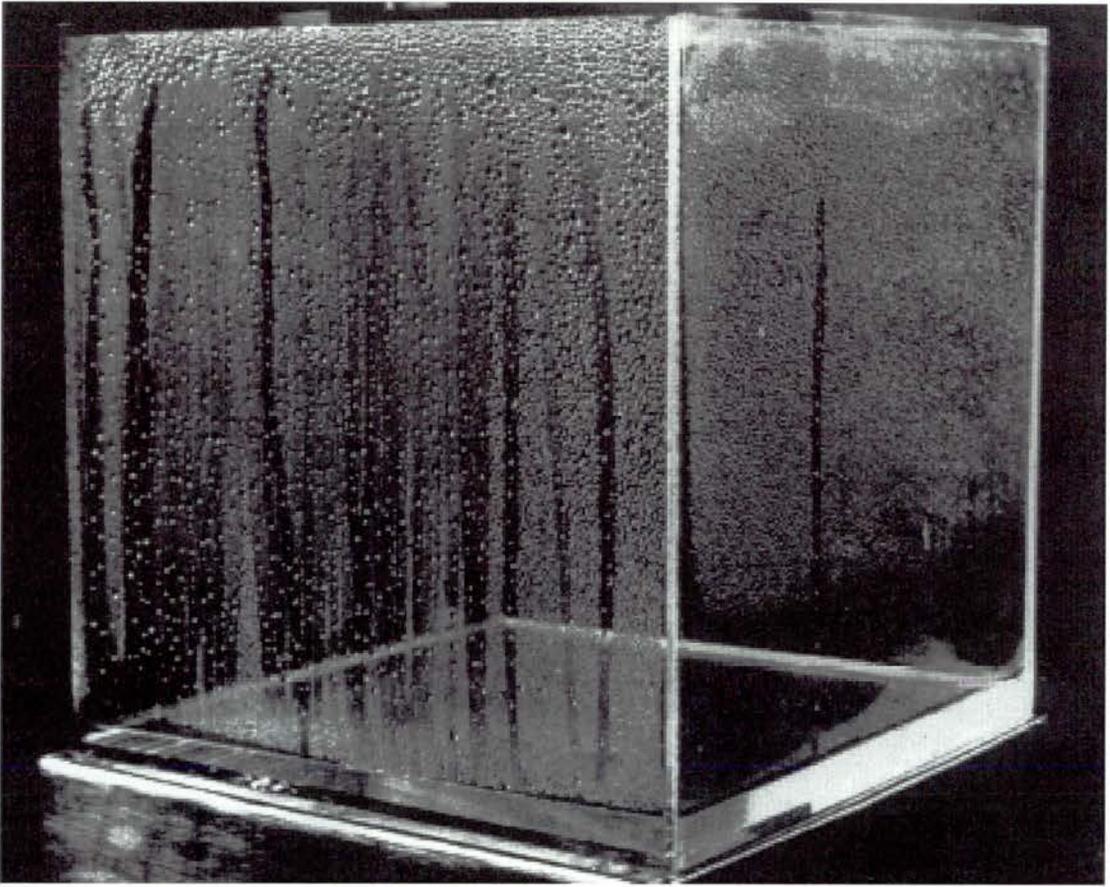


fig.48. Hans Haacke. *Condensation Cube*.



fig.49. Paul Cézanne. *Mont Sainte Victoire*.

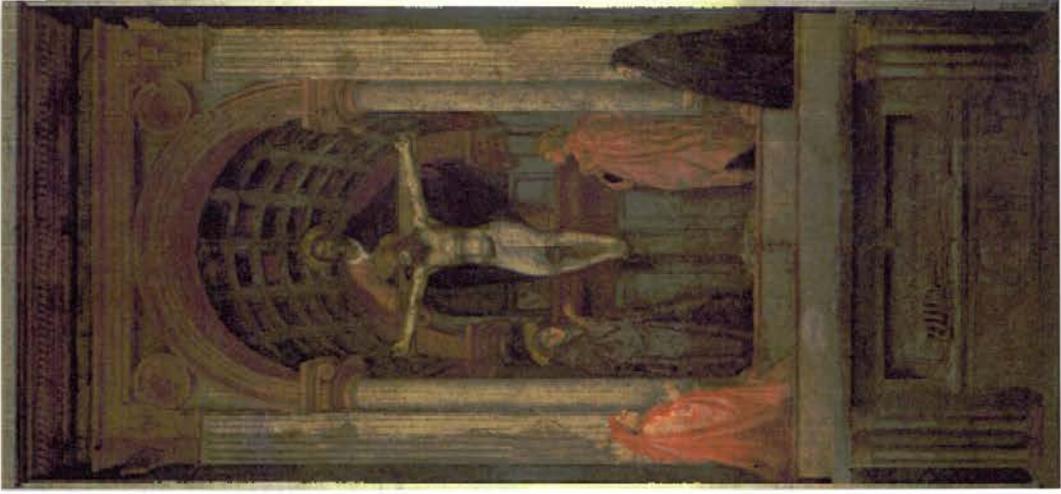


fig.50. Masaccio. *Holy Trinity with the Virgin, Saint John, and Two Donors.*



fig.51. Barnett Newman. *with Whose Afraid of Red, and Yellow, Blue III.*



fig.52. Pablo Picasso. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*.



fig.53. Vincent van Gogh. *A Pair of Shoes*

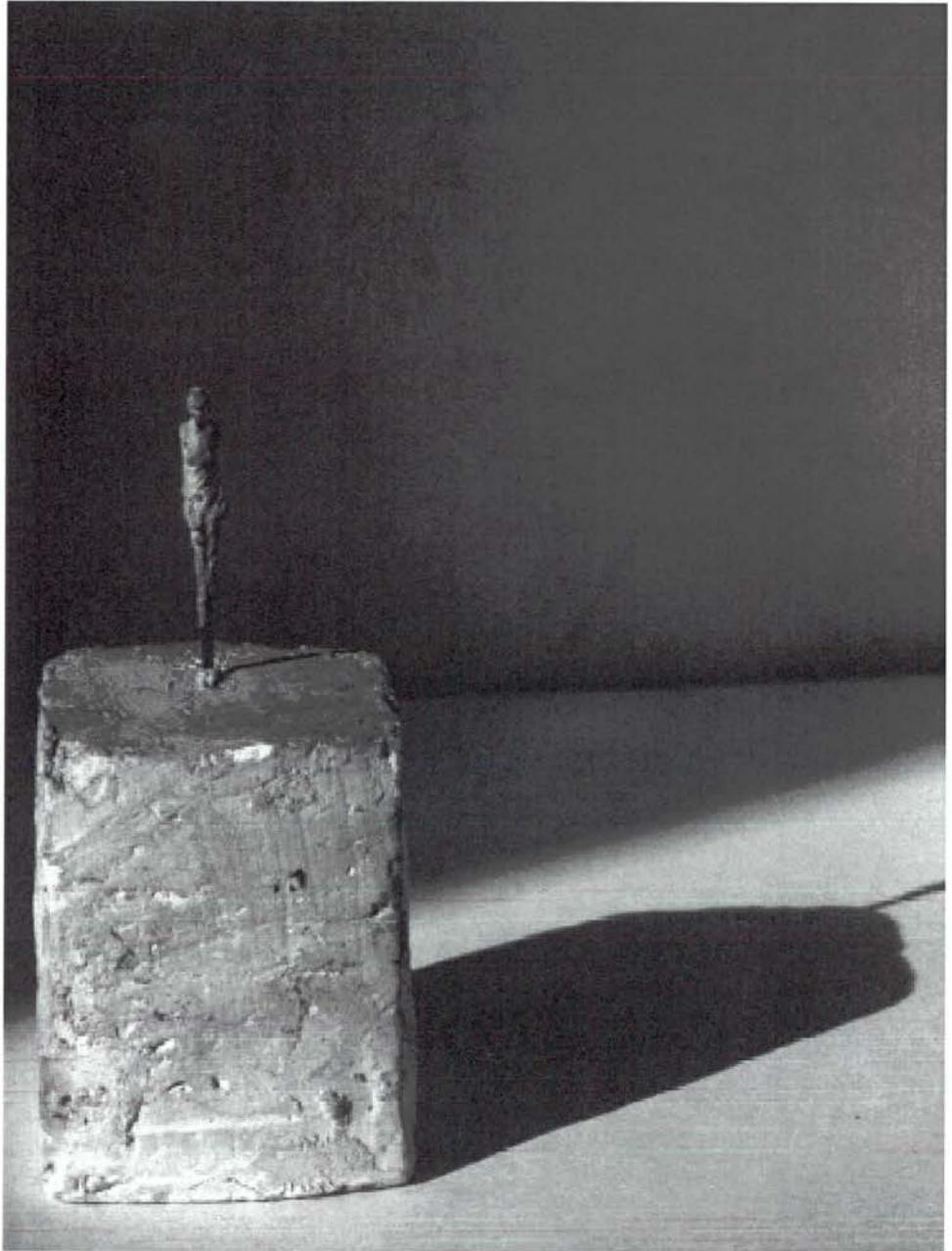


fig.54. Alberto Giacometti.
Figurine on a Base.



fig.55. Frank Auerbach. *Head of E.O.W.*



fig.56. Anselm Kiefer. *Isis and Osiris*.



fig.57. Hans Holbein the Younger. *The French Ambassadors*



fig.58. Spitting Image. *P.M. Thatcher*



fig.59. Umberto Boccioni.
Development of a Bottle in Space.



fig.60. Umberto Boccioni.
Unique Forms of Continuity in Space.



fig.61. Alberto Giacometti. *Slaughtered Woman.*



fig.63.
Michelangelo.
David (detail).

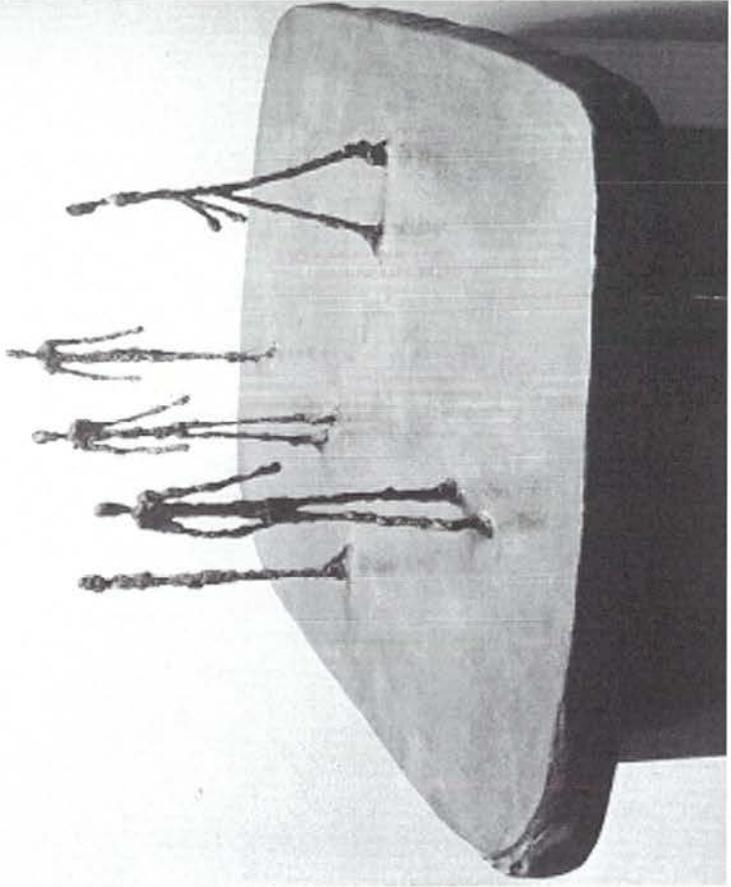


fig.52. Alberto Giacometti. *Square II*.



fig.64. Pablo Picasso. *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler.*



fig.65. Duane Hanson. *Seated Artist.*

Part II. Sculptural Representation

Chapter Six

Sculptural Representation (I): Existing Accounts

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Resemblance

6.3 Seeing-in

6.4 Make-believe

6.5 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

So far I have taken a critical look at a number of existing theories of the nature of sculpture, and proposed my own alternative theory. As I suggested in Chapter 5, one of the ways in which a theory of the nature of sculpture might be useful to us is in coming to a better understanding of the ways in which some artistic features, such as representation or expression, function sculpturally. In this and the following chapter I bring my theory of the nature of sculpture to bear upon a number of questions concerning the nature and functioning of sculptural representation.

Representation has received a great deal of philosophical attention, and the theories which seek to explain its nature or key aspects are manifold. Rather than survey the entire range of views on the nature and functioning of representation, I will focus on three influential theoretical stances: the “resemblance” theory, Richard Wollheim’s “seeing-in” theory, and Kendall Walton’s “make-believe” theory.²¹³ Since these theories have been developed predominantly as accounts of *pictorial* representation, or in Walton’s case as a general theory of representation, I will examine how well, if at all, they might apply to *sculptural* representation.

²¹³ See Hopkins’ “Resemblance and Misrepresentation” in *Mind*, Vol. 103. 412. October 1994; Wollheim’s *Painting as an Art*; and Walton’s *Mimesis as Make-Believe* Harvard University Press: Harvard, 1990.

The question “what is sculptural representation?” can be understood in a number of ways:

(i) as a question about what features make a representation sculptural;

(ii) as a question about what determines a sculpture’s status as representational; i.e., its representationality;

(iii) as a question about what determines the object of a sculptural representation (the denotative aspect of representation); and

(iv) as a question about what determines the content of a sculptural representation (the contentful aspect of representation, i.e., the qualities represented as being those of the object).

Seldom in the literature are these issues given separate treatment, and it is often unclear which aspect is addressed by a theory or how the accounts of these different aspects should be seen to fit together. Generally each aspect is taken to be accounted for by the very same theoretical considerations, and the theories I will examine in this Chapter are no exception. Hopkins, Wollheim, and Walton each give what could be called “content dependent” accounts of representation, for each holds that the factors which determine the content of a representation are the very same ones which also at the same time necessarily determine the object of representation and the thing’s status as representational. On their view, for something to be a representation, and for it to represent some object, just is for it to represent that object as having some properties. There is, I suggest, no reason to assume that this will be the case, for while it is true that anything which has a representational object, or which has representational content, must be representational, it nevertheless could well be that the kind of features which determine the fact of representationality differ from those which determine the object of the representation, or how that object is represented as being. I proceed by treating each

aspect of representation separately, both in critically assessing the resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe theories, and in building my own alternative account of sculptural representation.

6.2 Resemblance

In its simplest form, the resemblance theory of representation holds that one thing represents another thing in virtue of their resemblance. In the case of sculpture the claim might be that a sculpture represents a thing in virtue of its resembling that thing in three-dimensional shape or form. This approach seems at least initially plausible, and seems to provide a way of distinguishing sculptural from other forms of representation. In a recent article concerning three-dimensional resemblance and misrepresentation in sculpture, Robert Hopkins argues for just such a view. According to Hopkins, three-dimensional resemblance provides the constraint necessary (and sufficient in conjunction with the item's causal and intentional background), for sculptural representation.

Hopkins holds that the possibility of sculpturally misrepresenting particulars generates considerable difficulties for the resemblance theory of representation in general, but he thinks that these problems can be overcome. The problem, according to Hopkins, is this: because to represent something is always to represent that thing as having certain properties, in the case of misrepresentation three-dimensional resemblance would have to constrain *both* which particular is represented *and* how it is represented as being when how it is differs from how it is represented as being. In other words, the same three-dimensional shape would have to resemble two different things - the particular as it is, and the particular as it is not (but as it is represented as being). The example Hopkins has in mind is a Spitting Image model of Thatcher [fig.58]. For three-dimensional resemblance to do the job the resemblance theory requires, the model has to both resemble Thatcher in three-dimensional shape, and resemble a woman with a three-dimensional shape (long-nose, knotted brow, large mouth) which is not Thatcher's. How can one model resemble both?

Hopkins considers and rejects two answers which might be offered to this problem²¹⁴. These are: first, that some parts spatially resemble Thatcher, while other don't; and second, that the requisite resemblance in three-dimensional shape need not be precise, but merely to an appropriate degree (the thought being that if, for example, the puppet looked just like Reagan it could not be a sculptural representation of Thatcher). Hopkins thinks the problem can be solved, and the idea of three-dimensional resemblance as the basis of sculptural representation rescued, first by abandoning the idea that a representation must resemble its subject as it really is, and secondly by appealing to experienced three-dimensional resemblance.

According to Hopkins, the problem only arises for the resemblance theory because the notion of three-dimensional resemblance has been used twice to explain misrepresentation - the sculptural representation is thought of as first resembling in three-dimensional shape Thatcher as she really is, and second resembling Thatcher with odd properties, which appears to be a contradiction. Hopkins suggests that we abandon the first use of three-dimensional resemblance, and simply say that in order for the model to represent Thatcher it must represent Thatcher with odd properties, namely those ascribed to her (long nose, knotted brow, large mouth). That is to say, all that is needed is for the model to resemble Thatcher as represented.

The problem Hopkins sees with this is that if the three-dimensional resemblance is no longer to Thatcher as she is but rather to Thatcher as represented, then why does the model represent Thatcher given that the model now resembles *anything* which has those properties, and given that just as Thatcher lacks those properties, so does practically everything else? Why couldn't it, for example, represent Clinton with those properties (long nose, knotted brow, large mouth)? Three-dimensional resemblance now seems useless. Hopkins' solution is a phenomenological one: he suggests that what counts is that we experience the model as resembling Thatcher with those properties and not as resembling Clinton with those properties. In the case of the model, we do not simply experience something with a given three-dimensional shapes - we experience it as resembling something. The experience has a different content, and it is this experiential

²¹⁴ "Resemblance and Misrepresentation", pp. 428-430.

content - that is, the experience of the model as resembling Thatcher-with-odd-properties - which makes it a sculptural representation of Thatcher and not a sculptural representation of Clinton.

I agree with Hopkins that a consideration of sculpture presents problems for the resemblance theory of sculpture, although not problems specific to sculpture.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, I find his proposed solution to these difficulties unconvincing. The first thing to note is that Hopkins' solution to the problem is simply counter-intuitive. It seems very strange indeed to deny that the Spitting Image model represents Thatcher but instead Thatcher-with-odd-properties. After all, there is no such Thatcher around, and it does seem to us that the Thatcher being represented in the sketches is the actual Thatcher, the one who went to Brussels, who was Prime Minister, etc.. If it did not represent this (actual) Thatcher, we would lose the satire. It seems more appropriate to think that actual Thatcher is represented using an object with properties which *would* be odd *were* they Thatcher's

Secondly, it seems that in seeking to save three-dimensional resemblance, Hopkins has in fact eliminated it from doing any of the explanatory work which might have been expected from it. To say that the model does not represent the actual Thatcher, but rather Thatcher-with-odd-properties, and that it does so because it resembles three-dimensionally Thatcher-with-odd-properties, is in effect simply to assert that the model resembles three-dimensionally itself, something which if true is trivial. The puzzle, however, is how the sculpture is a representation of *Thatcher*. Hopkins seems to realise something like this, hence his introduction of the notion that experiencing the model in a certain way introduces a 'Thatcher' content. However, now the experiencing-as seems to be doing all the work, rather than the resemblance, which he nevertheless maintains to be the basis of sculptural representation. But three-dimensional resemblance can no longer do any work in explaining why it is appropriate to experience the model as resembling Thatcher-with-odd-properties, and not as Clinton-with-odd-properties, something which we would expect it to be able to do if three-dimensional resemblance played the kind of criterial role Hopkins ascribes to it.

²¹⁵ A consideration of pictorial caricature, for example, generates analogous difficulties.

I think Hopkins is right to locate the source of the problem in the dual employment of three-dimensional resemblance in explaining misrepresentation. However, I think he abandons the wrong one of the pair. It would be more promising, and our intuitions about the role of three-dimensional resemblance in sculptural representation would stand a better chance of being preserved, if we adopted one of the solutions he rejects and hold instead that the model resembles three-dimensionally the actual Thatcher to an appropriate degree and in appropriate respects (appropriate, that is, to the purposes of political satire). Hopkins gave little reason for rejecting this approach. He finds it unattractive because, although the three-dimensional shape of the model of Thatcher is not wholly different from the three-dimensional shape of Thatcher, it is at least as different as the three-dimensional shape of other people whom the model does not represent. While I agree with Hopkins that this approach is not a very attractive account of one thing's being a sculptural representation of another thing, it does fit well with the way we regard the Thatcher model. Part of appreciating the model is to notice how it is like, but also different from, the three-dimensional shape of the actual Thatcher body.

Some of these difficulties may be avoided, and others identified, if we consider the four aspects of sculptural representation separately. Hopkins argues that what makes something a *sculptural* representation is its *three-dimensional* resemblance of an object. Considered as an account of the *sculptural* status of a representation over and above an account of what it is for a sculpture to *represent*, his theory, in appealing to both physical three-dimensional resemblances and *experienced* (perceptual or phenomenal) three-dimensional resemblances, seems to involve elements of both the physical and perceptual theses, and hence to be susceptible to the arguments I made in Chapters 2 and 3. However, it may well be wrong to read Hopkins' thesis as involving, or seeking to provide, an account of the distinctive nature of the *sculptural*. Instead his view may be construed as simply an account of which features of sculptural works make them representational. As such his account may involve no commitment to a view one way or the other as to whether other kinds of artwork are physically three-dimensional, or whether other kinds of art work either objectively resemble, or are experienced by us as resembling, other things three-dimensionally. On this reading his position is fully

compatible with the failure of the physical and perceptual theses. Hopkins may yet be right that three-dimensional resemblance has a central role to play in sculptural representation. All I have claimed is that we need not begin by assuming that three-dimensional resemblance between the representation and its object is necessary for a representation to be *sculptural*, even if it is necessary for that sculpture to be representational.

With respect to the question of representationality, according to Hopkins a sculpture is representational if (in addition to facts about the work's causal and intentional history) it resembles something three-dimensionally. One problem with this approach is that there don't seem to be any material features of a work which can independently constitute its being representational, and therefore nothing which necessarily and independently indicates to the interpreter that it bears a sculptural work of representation. Given there are no structural features or properties of art objects which are necessary and exclusive to representational artworks, there need be no explicit indication in the art object itself that it is a representational artwork, and so attending to the art object alone will not help us in attributing representationality to it. Resemblance theorists will say that there is such a feature: namely, three-dimensional resemblance. Of course, given that the representationality of a sculptural work is not internal to the work's material, including its relation of three-dimensional resemblance with another object, we cannot tell whether a sculptural work is representational simply by checking it for three-dimensional resemblances with real or imaginary objects. Many objects, both artefacts and naturally occurring objects, may resemble other objects without the fact of this three-dimensional resemblance being sufficient for, or even evidence for, their being representations (although it may make them suitable for certain purposes of representers). Hopkins, for example, claims that it is three-dimensional resemblance together with the causal and intentional history of the work which are criterial. But while recognised three-dimensional resemblance between a known art object and another object might be evidence for a sculptural work's representationality, in so far as many representational works do in fact resemble their objects three-dimensionally, it does not follow from this

that three-dimensional resemblance is necessarily determinative of *representationality*, even jointly with the causal and intentional history of the work.

With regard to the determination of the object of representation, Hopkins' view is that it is the resemblance of the sculpture with a thing that makes it a representation of that thing (Thatcher, or in the case of misrepresentation, Thatcher-with-odd properties). But although it is quite possible that the art object resemble the represented object three-dimensionally, it may well also fail to do so. Given that not all representation involves resemblance - consider for example linguistic representation - there seems little reason to assume that sculptural representation must always involve resemblances, even if some sculptural representations do. If representation is possible without resemblance, say in language, then it might be possible in sculpture. Even if it were true that pictures must involve resemblances, it doesn't follow that sculptural representations must, even if some sculptural representations operate "pictorially", via resemblances, others may not.

The view that three-dimensional resemblance plays a necessary role in sculptural representation seems to be based on the assumption that sculptural representation is always morphic. Sculptural representation is morphic when it uses properties of one kind to represent properties of the same kind, or sometimes a particular property to represent the same particular property (auto-morphic). Hopkins' assumes that the three-dimensional properties of the sculpture represent three-dimensional properties of the object, or represent the object as having these three-dimensional properties. But this need not be the case. Representation in general need not be morphic. Representation in literature, for example, is generally non-morphic, since properties of one kind are used to represent properties of another kind.²¹⁶ While it is true that paradigm cases of sculpture generally do represent morphically, sculptural representation need not be morphic. It is quite possible, for example, to use three-dimensional properties to represent two-dimensional properties, or even to represent four dimensional properties (consider the case of a 'projection' of a four dimensional cube into three-dimensions, analogous to the projection of a three-dimensional cube into two-dimensions, something which we are all familiar with). If there is some question about where to draw the line between kinds of

²¹⁶ An example of morphic linguistic representation would be the use of a word to represent a word.

properties (perhaps dimensional properties are a relevant kind rather than thinking of two-dimensional and three-dimensional properties as being of different kinds), then we need only remind ourselves that three-dimensional properties may be used to represent non-dimensional properties, such as strength, youth, and so forth.²¹⁷ In cases of non-morphic sculptural representation there is not going to be any three-dimensional resemblance in the first place which could function to fix the object of the sculptural representation. Even when sculptural representation is morphic, and there are three-dimensional resemblances or identities between the properties used in representing the object and the properties the object is represented as having, it does not follow that it is three-dimensional resemblance that fixes the object of the sculptural representation in these cases any more than in the case of non-morphic sculptural representation. If three-dimensional resemblance doesn't do the job in cases of non-morphic sculptural representation, it is not clear why we should think that it must in cases of morphic sculptural representation.

Resemblance is also held to be the feature which determines representational content. Indeed, the idea of resemblance, especially recognised resemblance, seems to be inherently contentful in so far as if one thing resembles another it is always in particular respects. The resemblance view holds that if one thing represents another in virtue of resembling that other thing, then it also at the same time attributes particular properties to that other thing; namely those very properties in respect of which it resembles (and hence represents) that thing. But once again, the fact that we can have contentful representations without three-dimensional resemblance indicates that three-dimensional resemblances between a sculptural object and another objects can have no necessary role to play in determining the content of sculptural representation. As I have argued above, representation in general, including sculptural representation, need not be morphic but may well be non-morphic. It seems obvious that for cases in which sculptural

²¹⁷These considerations bear strongly against the resemblance theory, but not the seeing-in and make-believe theories, for it seems that neither need assume that representation must be morphic: one kind of property might be see-in another, and we might make-believe that one kind of property (or our experience of it) is another (or our experience of another).

representation is non-morphic there need not be, indeed there is unlikely to be, any significant (objective or perceptually recognisable) three-dimensional resemblance between the properties used as a medium of representation and the properties represented by these properties of the sculptural object as being those of the object represented, since the properties used to do the representing-as are not only different properties but are different *kinds* of property. Think for example of Umberto Boccioni's representations of dynamic temporal and physical spatial progressions in works such as *Development of a Bottle in Space* [fig.59], with its solid and interiorless representation of the dynamic interchange between interior and exterior forms associated with bottles and their function as both vessels and pourers, and *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*[fig.60], where static shapes represent rapid, almost superhuman, movement. So it seems that it follows already from the fact that sculptural representation may be non-morphic that three-dimensional resemblances have no necessary role to play in determining the representational content of sculptures since in cases of non-morphic sculptural representation we have representational content without features of the sculptural object which bear significant three-dimensional resemblance to the properties being represented. In such cases resemblances simply do not exist which could play this role.

Now, the three-dimensional properties of the object which are used to represent properties of the object represented do resemble *some* properties, and the properties being represented as those of the object represented resemble *some* properties. Given this, it could be suggested that *these* resemblances, and also the lack of resemblances between the three-dimensional properties being used to sculpturally represent with and the properties represented as being those of the object represented, are just what is important in determining the representational content, and mandating the judgements of appreciators, of non-morphic sculptural representations. It seems to me that this might indeed be the case for some such sculptural works, and is indeed likely to be the case. Think, for example, of Giacometti's surrealistic *Slaughtered Woman* [fig.61], where the representation is achieved using the arrangement of shapes resembling vegetable, exoskeletal, and non-biological forms. Although representation here is morphic, resemblances to things other than the object represented and lacks of resemblance with the

object represented play an important role in the work. The same point is demonstrated with respect to non-morphically representation by Giacometti's *Miniscules* [fig.54] and much of his later work where size, in the form of disproportionately large bases and small, thin, fragile, almost dissolving, figures, is used to represent the location of figures at a distance, albeit via perceptual resemblances. Another example might, again, be the way sectioned or cut-away static forms are used by Boccioni in representing temporal and physical dynamic properties. But although this may sometimes be the case, I see no reason why these resemblances and lacks of resemblance must on any occasion where they occur play such a role.

There is another consideration which suggests that three-dimensional resemblances between sculptural objects or their aspects and the object represented (and other objects), even where they exist objectively and to be recognised perceptually by appreciators, need not determine the representational content. This is simply that the mere existence of a three-dimensional or other kind of resemblance or non-resemblance need not mean that it has a role in the determination of the representational content of a work.²¹⁸ For example, there is simply no reason to think that just because there is in fact a remarkably striking three-dimensional resemblance for all to see between the head of Michelangelo's *David* and the head of my friend who is also, coincidentally, named David, that this is somehow a fact relevant in determining the representational content of the sculpture, or to be taken into account in understanding, evaluating, and appreciating Michelangelo's sculpture. At least, if it is a fact of relevance here, it seems that it is only a peripheral consideration and one which will only and could only possibly play a role in

²¹⁸ The same consideration applies, in instances of non-morphic sculptural representation, to three-dimensional and non-three-dimensional resemblances between the three-dimensional properties used in representation and other properties and objects. It also applies to resemblances in cases of non-morphic sculptural representation between the properties represented by those three-dimensional properties of the sculptural object used to represent with these properties and other properties or objects. And it also applies to the absences of three-dimensional and other resemblances between the three-dimensional properties used to do the representing and the properties represented with them and also with other properties, even when the three-dimensional resemblances concerned are obvious or striking.

the appreciation of Michelangelo's *David* for a quite small number of people who also know or have seen the face of my friend David. The three-dimensional resemblance which exists between, say, the right forefinger of *David* and the, say, body of slug seems also more or less irrelevant (although perhaps we could say that if it were utterly implausible to suggest any such three-dimensional resemblance, then something would have gone seriously wrong in the sculpture if it is intended as a realistic portrayal of the human form).²¹⁹

If there is one feature of the notion of resemblance which has been very well explored in the philosophical literature, it is that everything resembles everything else in some respect. It would seem strange indeed if every three-dimensional resemblance and non-resemblance which exists or was recognisable by appreciators with normal (or extraordinary) perceptual apparatus had a role to play in determining the representational content of sculptural works. Even if we limited the relevant resemblances in the case of sculptural to resemblances with the three-dimensional properties of the sculptural object, the total of actual and possible resemblances and lack of resemblances, if not infinite, seems at least unimaginably many. Three-dimensional resemblances (and non-resemblances) seem, in themselves, simply too unrestricted to function as criteria determining the content of sculptural representation and mandating the judgements of appreciators.

The considerations above make a strong case for thinking that three-dimensional resemblance itself does not determine a work's representationality, the object of representation, and representational content. Three-dimensional resemblance may, of course, still have some role in determining the object and content of representation, and perhaps also representationality, but this will be contingent upon other factors which give it this role. Indeed, resemblance does seem to have a crucial place in much sculptural

²¹⁹ The same case can be made for non-resemblances which may, but need not, be significant. It is significant, for example, that the face of *David* not resemble the face of an elderly woman (or, perhaps, the fact that the face resembles the face of a young man more than that of an old woman contributes, in this case at least, to *David* is being represented as a young man).

representation, particularly in relation to the object and content of representation, something I look at further, below.

6.3 Seeing-in

The basics of Wollheim's influential account of pictorial representation can be summarised as follows:

P pictorially represents X if and only if X can be correctly *seen-in* P by a suitably sensitive viewer V, where the *standard of correctness* C of V's seeing-X-in-P is concurrence of V's seeing-X-in-P with intentional states I of the artist A in producing P.

The two core components of Wollheim's account of representation are firstly the psychological concept of *seeing-in*; and secondly intentionalism about the determination of representational content via a *standard of correctness* for seeing-in.²²⁰ Wollheim describes²²¹ seeing-in as the "biologically grounded ... innate capacity" of human perception - (what I would call, in the terms outlined in Chapter 5, a mechanism) - to see some thing in another thing²²². Central to the concept of seeing-in is the notion of "*twofoldness*", of "seeing the marked surface *and* seeing something in the marked surface", what Wollheim refers to as, respectively, the "configurational" and "recognitional" aspects of seeing-in²²³.

Wollheim states that "seeing-in is prior to representation both logically and historically - representation arrives when a standard of correctness and incorrectness set

²²⁰The notion of "expressive seeing" also plays an important role in Wollheim's overall theory of pictures, and plays the same role structurally in relation to expression as seeing-in does to representation.

²²¹*Painting as an Art*, p.54

²²²As distinct from taking something to be another thing, or seeing it as another thing.

²²³*Painting as an Art*, p.20-21 Two-foldness makes explicit the difference between Wollheim's seeing-in account and illusionistic theories and seeing-as theories.

by the artist's intentions is imposed upon the natural capacity of seeing-in"²²⁴. Such a standard is imposed upon seeing-in via two key aspects of the artist's intentional activity which both involve seeing-in (and twofoldness) on the part of the artist: *thematization* (the abstraction of some hitherto unintentional aspect of activity and making it into a consideration guiding further action - making this aspect of activity intentional when it wasn't before); and *figuration* (identifying what is represented as something).²²⁵ On Wollheim's view, in so far as thematization and figuration are essential to pictorial representation, and in so far as they can only be understood in terms of the artist's productive (thematizing and figurising) intentions, then the artist's intentions must play a role in determining the representational content of pictures and, therefore, as a standard of correctness for the appreciator's experience and understanding of the pictorial representation. The artist's intentions have this role as a standard of correctness not just because the artist intends that suitably sensitive appreciators have particular experiences, but also (and more so) because the activity of producing the picture is (in the way outlined above) intentional.

²²⁴Ibid., p.47-48

²²⁵Ibid., p..22. So to pictorially represent something is to figuratively thematise the seen-in image. According to Wollheim, thematization is largely pursued so as to endow the resultant surface with meaning. His theory of pictorial meaning is a psychological one: that pictorial meaning is dependent on a triad of factors - the mental state of artist, the way this causes artist to mark surface, and the mental state marked surface sets up in sensitive informed spectator. Pictorial meaning rests upon "the *experience* induced in an adequately sensitive informed spectator looking at the surface of the paintings as the intentions of the painter led him to mark it. The marked surface must be the conduit along which the mental state of the artist makes itself felt within the mind of the spectator if the result is to be that the spectator grasps the meaning of the picture". I think that Wollheim's psychological theory about meaning, in so far as this is a constitutive theory rather than one which seeks to set limits of determination of meaning and mandating of interpretations in terms of intentional facts, is mistaken (for reasons I won't have space to explore adequately here) but that this aspect of his theory can be rejected without also jettisoning his central point about the intentional nature of representation.

Application to sculpture:

In so far as senses other than vision are at least sometimes appropriately involved in the appreciation of sculptural works, one obvious modification to the notion of seeing-in and twofoldness is to create an analogues for senses other than vision. Given the frequent involvement in the appreciation of sculpture of actual and imaginary touch, perhaps the most obvious would be the idea of what could be called “feeling-in”. Robert Vance²²⁶ suggests such an idea in his discussion of “seeing-in”, and it certainly seems plausible that we do have a perceptual capacity to feel some thing in another thing, for example, to feel a head in stone.

But what of twofoldness, the essential element of seeing-in - does this transfer to other perceptual modes? Vance thinks that “the configurational aspect of seeing-in, construed as identifying something discerned as standing out in front of or receding behind something else, seems inappropriate with regard to three-dimensional objects occupying locations in actual space”²²⁷. However, Vance does not specify why he thinks this. Presumably it is because he thinks that this kind of relationship between the three-dimensional material body of the sculptural work and the way it appears is possible. But as we have already seen, this seems false: there is often a difference between the actual spatial characteristics of a work and the spatial characteristics it appears to us to have (either in vision or in touch). At least in so far as the core aspect of twofoldness is the awareness in a single experience of both the material (the stone) and the thing sensed-in it (the head), then there doesn't seem to be a problem with extending twofoldness to “feeling-in”. We simply need to modify twofoldness as it applies to touch by expanding what we include in the configurational aspect, so that it involves recognising spatial relationships in three-dimensional configurations.

Second, there seems nothing which would make Wollheim's claims with respect to the intentional standard of correctness, and the notions of thematisation and figuration, any less applicable to sculpture than to painting. Sculpting is an equally intentional activity and equally involves thematisation and figuration. If Wollheim's position on this

²²⁶ Robert D Vance, “Sculpture”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 35, No. 3, July 1995

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222

aspect of his account of pictorial representation is well founded then it should be equally well founded in relation to sculpture, as will be his structurally analogous views on expression and other dimensions of meaning.

So if we consider these points, and the distinctions between the question of the *sculpturalness* of representation, the question of *representationality*, the question of *representation-of*, and the question of *representation-as*, we can formulate the following possible set of claims for a Wollheimian account of sculptural representation:

- (a) that a representation is *sculptural* if it represents via feeling-in (or some suitable formulation of perceiving-in);
- (b) that a sculpture is *representational* in so far as appreciating it (correctly) involves feeling-in;
- (c) a sculpture is a *representation of X* in so far as X can (correctly) be felt-in S;
- (d) a sculpture *represents X as Y* in so far as X can (correctly) be felt as Y in S.

Responses:

There are two major reasons which render the Wollheimian approach inadequate to sculpture an account of the sculptural nature of representations. It is difficult to formulate a plausible Wollheimian account of the nature of the sculptural for the reason that whereas the pictorial more plausibly involves the direct use of a single mode of sensory perception, sculpture often involves the employment of a variety of perceptual modes and kinds of perceptual experience including but not limited to the visual. Therefore, any attempt to give an account of the nature of the sculptural in terms of an analogue of seeing-in limited to one sense mode, say feeling-in, seems inadequate to our experience of sculpture as involving not only touch-based perception (and often not involving touch-perception at all) but, in the overwhelming majority of cases predominantly vision. In the absence of such a possibility, the alternative is to give a mixed account of the kinds of

perceiving-in involved in our appreciation of sculpture, but such an approach seems unable to furnish an account of the *distinctive* nature of the sculptural. Perhaps a Wollheimian might say that there is no distinctive nature of sculpture or sculptural representation and that a mixed-bag version of perceiving in is the correct account of what goes on when representation occurs in sculpture. On such an account, sculpture sometimes represents pictorially, when representation occurs via seeing-in, and other times it represents non-pictorially, such as when it represents via other forms of perceiving-in. But if we think about it this way, then there does seem to be the beginnings of a theory of *sculptural* representation here after all: namely, that the distinctively *sculptural* element of representation in sculpture is to be accounted for in terms of the actual or potential relevance to appreciation of some analogue of seeing-in, such as feeling-in. I refer here, however, to my arguments in Chapter 3 against the perceptual thesis, which apply equally to possible perceiving-in theories of sculpture and sculptural representation.

Nevertheless, it might be considered that even if the Wollheimian account fails as an account of the distinctively *sculptural* nature of sculptural representations, it might yet prove a useful account of the determination of representationality, and of the object and content of sculptural representations. Nevertheless, there are reasons to reject the Wollheimian approach to these issues as well, albeit ones which concern the seeing-in aspect of the account rather than the proposed nature of the standard of correctness. Many of these considerations are the same as, or closely related to, those I brought to bear against the three-dimensional resemblance theory in the preceding section.

The Wollheimian approach seems to have more to offer here than a basic form of the resemblance theory which holds resemblance to be sufficient for representationality, at least in so far as the role afforded to a standard of correctness conceives of the seen-in as insufficient for representation. There is of course room for an intentional standard of correctness in Hopkins' account of the role of resemblance. Wollheim holds that a painting is *representational* (i.e. is a picture) in so far as something can correctly be seen-in it, so a possible analogue for sculptural representation is that a sculpture is representational in so far as something can correctly be perceived-in it. But it seems clear

that not all representation involves seeing- or perceiving-in - think again of linguistic representations. So while it might be true of pictures that seeing-in is necessary to representation, it wouldn't follow from this that representation in sculpture must also involve seeing-in or some analogue, any more than it would follow that linguistic representation must. I think it is clear that however it *does* work, not all representation in sculpture is pictorial in nature (in the sense of involving seeing-in in relation to a three-dimensional configuration), or involves a perceptual analogue of seeing-in. The possibility of non-morphic representation demonstrate this, as does symbolic representation within sculpture.

But even when we do have cases of *correct* perceiving-in (and this point applies as well to Wollheim's account of the pictorial), what reason is there to think that it is correct seeing-in which is determinative of representationality (even in these cases), rather than a feature of certain kinds or instances of representation (including the pictorial) which, for example, is a consequent of representationality, an element of the representation rather than constitutive of representationality? On the Wollheimian account, something's being representational is closely linked to the intentions of the artist that something be seen-in the material of the work. There does not seem to be a determinative role on this account for an intention on the part of the artist to represent, to have one thing stand for another either denotatively or in a contentful, attributive, manner. But, given that intentions do have a central role in the Wollheimian view of art, one wonders why it wouldn't be just such an intention to represent that has the determining role. Further, one wonders what it is about an intention that something be seen-in another that makes such an intention determinative of representationality, as opposed to being determinative simply of the fact that something be seen-in the thing. Such a feature which may have a place in the larger representational story (for example the determination of a representation's object and/or content), but why hold it to be determinative of representationality as such?

Wollheim appears to give no explicit reason, but the motivation for the thesis about representationality seems to stem from his view that it is the facts which determine the content of a representation which determine its object, and ultimately, its nature as

representational. But this seems to have less to do with the notion of representationality than with the notion of seeing-in with which Wollheim seeks to explain representationality. Experiences of seeing-in seem to be inherently contentful, for if something is a representation of X in so far as X can (correctly) be seen-in that thing, then it seems true that to see X in something else is always to see X as having some properties. It is not clear what it would be to see X (as opposed to anything else, or nothing) if we did not see X having any properties. But this does not provide a reason for thinking that these facts determine representationality. Indeed, one might expect rather the opposite: that these facts are relevant to the determination of the object and content of the representation only in so far as it is already determined that what we have is a representational object, and issue which puts us right back to the question of what makes the idea of correct seeing-in constitutive of representationality in the first place.

There is some plausibility to the idea that correct perceiving-in has a role in the determination of the representational object and content. But there seems little reason to think that it is a necessary feature of representation in sculpture, or in other art forms, even should it be the case that it does have this role in pictorial representation. Similar considerations apply again. With respect to the object of representation, it seems possible to use one object to stand for or denote, and in this sense represent, another object without it being a requirement that the denoted object be perceived-in the object I use, or (with respect to the issue of content-dependence) that it be seen-in the object as having some or other properties. With respect to the determination of representational content, correct perceiving-in cannot be necessary to representation in general, or to sculptural representation in general, given the existence of representational content in the absence of seen-in content.

Further, it seems that even if it is true of some work that the properties which are represented as being those of the representational object are the properties which can be correctly seen-in the material of the work, it doesn't follow that it is their being correctly seeable-in the work which itself determines the representational content. Or at least there is a question about the relationship within correct seeing-in of the two elements of correctness setting intention and of the seen-in. For example, why not simply hold that it

is the intention of an artist to represent X which makes the work a representation of X, and that it is the artist's intention to represent X as Y which (within reasonable limits) determines the content of the representation of X as Y? On this conception, seeing-in is seen as a limit on the success of certain kinds of object and content determining artistic intention, rather than just that the intentions of the artist being a limit on the range of possible seeings-in. If seeing-in isn't necessary for representation, this story seems quite appealing. If there are other methods of the representing, then it seems that the involvement of any one is contingent upon some other factor, for example, the intention to represent X and to represent it as Y, such that seeing-in (and other features) are reconceived as conditional ways of presenting, or realising, the representational intentions of the artist rather than criteria which themselves have a necessary priority in determining the object and content of the representation. I explore these ideas, and others, in Chapter 7.

One further thing to notice about Wollheim's account of seeing-in is that it is heavily psychologicistic. Wollheim conceives of seeing-in as an innate capacity of perception, the kind of thing I have referred to as a mechanism which, in this case, operates at the non-intentional level to produce perceptual experiences with intentional content (such as seeing a horse in the canvas and paint) which may feature among exploited by artists in producing works. It is only with the addition of intentionalism with respect to standards of correctness for seeing-in and the determination of representational content that Wollheim's account becomes an account of representation. But in doing so, the connection with seeing-in in the appreciation of representation is somewhat lost, or rather, it seems the explanatory load is shifted away from seeing-in and towards the intentions of the artist. One could therefore expect that Wollheim would have more to say about the role of intentions in appreciation than he does. While he gives us an account where by such features of the psychology of perception are used by artists in producing pictorial works (e.g. thematisation), he says little about what is involved in the process of appreciating such uses. Appreciators have seeing-in experiences, and then these experiences are determined as correct or incorrect in terms of the standard of correctness for such experiences (concurrence with intentional and other mental states of

the artist). The intentional standard of correctness functions externally as a standard or normative limit on the appreciative process whatever it involves, and does not fill in details of the process of appreciation. It seems that there is a significant gap in Wollheim's account between the experience of seeing-in, (the capacity for which is a mechanism, and the experience of which is part of the material or representation) and the intentional determination of the correctness of this experience. What is needed is an account of the way features of human psychological mechanisms and the phenomena of the perceptual experiences they give us are *used* by artists and appreciators and how using these features involves using materials in an intentional and more than just a non-intentional way. Others have gone in this direction to try to give the notion of seeing-in and twofoldness more substance: Walton, for example, gives an account whereby the content of representational experience involves making believe. I explore this theme further in the following chapter.

6.4 Make-believe

Like Wollheim, Kendall Walton seeks to both account for the nature of representation and to give an account of what determines the content and mandates our judgements of representational artworks. And like Wollheim, Walton also seeks to give some content to an idea of the processes that are involved in appreciating artworks. Only, whereas Wollheim gives so little role for the imagination in his account of representation, placing emphasis instead on basic perceptual capacities and phenomena of experience, Walton gives imagination, in the form of make-believe, the central explanatory role. Walton begins his discussion of representation and make-believe by suggesting that:

“In order to understand paintings, plays, films, and novels, we must look first at dolls, hobbyhorses, toy trucks, and teddy bears. The activities in which representational works of art are embedded and which give them their point are best seen as continuous with children's games of make-believe. Indeed, I advocate regarding these activities as games of make-believe themselves, and I

shall argue that representational works function as props in such games, as dolls and teddy bears serve as props in children's games."²²⁸

Walton's thesis can be summarised in the following way:

P represents X if and only if P functions as a prop in a game of make-believe which, together with the rules of the game (principles of generation), mandates the content of participants' experiential and propositional make-believe (e.g. their making believe that P is X, that experience of P is experience of X, their imagining some proposition to be true of X, and so on) by making this content fictional (true within fictional world/the game of make-believe).

In other words all representations are a form of fiction. Remembering the problem Wollheim faces accounting for the nature of the viewer's experience of the object of representation in the recognitional aspect of twofoldness, Walton's make-believe theory can give the following experiential account: for P to be a picture X is for it to be fictional that P is X, that for us to see-X-in-P is for it to be fictional that our seeing P is seeing X. To use Walton's example, in a game of bears in which the convention is that we are to make-believe that tree stumps are bears, the existence of a tree stump (the prop) makes the existence of a bear part of the fiction, and determines that we are, upon discovering the stump, to make-believe that it is a bear.²²⁹ This involves imagining about bears (or imagining about bears with stumps) as well as about stumps (that they are bears) and about ourselves (that our experience of stumps is experience of bears), and depending on the particular nature of the representation may involve both propositional imagining (when the prop generates fictional truths/makes some propositions fictional) and non-propositional imagining (for example, imagining oneself swimming or what it is like swimming, rather than imagining about oneself *that* one is swimming)²³⁰. Not all make-

²²⁸ *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p.11.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.43

believe is experiential, however, since the prop plus the principles of generation can also mandate other imaginative activities, such as propositional imaginings about the prop, about oneself about the object represented, and so forth. Literary representations, for example, often involve little or no experiential make-believe, although we sometimes imagine of a work of fiction that the text and our experience of it are something other than they in fact are (e.g. the text of a work of non-fiction).

Applied to art works, the material body (and its qualities such as appearance) of the work determines what is fictional in the work in the sense that, in virtue of its physical properties, it makes it true of the fiction that it has this content rather than another. As was noted, it is not the physical body of the sculpture alone which determines the content of a sculptural representation (that which the prop makes fictional). Rather, this is a matter of the relation between the characteristics of the material and the conventions (and so forth) of the practice of sculptural representation, or what Walton also refers to as the “principles of generation”. The correct reading of the work will be the one which complies with the principles of generation since it is these rules and conventions which together with the prop determine what is to be imagined. Hence it is against these principles of generation that we must test our understanding of the work since they determine whether or not a given use of the material is appropriate. In order to read a representational work properly and to understand the content of that work correctly, an appreciator will therefore need to have knowledge of, and competence in applying, the principles of generation. These principles “constitute conditional prescriptions about what is to be imagined in what circumstances”²³¹, but Walton does not assume that they must be “‘arbitrary’ or ‘conventional’”. What the nature of the principles of generation is will vary from case to case - some will be more conventional than others, some may be grounded to a greater or lesser extent in the intentions of artists or participants. But Walton finds it “more reasonable to regard the artist’s intention, in most cases, as but one

²³¹ Ibid., p.41

of a loose collection of circumstances bearing on the determination of what a work represents',²³².

Application to sculpture:

As a general theory of representation Walton's account should apply to sculpture as well as to paintings, films, and novels.²³³ To apply the theory to a paradigm example of sculpture, Michelangelo's *David* represents David because we are to imagine that the stone (prop) is David, to imagine that elements of our experience of the stone are experiences of David, and to make-believe certain propositions about David to be true. If David is represented with a heavy brow, then this is because we are to imagine the shape (and so on) of a part of *David* to be David's heavy brow, or our experience of it to be experience of David's brow, or that it mandates our imagining certain propositions about David to be true (e.g., "that David has physical strength"). There are a number of problems with this approach, and some of the considerations weighing against it will already be familiar from the preceding sections.

In his article "Sculpture", Vance criticises the Waltonian approach on a number of grounds, but primarily because he thinks it "unnatural" to speak of the fictional world of the statues and, relatedly, "implausible" to think of sculptures generating fictional truths (or, if they sometimes do so, that they must always do so), whereas he agrees that it is natural to do so in the case of paintings. If sculptures do not function as props which have fictional worlds or which generate fictional truths, then the Waltonian account will fail as an account of sculptural representation, and thereby also as a general theory of representation in the arts. Vance presents a number of examples which are supposed to

²³² Ibid., p.111. In pictures, for example, our perceptual psychology and the conventions of painting/depictive practice are among the additional features which function as constraints.

²³³ Given Walton's use of such obviously sculpture-like objects as dolls, hobbyhorses, toy trucks, and teddy bears, as examples in introducing his theory, we could perhaps expect his account to be most clearly effective in relation to sculptural representation if it is to work at all. However, I think that, curiously in view of his metaphor of toys as props, Walton's account of representation as make-believe is no more (and no less) plausible as an account of sculptural as of other varieties of representation.

demonstrate the inappropriateness of the Waltonian account to sculpture, but presents very little in the way of arguments to back up his claims. Vance's view seems to be based on his thought that "whereas paintings create their own fictional spaces ... sculptures operate in real space, making it unnatural to speak of the world of the sculpture."²³⁴ He discusses the example of the *Minute Man* statue of a soldier on Concord Bridge, and claims that "although the *Minute Man* statue makes it fictional that a soldier is located on the very bridge where the statue is actually located, there is no fictional space comprising a fictional world of the statue."²³⁵ In so far as this is the case, Vance's claims seem to run foul of the objections I raised to the Physical Thesis in Chapter 2 and to the Perceptual Thesis in Chapters 3 and 4. In any case, it simply seems false to me that statues never have their own fictional locations. In Giacometti's walking figures in *Square II* [fig.62], the path of the man who approaches the standing (waiting?) woman about to be crossed by the independent paths of passers by, their trajectories implying a possible collision in the centre of the square, a barrier which will perhaps thwart the attempted meeting. All this happens (as the work's title itself makes explicit) in the square, not in the gallery. Similarly, many statues of soldiers are of soldiers in battle, not in the town square where the statue is located; and Michelangelo's *David* is not located in whatever place the stone happens to be placed, but elsewhere, perhaps in Biblical Palestine. If we think of dolls and teddy bears again, very often we are to take the doll to be in the (fictional) nursery and the bear in the (fictional) woods, not in the (actual) child's bedroom.

But whereas Vance agrees that statues such as the *Minute Man* might generate fictional truths, he does not think that other kinds of sculptures necessarily do: "what fictional truths", he asks, "are generated by Richard Serra's massive Cor Ten steel slab sculptures [fig.51], which 'seek to incarnate the viewer, to make the viewer conscious of his or her own embodiment as flesh, so that one's encounter is ... as body to body'?" . Maybe Vance has a point about the Serra sculpture, but a Waltonian could reply that in so far as the Serra Slabs don't generate fictional truths, then they aren't representational, and

²³⁴ Vance, "Sculpture", p. 218

²³⁵ Ibid.

such an interpretation of Serra's Slabs, as being non-representational, might not be so far off the mark. On the other hand, perhaps it generates the fictional truth that the viewer is embodied as flesh and that the encounter is one as body to body - fictional truths which also happen to be true of the actual world, something which does not in itself undermine fictionality, at least on Walton's account, since being fictional is simply a matter of the attitude of make-believe we are prescribed to take towards a proposition or experience rather than the (incidental to the fiction) relationship of that proposition or experience to reality or what we believe. So there doesn't seem to be any special reason which rules out Walton's account in particular as an account of sculpture.

As a general account of representation in the arts, Walton's make-believe theory does not give an account of the specifically sculptural nature of sculptural representation. But perhaps a Waltonian approach to representation could provide the basis for such an account of *sculptural* representation by making distinctions between kinds of prop or kinds of principles of generation, or kinds of contents of make-believe (e.g. the kind of perceptual information or propositional content imagined with or about and the way we imagine with or about it). Robert Vance suggests that the distinctive kind of imagining involved in sculptural make-believe involves somatic imaginings and somatic sensations, for example "sensations of volume, heft, and lack of resistance, our awareness of which is imagined to be an awareness of light insubstantial forms (an awareness also permeated by the conflicting thought of massive heavy material which we know to be present)".²³⁶

Given my arguments in Chapter 2 (with respect to kinds of props, considered as material) and Chapter 3 (with regard to perceptual kinds), and my argument so far in this chapter, specifying distinctive kinds of principles of generation seems the most promising. If there are principles of generation which prescribe that we do distinctive things with sculptural props (albeit that sculptural props are neither physically nor perceptually essentially distinct in kind), then we need an account of these principles, or rather, of these distinctive kinds of uses. To this extent, this possible Waltonian avenue coincides, at least in direction if not in origin, with the approach for which I argued in Chapter 5 and which I explore further in the rest of the dissertation. However, as I shall

²³⁶ Ibid., p.221

argue below, there are good reasons to think that Walton's account of representation is inadequate to sculpture and as general theory of representation. But whereas Walton conceives such principles of generation necessarily to be generating make-believe and fictional truths, that they can be reconceived as principles (and so forth) concerning the productive and appreciative use of materials in ways which may include, but which go beyond, making-believe, and that the failure of the make-believe (which I argue for below) account of representation requires that we do so.

With respect to the issue of representationality, the Waltonian approach would hold that a sculpture is *representational* in so far as it functions as a prop in a game of make-believe which serves to make some thing (proposition or experience) fictional. I argued earlier that neither three-dimensional resemblance nor perceiving-in seems necessary to representationality, and hence can be ruled out as the features which determine a sculpture's status as representational. Something similar, I believe, holds for Walton's make-believe account. The main reason to reject Walton's account of representationality for sculpture in terms of fictional worlds and the generation of fictional truths is not that sculptures do not have fictional worlds or generate fictional truths (as we saw Vance claimed), but simply a more general objection regarding the relationship between fiction (and make-believe) and representationality. Walton takes make-believe, and hence fiction, to be essentially rather than contingently involved in representationality, but this just seems implausible in relation to many cases of representation.²³⁷ For example, when I see a picture in the newspaper of the Prime Minister, I do not make-believe that the picture is the PM, nor do I make-believe that my experience of the picture is experience of the PM. Further, it does not seem to be fictional that the picture is the PM, nor to be the case that it represents the PM because there is a fictional world in which this picture is the PM or in which my experience of the picture is

²³⁷ Walton gives a different account of photographs according to which photographs are transparent pictures through which we literally see the person or object in the picture, rather than being representational in nature. See his "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism", *Nous*, 18, pp. 67-72, March 1984; and his "On Pictures and Photographs: Objections Answered", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. R. C. Allen, Clarendon/Oxford Press: New York, 1997.

experience of the PM. Nor need it be the case that I make-believe that certain propositions about the PM are true (e.g. “that the PM is in Brussels”). Instead, we simply *believe* that it is a picture of the PM, and that the person in fact depicted is in fact the PM, and that he is in Brussels.

Certainly there are explanations of why we believe it to be a picture of the PM and what indeed makes it a picture of the PM, but it doesn't seem that make-believe need play a role here at all. We could instead just say that the material characteristics of the prop (formal properties, colour and so forth) together with the principles of generation (for newspaper pictures) makes it the case that it is a representation (of the PM). There might *also* be such fictions and fictional worlds, and I may *also* engage in this kind of make-believe, but it doesn't seem necessary, and it does not seem to be the basic part of our the picture being a representation (of the PM). No doubt a variety of psychological mechanisms are involved in this, both at the sub-intentional and the intentional level where we may employ them deliberately, but there seems no reason to assume that make-believe must always be one of them. And if make-believe is not consciously involved in our experience of such pictures, why assume it to be unconsciously involved (if indeed unconscious make-believe could even be a coherent notion at all)? Rather it seems that pictures of the PM, and many other representations, operate outside of make-believe and fiction, and indeed can only be appropriately involved in fiction and the objects of make-believe in so far as there are prior facts about the representation, as a representation, which make it appropriate for us to bring it into that context (i.e. the context of games of make-believe and fiction).

Indeed, considering the role of teddy bears and hobbyhorses in children's games of make-believe reveals an important fact which undermines Walton's thesis: representation is *prior* to make-believe, in the sense of representationality as well as in the senses of representational object and representational content. Implicit in the idea of something's being a hobbyhorse is that it is a representation, specifically that it is a representation of a horse, in being a teddy-bear that it represents a bear, and so forth. It is the fact that the child's toy represents something (a bear, or a horse, or a truck) that makes it usable as a prop of a certain sort in those child's games of make-believe. The

bear can go on a picnic because he is a teddy-*bear*, the truck can play its part in building the road because it is a toy *truck*, the horse can be ridden through the fields and towns because it is a hobby-*horse*. In these games the child may well make-believe that the piece of cloth is a bear or sorts, that the piece of wood is a horse of a kind, and so on. Such a fact, however, is not sufficient in itself to warrant the assumption that such making believe constitutes these things being representations, but simply identifies that there is *some* relationship between P's representing X and V's being mandated to make-believe the P is X. It seems more reasonable to suppose that what mandates child's making believe that the stump is a bear is firstly the fact that the stump is a representation, and secondly the fact that the stump represents a bear.

Of course, there may yet be room for such a concept in relation to the determination of the object and content of representation without a pre-existing commitment to make-believe being necessary or essential either to the determination of representationality or to the determination of the representational object or content. On the Waltonian view of the determination of the representational object, a sculpture is a *representation of X* in so far as it functions as a prop in a game of make-believe which, together with the principles of generation for the game, mandates our making-believe that it is X by making it fictional that it is X. It is less straightforwardly clear than in the case of either resemblance or seeing-in whether the make-believe account must be committed to a content-dependent account of the determination of the object of representation. If we just consider that aspect of the account which holds that it is fictional that S is X, then it need not also be the case that it is also fictional that X has any particular properties. However, if we consider experiential make-believe, and propositional make-believe about X, then the account of object determination does seem tied to representational content. In so far as experiential make-believe and propositional imaginings about X are central to Walton's account of representation, at least in the perceptual' arts like painting and sculpture, then his account of representation (at least for such arts) does seem to this extent to be content-dependent.

The criteria for the determination of the representational object can be directly derived from the criteria which the Waltonian account takes to determine representational

content: that a sculpture *represents X as Y* in so far as it functions as a prop, P, in a game of make-believe which, together with the principles of generation for the game, mandates our making-believe Y of X (e.g. that some aspect of P is aspect Y of X, that our experience of P is experience of Y of X, that proposition “X is Y” is true, and so on) by making Y fictional of X. But, just as I argued earlier that it is possible to use one thing to denote, and in this sense represent, an object without thereby attributing properties to the represented object, something analogous can be said about make-believe. It seems that stumps can stand for and denote, and in this sense represent, bears without it necessarily being the case that the rules of the game require that in doing so I make-believe that the bear has any properties. Further, in so far as the rules might require me to imagine the bear to have such and such properties, they do so in a way which might be independent of the facts which determine that stumps stand for bears - after all, stumps could represent bears as having different properties (if we change the relevant rules) while the fact that bears are represented does not change.

These considerations give us reason to believe that make-believe is not the feature which determines a work's representationality, the object of representation, and representational content. If make-believe has a role with respect to our questions about representation, then it will be a contingent one and cannot be, as Walton argues, essential to representation as such. Make-believe will be something which, much like (as I have already argued) resemblances, or illusions, or seeings-in, might but need not be involved in kinds and instances of sculptural representation. Walton of course would claim that make-believe must always be one of these factors, but a consideration of examples indicates that Walton generalises a contingent feature of some representations and turns it inappropriately into an essential feature of all representations.

On general thing to notice about Walton's account is that its elements do not at first make it clear why he takes make-believe to have this kind of constitutive, determinative, role. Indeed, most of the work on these questions seems to be done not by the concept of make-believe but by the prop (stump) together with the principles of generation. While it is true that in Walton's theory the principles of generation are essentially principles for make-believe in so far as they tell participants in the game what

to imagine, they are prior (logically, at least) to the making-believe itself (which the rules generate, and determine) - *they*, the rules for making-believe, rather than the making-believe itself, determine the fictional facts of the game. But if we can say that it is the characteristics of the stump plus the principles of generation which determine that a stump is a representation, that it represents a bear, and that it represents a bear as being over there, it is unclear what is left for the notion of make-believe to do in relation to such questions of determination. It may be more reasonable instead to suppose that the fact that the stump represents a bear, determined by properties of the stump and the principles of generation, mandates (in a game of bears) our making-believe that the stump is a bear. This does not of course leave the concept of make-believe completely redundant, since even if make-believe doesn't have a role in explaining the determination of such facts about representations, it may nevertheless still have an important role to play in an account of the process of understanding and appreciating or using representations and therein for an understanding of the nature of representationality. At the very least make-believe has a role in the Waltonian account as the activity we go on to engage in using the props, correctly or not, in terms of those principles, whether or not such games are essential to representation. But this does show that Walton's thesis is characterised by an explanatory lacuna between questions of process and questions of determination and mandating which is structurally similar to that which we find in Wollheim's account of representation.

Walton's and Wollheim's theories are structurally similar in so far as they both claim a feature (make-believe, seeing-in) to be constitutively related to representation on the one hand but then on the other answer questions about what makes P a representation, a representation of X, and a representation of X as Y, in terms of considerations which seem to have little connection with that feature. One of the reasons for this is perhaps the relationship Walton and Wollheim see between questions of the determination of facts of representation and the warranting or mandating of judgements about that representation. Both Walton and Wollheim seem to hold that what it is for P to be characterised by certain facts of representation (that it is a representation, that it is a representation of X, that it is a representation of X as Y) is for our judgement that P is characterised by such fact to be

warranted or mandated. On Wollheim's account it is the standard of correctness, and on Walton's account the prop plus the principles of generation, which serve to mandate or warrant the judgement and thereby determine the facts of representation. Once priority is given to questions of warrant and mandate over questions of determination, it is easy to see how the gap between questions of determination and warrant on the one hand and questions of process on the other is opened, for in so far as the standards and prop plus principles function to determine the facts of representation only *via* their warranting judgements, the story becomes one which is largely external to the process of judging, (i.e. to that which is being mandated). Make-believe and seeing-in only come into the story of the determination of the facts of representation in so far as the judgements which are mandated are seeing-in or making-believe judgements. The nature of seeing-in and making-believe as processes does not in themselves play a role in determining the facts of representation, only their being warranted or mandated. This goes along with why make-believe is held by Walton, and seeing-in by Wollheim, to be prior to representation rather than vice versa: since the standards or principles which determine the facts of representation operate or function only *via*, or *through*, or *on*, or *against*, the make-believe or seen-in, seeing-in or make-believe are prior to the fact of representation, but only in so far as they are the experiences which are the bearers of warrant, and not because of internal nature of the experiences themselves.

However, as I suggested earlier, we can reconceive the account in a way which overturns the priority between the determination of the facts of representation and the warrant or mandate for our judgement of the representations such that the factors (such as the intentions of the artist or the props plus principles) which determine the facts of representation are also the warrantors or mandators of our judgements of those facts. The representational facts and the warrant of our judgement of those facts are related by being determined by the very same factors. Such a structure is more in accord with the way we normally take the relationship between ontological determination and epistemic warrant. Normally we take our judgements of facts to be warranted or mandated in so far as those judgements are in accord with or are borne out by the kinds of considerations which determine the facts, rather than thinking that our judgement's being warranted itself

determines the ontological facts. Thus, if I take the building I am in to be the Philosophy Department at Århus University, then the fact that if my belief is warranted it is warranted by the same factors which determine the fact of its being the Philosophy Department at Århus University it is the Philosophy Department: few would hold that what makes it that case that the building I am in is the Philosophy Department building is my being warranted or mandated in holding it to be that building. On such an account the priority of questions of ontological determination and epistemic warrant has been equalised with respect to factors such as the artist's intentions or principles of generation. But this is not to say that these factors apply in a logically independent way to these questions, since while it is the same factors which determine the ontological facts mandate the judgements this is only because they are the factors that determine the ontological facts. To think of the representational case again, it may well be that artistic intentions, or props plus principles of generation mandate our judgements of representations, but this is only because and in so far as they are (if they are) the factors which determine the facts of representation. Certainly, there is a relationship between ontological determination and epistemic warrant, but it seems that Wollheim and Walton have the appropriate orientation skewed.

If the relationship of priority is shifted to this orientation as I suggested it should be, then it can quickly be seen that the relationship of priority between representation and make-believe will also be reoriented away from the Waltonian view so that representation will be prior to make-believe. We can still see the props the principles of generation as mandating make-believe, but in the way I suggested above: because and in so far as the props plus the principles of generation determine the facts of representation. On such a view, P's being a representation of X as Y is what mandates our making-believe that P is X as Y, rather than the Waltonian picture in which the mandatedness of our making-believe that P is X as Y determines that P is a representation of X as Y. Although make-believe has been squeezed out of the account of what determines the facts of representation, there is still potentially room for it within an account of the processes of appreciation, and hence the nature of representation - its proper place if it has any on this account. It can also be quickly seen that the re-orientation of priority I suggest above is

more conducive to an account which is more integrated in the way it addresses issues of determination and issues of process, and which therefore makes room for make-believe (if it has a place at all) in a way which does not isolate it from questions of determination or make questions of determination external to it.

I suggested earlier that the gap between questions about determination and warrant on the one hand and questions about the process of interpretation in Walton's and Wollheim's theses were due in part to the priority afforded to make-believe and seeing-in in their respective accounts of the determination of the representational facts, a priority which these features have only formally, that is, with respect to their being the features to which standards of correctness or the prop plus principles of generation apply and through which they determine the facts of representation, rather than substantively in terms of the content of making-believe or seeing-in. Once this structure of explanation has been reversed, make-believe (or seeing-in) need no longer be merely formally involved with respect to the determination of the representational facts, and a substantive account of the nature and content of the experience of making-believe can have a place in the theoretical explanation of the determination of the facts of representation. No doubt both Walton and Wollheim would like make-believe and seeing-in to have such a role: the point has simply been that the explanatory structure of their respective theories mitigates against this. If instead we conceive of the facts of representation being determined by facts concerning the intentions of the artist or the principles of generation relating to props, and of the facts of representation warranting or mandating the judgements of appreciators, then an account can be developed which relates the warrant or mandatedness of appreciative judgements and the representational facts and their determination in a different way, since now the very same considerations determine the representational facts as warrant or mandate the judgements of appreciators. Although they do not do so in a logically independent way, the factors apply *without* doing so via the formal involvement of the warrantedness of the judgements, i.e. , now, with equal priority. This leaves room for an account of the role of make-believe which ties it equally to the determination of the facts of representation as to the warrant of our judgements of those facts, and which can do so in a way which does not involve make-believe merely

formally but in respect of the nature and experience of the process of making-believe - thus closing the explanatory lacuna I referred to earlier.

The approach I suggest allows room to be given to concepts such as make-believe in an account of representation, both of the determination of facts and the warrant of judgements and of the process of coming to appreciate representational works without a pre-existing commitment being necessary or essential to representation as such. Indeed, I would also argue that if make-believe has a role with respect to our questions about representation and in the process appreciation, then it will be a contingent one and cannot be, as Walton argues, essential to representation as such. My discussion above of the relationship between the different elements of an account of representation shows why this can be the case, since if the same considerations determine both the facts of representation and the warrant of appreciative judgements of those facts, then make-believe will have a role only in so far as it is one of the relevant factors - it will be something that, much like (as I have already argued) resemblances, or illusions, or seeings-in, might but need not be appropriate to do with representations, and which might but need not have some role in determining the facts of representation. It seems (to 'paraphrase' Walton on intentionalism) more reasonable to regard make-believe, in some cases, as but one of a loose collection of factors bearing on the determination of what a work represents. Even if make-believe need not have a role in determining the facts of representation or warranting our judgements, it still seems false that it must always be involved in the process of judging the facts of representation. And if there is no role for make-believe in the process of judging, then there seems no reason for the principles of generation to apply to what we are to make-believe and hence no way for it through this to determine the facts of representation.

The advantage of Walton's thesis over the seeing-in thesis, for example, is that it seeks to give some way out of the problem of the recognitional aspect of seeing-in through giving a central role to the imagination, a way out which seems, given my criticisms of the Wollheimian account, appropriately grounded in the intentional realm of activity, use, or practice. Walton's theory has the virtue of saying much more to say about things at the intentional level of appreciation and it is, I suggest, possible to make

something of this latter aspect of Walton's account even though the significance he affords to make-believe needs to be reconceived. Walton's notion of the role of the imagination, in being tied to make-believe, and predominantly propositional make-believe, is too limited a conception²³⁸. I believe that imagination has a central role to play in both the process of appreciation and in the determination of content and mandating of our activities as appreciators, but my conception of the relevant variety of imagination and the role required of it is somewhat and significantly different. Rather than conceiving of the explanatorily relevant sort of imagination as a being a matter of doing a particular sort of thing (e.g. making-believe) with propositions (propositional imagining) or with

²³⁸ Currie has a different account of the imagination in representation: the imagination, and especially the perceptual imagination, is a matter of running our perceptual faculties off line, such that visualising, a process he takes to be central to pictorial representation, is a matter of simulation. This way he seeks to give an account of the way in which imagination is involved in pictorial (and other perceptual) representations which avoids the shortcomings of the Waltonian make-believe/fiction account while yet providing an answer to the problem with Wollheim's account of seeing-in (how to conceive of the recognitional aspect of twofoldness). However, I think any attempt to define the specifically sculptural nature of sculptural representation falls foul of the kinds of objections I raised against the Perceptual Thesis in Chapter 3. As an account of representation again, like Walton and Wollheim, Currie seems to take an element of the process of appreciating some representations and generalise it into a necessary and essential constitutive feature of the representational and determinant of representational facts such as representation-of and representation-as. The role of simulatory perceptual imagining, if and when it is involved in interpreting representations, is something which needs to be explained rather than something which explains, as such, the nature of either representation or the interpretive process. Like Wollheim, Currie in the end grounds the representational facts in intentions, although this time the intentions of a hypothetical artist. This leads to a similar gap between the kinds of things that determine the content of a work and the kinds of things that are involved in the process of understanding it, one which once again can be found to originate in a theoretical structure which gives priority to the warrant of judgement over determination of the ontological facts, for content is determined only via the hypothetical nature of Currie's artistic intentions means, and the hypothetical intentions are just those intentions which we are warranted in taking there to be.

perceptual contents (non-propositional imagining), my notion of the role of imagination cuts across the propositional imagining/non-propositional imagining distinction and concerns an intentional form of activity, a variety of practical judgement, which may involve the deployment of, and form the context for, but does not as such amount to, imagining in either or both or more than these ways.

6.5 Conclusion

There is a role for something like such a standard of correctness within an account of the practice of sculptural representing. There may (depending upon the sculptural work in question and contingent upon sculptural practices) also be a place among the material and mechanisms of sculptural representation for capacities such as seeing-in, for the phenomenal content of seeing-in experiences, for make-believe, and for three-dimensional resemblances. What we need in an account of representation is an account at the intentional rather than the non-intentional level which gives us an explanation of how and why and when such capacities and phenomena have a role in representation in terms of the way such features are *used* within appreciative sculptural practices. In the following chapter I outline the beginnings of such an account, and provide motivation and justification for my intentionalist stance, in terms of an integrated theory of the determination and appreciation of sculptural representation.

Chapter Seven

Representation (II): Determination and Appreciation

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Appreciation and determination - an integrated account

7.3 The sculptural

7.4 Representationality

7.5 Denotation

7.6 Content

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I propose an intentionalist account of the determination of a representational work's sculptural status, a content-independent and intentionalist account of representationality in sculpture, a content-independent and intentionalist account of the determination of the object of sculptural representations, and an intentionalist account of the determination of representational content in sculpture. I claim that although features such as three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe have a role to play in some instances and kinds of sculptural representation, they have no necessary role, and do so only contingently within the limits circumscribed by the intentional context of the particular work's production. Rather than run through the largely familiar arguments for and against intentionalist theories of the determination of artistic facts, I seek to give motivation and support to my intentionalism in terms of an integrated account of sculptural appreciation. The kinds of processes and activities of judgement involved in appreciating sculptures are, I suggest, intimately connected with both the way such judgements are mandated and with the way such facts are determined.

Accounts of what is involved in appreciation are often found together with accounts of what makes our appreciation appropriate or determines the facts of what there

is to be appreciated. Wollheim's account of pictorial representation in terms of seeing-in, and Walton's account of representation in terms of imagination, are prominent examples. As we have seen, approaches such as Wollheim's and Walton's attempt to explain central features of pictorial appreciation in terms of putative facts about the psychology of seeing and accounts of the nature of perceptual and non-perceptual imagining, but they tend to appeal to intentions (actual or hypothetical) or similar factors (conventions, principles, features of the material, and so forth), in order to ground representational facts and judgements.²³⁹ I argued in the previous chapter that it is for this reason somewhat surprising that the kinds of features taken to do the mandating and determining work are so different from the kinds of features which these theories take to be central to the appreciative process. Despite the fact that these theories seek, as a whole, to account for both issues, the connection within these theories between one feature and the other is weak and is simply an explanatory one: intentions (and their like) are given a role, but only as mandators of pictorial judgement or determinants of representational content which are largely external to the core processes of appreciation, anchoring but remaining distinct from the (largely non-intentional) psychological bases of appreciation.

Such accounts of the nature of sculpture and sculptural appreciation remain largely at the non-intentional level of mechanism and material rather than the intentional level of the medium as the use of (mechanism and) material with an orientation towards work. I suggest that the intentional is crucial to an account of the nature of sculpture not just because of the role of intentions in mandating sculptural judgements or determining sculptural content/the content of sculptural works, (as these theories do hold), but also at the level at which an adequate understanding of the processes and activities of sculptural appreciation must be located. A use-based account of the sculptural appreciative process which also focuses on materials, perceptual contents, and imagination, but which shifts the emphasis away from the non-intentional level of mechanism and material and to the level of the intentional, gives the intentional more than just a mandating and determining role. Indeed, it is the intentional nature of appreciation which partly explains why it is that intentions have a mandating and determining role in relation to the sculptural status

²³⁹ to give an account of what it is, in the end, that makes x a pictorial representation of y and not of z.

and content of sculptural works. If material properties or simply psychological processes were sufficient, then we could expect that the relevant determinants and warrantors would be the actual properties of those materials or some idea of norms of human perception and psychology.

7.2 Appreciation and determination - an integrated account

My criticisms of Wollheim's and Walton's theories of representation as applied to sculpture have primarily concerned the lack of an account of the process of appreciation at the relevantly intentional level, and the associated lacunae in their accounts between the kinds of considerations which are seen as determining content and mandating our judgements of that content on the one hand and on the other hand the nature of the appreciative process. In this section of the Chapter I suggest an account of the process of sculptural appreciation which is suitably located at the intentional level (the level at which the artist's use of the three-dimensional properties of materials functions as an artistic medium with an orientation towards the work), and which, in being relevantly intentional, avoids the creation of a lacuna between issues of determination and warrant and issues of process. Although I am sympathetic to Wollheim's appeal to intentions, and Walton's appeal to props plus principles of generation, in giving an account of the determination of the content of sculptural works and the mandating of our appreciative judgements of that content, I argued that the constitutive significance and explanatory role of these factors should be reconceived within a different theoretical structure. My account of the appreciative process, in avoiding opening such a lacuna, at the same time provides an explanatory and justificatory motivation for an intentionalist account of determination and warrant which renders unmysterious why it is broadly intentional factors (rather than some other kind) which have this determining and mandating role.

Earlier in the Chapter I criticised the theories of Wollheim and Walton for failing to give an account which gave an integrated account of determination/warrant and the appreciative process such that the reason for their chosen determinative criteria which they took to be a limit of appreciation (or, more precisely, to determine content *via* being a limit of warranted appreciation) remained something of an unexplored mystery. Given

my account of the nature of sculpture, it should be easy to see how it is that issues of determination and warrant can be integrated with issues concerning the nature of the appreciative process. In Chapter 5 I argued for the view that the sculptural is essentially an art-practice in which the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium. I also said that on this view such a use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art object is necessarily relevant to appreciating the work. I also argued that sculpture refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard

The properties of material are used not only in the sense that they enter causally as material into the artist's *productive* activities. Appreciation as well as production involves the use of materials, albeit in distinct ways, but there is an internal and necessary connection between productive and appreciative uses. Appreciative uses of materials, like productive uses, involve bringing the three-dimensional properties of material into the intentional world of the medium oriented towards the work. But whereas productive uses do this because they *make* the work by functioning as a medium for the carrying out of various artistic functions and ends, appreciative uses do not make the work, or create the medium, but involve *treating* the properties used by the artist as a medium for the work (*without* making). It is no part of my view that the non-producing appreciator as opposed to, or as well, as the artist *makes* the art, but it is nevertheless only through so treating these properties that we can have access to and any hope of an appreciation of the work. So, while Michelangelo makes the stone a certain shape and uses this shape to represent the nose of David [fig.63], it is only when we, as appreciators of *David* treat the shape of the stone as one of the properties among those used by Michelangelo to function as an artistic medium that we gain access to and an appreciation of *David*. Treating the shape in this way, and the process of coming to an appreciation of this element of the work, and the work as a whole, involves making use of this shape in a variety of physical and mental activities, uses which, at least in their orientation if not their content, are not unrelated to the uses Michelangelo made of this shape in making *David*.

Further, productive and appreciative uses are internally related in so far as the producer is also an appreciator and the appreciative use of materials is a necessary

component of artistic production. The artist's productive use of materials as a medium is guided by their appreciative use of those materials, and indeed is only treated as and only becomes a medium which constitutes a work in so far as the artist's productive use of materials is so guided. If appreciative uses of materials did not have this role in production, then we would simply have materials being reshaped into other objects which remained at the level of material and which, as such, would not be a use of materials which would function as an artistic medium bearing a work. I am not saying that there is no difference between the ways appreciation enters into production as opposed to non-productive uses of materials: clearly, the context is different, but appreciative uses of materials, as a constitutive part of productive processes, are implicated in the development of the work throughout the process towards completion. Since non-productive appreciative uses of materials occur only once the work has been produced, they clearly do not have this kind of developmental relationship with production. Nevertheless the process appreciating a work in non-productive contexts is such that appreciative uses of materials are involved in a developmental fashion throughout the process of coming to understand and evaluate the work. Appreciative uses of materials figure differently in the process of appreciation than in the process of production in so far as both processes differ, but they are similar in so far as in neither productive appreciation nor non-productive appreciation is the work given to us, as it were, whole in a moment.

Clearly, given both the distinction between making and (mere) treating, and, more importantly, the difference in the developmental role which appreciative uses have within the processes of productive and non-productive appreciation, I am not implying that the correct appreciation of a sculptural work is necessarily that which involves an appreciative use of the materials which is identical with the artist's appreciative uses of materials in the sense of process. However, given my claim that appreciation involves grasping the way in which the artist has used materials as an artistic medium, and that the nature of use is determined by facts about the intentions of artists in using materials I am implying that the correct appreciation of a sculptural work involves *in the end* using the materials in appreciation as a medium for the work in a way which captures the use which the artist *in the end* made of the materials as an artistic medium. That is to say, if in producing *David*

Michelangelo's use of the three-dimensional resemblance of an area of stone to a nose functions as an artistic medium for representing the nose of David (something which, I argue below, is determined by Michelangelo's intention to so use the resemblance of this area of stone), then in appreciating *David* appreciators' make use of these characteristics of the material in such a way that they are treated as the medium for the representation of the nose of David.

I have also been critical of Wollheim's and Walton's account for the related reason that they fail to give adequate accounts of the nature of the process of appreciation as something which occurs at the intentional level at which the use of materials functions as an artistic medium for the work. I argued that Wollheim's account of seeing-in leaves the account of appreciation resting too greatly on non-intentional features of human perceptual psychology. And I argued that Walton's account of representation in terms of make-believe, while giving a central role to an activity (making-believe) situated at a suitably intentional level of analysis nevertheless failed to identify an appropriate activity in generalising and making necessary what is simply one among several activities which may contingently be involved in appreciating works. I have already said something about how I think the involvement in appreciation of seeing-in and make-believe can be reconceived and given a more appropriate explanatory role in a theory of appreciation. But more needs to be said about the general nature of the appreciative process if I am to provide a fully integrated account. What I have said so far suggests a certain kind of account of the appreciative process which differs in several important ways from other analyses, such as those of Walton and Wollheim. Appreciating sculptural works, as I have already argued, involves the use of the three-dimensional properties of material such that they are treated as a medium for the work. The kinds of ways in which materials may be used are manifold and will vary from work to work. These include but are not limited to seeing-in, making-believe, seeing-as and perceptual illusions, recognised resemblances, propositional imaginings, and non-propositional imaginings. Although such possible elements of appreciation could be listed, the great differences between these kinds of activities means there is very little general to say about them beyond pointing out an important feature of the way in which, on my analysis, they feature in the appreciative

process and which suggests a general and appropriately intentional account of the nature of the appreciative process.

The process of appreciating a work, on my account, is primarily the (often imaginative²⁴⁰) interpretive and evaluative process (well captured in the idea of the hermeneutic circle²⁴¹) of coming to grasp *how* it is that materials have been used by the artist to function as an artistic medium for the work carried out via the appreciator's own use of the materials as a medium for the work. As I have argued, appreciation is interpretively appropriate in so far as it involves *in the end* a use of the materials which treats them as a medium for the work in a way which captures the use which the artist *in the end* made of the materials as an artistic medium in making the work. Of course, such an *end* may never be reached, and the point at which we in fact contingently *stop* may be more or less removed from it. This activity will sometimes involve seeing-in, sometimes making-believe, perhaps propositional imagining (e.g. "that the area of stone is the nose of David") or non-propositional imagining (e.g. imagining the feel of David's nose, its "noseness", it being part of the face, its movements, its relationship to breath), but should not be *identified* with any of these contingent features of the process of seeing *how* the area of stone is a representation of David's nose. Evaluative judgements may be involved along the way within interpretation as well as in relation both to parts and whole works in a way which presupposes some degree of interpretive understanding. Evaluative

²⁴⁰ in so far as content is more or less unpuzzlingly presented to appreciators little or no imaginative work is required.

²⁴¹ Interpreters come to an (emergent) understanding of an artwork, as part of a hermeneutic process in which the art object has a particular role. In a kind of circular process, we begin with assumptions or imaginative hypotheses about the artwork as a whole in terms of which we understand the parts and which in turn informs and leads us to adjust our understanding of the artwork as a whole. The assumptions we make as to the content that the art object bears are open to reciprocal revision as well as validation by testing the coherence of these assumptions against the physical properties of the art object, the relevant conventions, the intentions of the artist, and so forth. Our understanding of the art object is thus continually refined in a kind of to and fro movement between parts and whole, art object and interpreter, with the art object as evidence for the artwork.

judgements are an integral part of appreciation, of seeing how the work does what it does, not only in the interpretive sense of seeing what is going on the work but also in the directly evaluative sense of seeing how it is that the shape of the nose is pleasing, seeing how it is that the work is striking or imposing, and so forth. This notion of grasping *how* materials function as the artistic medium for a work is something which is inherently intentional even though it may involve the use of all manner of non-intentional features of materials, of our human psychology and perceptual make-up, as well as intentional factors such as conventions and wider knowledge, and intentional activities such as moving about the work, making-believe that it is a bear, and so forth.

This is not to say that the object of interpretation, and of appreciation as a whole, is the intentions of the artist *rather than* the artwork, one common objection against intentionalism.²⁴² Such an objection misses its mark against my version of intentionalism, since I do not suggest that artistic intentions are the object of interpretation *rather than* the work itself. Indeed, such a view would contradict my account of the ontology of sculptural works, for on my view artistic intentions are determinative of work content in being partly *constitutive* of the work. On my account, where the nature and contents of sculptural works are a matter of the way materials have been used at the intentional level as an artistic medium, the work cannot be considered as a work independently of the intentional use of materials as an artistic medium. The intentions of the artist are not to be conceived of as determining work content somehow independently of the work as if from the outside, but rather as constituting the work as a work. Certainly there are facts which are not determined by the intentions of the artist. At the level of material, for example, the facts of weight, shape, chemical structure and so forth are not determined by the intentions of the artist. But considered as material we are not

²⁴² See, for example, M. C. Beardsley's "The Authority of the Text" in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger, Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1992. This volume contains a wide ranging discussion of the central issues concerning the role of intention in interpretation, and in relation to this, its role in the determination of a work's properties. It should be noted that appeals to hypothetical or model artists can't help here, since they can't be any more appropriately the object of appreciation rather than the art-object anymore than can the actual artist.

considering the sculpture as a sculpture, as a work at all. Facts about the work, which only exists at the intentional level, are a matter of the intentional use of materials with an orientation towards the work which brings material into the intentional world and out of which the work emerges. If the intentional use of materials has this kind of determinative role, and further in so far as the productive use of materials involves and is guided by their appreciative use by the artist, then it is hard to see how artistic intentions cannot be part of what we must be concerned with in appreciating the work, not *rather than* the work but *in* appreciating the work. The objection posits a false opposition between interest in artistic intentions and interest in the work.

7.3 The sculptural

What makes a representation sculptural rather than, for example, painterly? In Chapter 5 I argued that the sculptural is essentially the *use* of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium. My theory of the nature of the sculpture provides a straightforward answer to the question of which of a representational work's features makes it a *sculptural* representation: a representation is sculptural in so far as it is the use of three-dimensional properties of the material art object which functions directly as a medium for representation. Perhaps the properties used in the sculpture to represent the object its object resemble that object in three dimensions, and perhaps they represent the object in virtue of this resemblance, and perhaps perceiving-in and/or make-believe has a role in the realisation of the representation, but these issues, and the question of whether resemblance, perceiving-in, or make-believe are a necessary part of sculptural representation are really questions about the way in which representation works in sculpture rather than about what makes a given representation *sculptural*. Whatever the specific way in which the three-dimensional properties of the material function in representation, it is the fact that it is their use which functions directly as a medium for representation which makes that representation sculptural.

As I noted at the end of Chapter 5, my account so far leaves unanswered the question of what factors determine that materials are used sculpturally (a work's status as sculptural) and which determine a work's status as sculpture. As I indicated earlier, my

view is that the fact that materials have been used sculpturally, and hence a work's status as sculptural, is determined almost entirely by facts about its intentional history. It seems reasonable to suppose that the fact of sculptural use of materials is determined in the same ways as facts of use of any object in performing any action are in general determined. The idea of use is implicitly and necessarily intentional, and the facts of use are determined by the intentional history of the activity of using. If I use my crowbar to open the crate, what it is that makes it the case that I am so using my crowbar is the that *intending to do so* I open the crate with the crow bar. My claim is not, of course, that uses are the same as intentions, but rather that intentions form a necessary constitutive part of use. Someone may intend to act with an instrument and yet fail to do so for a number of reasons (they get distracted before they can act, they are mistaken about the possibility of acting or the existence of the object, and so), where as a use is intentional action with an instrument.

Now, it might be objected that the idea of use and the idea of intention come apart in such away that use cannot plausibly be held to be determined in this way by intentions. For example, it might be thought that whereas contexts of use are transparent, contexts of intention are opaque, such that whereas co-referential terms can be substituted *without a change in truth-value*, this is not true of contexts of intention. For example, in the case where I use my knife to cut the vege-burger it follows that should the vege-burger be rancid then I use my knife to cut the rancid vege-burger, where as if I intend to cut the vege-burger it does not follow that I intend to cut the rancid vege-burger. But it seems to me that we *can* look at both intentions and use in either way, as being transparent or opaque, depending upon whether we substitute the co-referential terms within or outwith the scope of the 'use'/'intention' term. If the referential term falls within the scope of the 'use'/'intention' term then substitution will be opaque, but if outwith the scope the substitution will be transparent. So there is a sense in which I do not use my knife to cut the rancid vege-burger, and in which I do intend to cut the rancid vege-burger. The apparent contrast between use and intention in the objection is the result of treating use in one way (as having the referential term external to the scope of the 'use' term) and intention in the other (as having the referential term internal to the scope of the 'intention')

term), rather than reflecting a necessary difference between the nature of use and intention as such. So long as the terms 'use' and 'intention' are used with equivalent scope relative to objects of reference, then there is nothing after all to undermine my claim about the relationship between use and intention. I am using 'intention' such that the object of reference falls within the scope of this term, and likewise 'use'.

There are advantages in treating the terms in this way rather than such that the object of reference fall without their scope. In particular, it allows us to make and maintain a distinction between using something and the products of use on the one hand, and accidental events and their outcomes. Had I opened the crate with the crowbar without intending to do so, then this would not be a *use* of the crowbar, but rather some non-intentional or accidental interaction of my bodily position and movements with the physical environment in such a way that as a result the crate came open. Relating this back to the sculptural, a person might interact physically with materials in such a way that non-intentionally something sculptural-seeming is produced, but without the intentions it would be wrong to say that they had used the materials sculpturally, and hence wrong to say that they had produced a sculptural work. Rather than counting as *uses*, such non-intentional events and their products are better conceived as natural occurrences and natural artefacts, in much the same way as natural processes can lead accidentally to the formation of stones which shaped like people and clouds that look like animals without our considering such things as being representations of people or animals. Intentions seem necessary and largely sufficient to determine facts of use of this kind. And so it is, I claim with the sculptural. What makes it the case that I have used the three-dimensional properties of a material to function directly as an artistic medium is that I intend in acting with the three-dimensional properties of the material that they function in this way.

In Chapter 5 I argued that the sculptural is something which exists only at the intentional level, not at the material level. Of course, the sculptural functioning of an artist's use of materials (just like other kinds of non-sculptural and non-artistic uses of materials), might involve and partially depend upon conventions and material facts, but does this undermine my intentionalism with respect to the determination of the sculptural? There are of course many facts about sculptural works which are true independently of

any intentions we might have in producing sculptures. At the material level, for example, the shape of the material, its weight, its chemical composition, and so forth. And of course we might say that material facts are necessary to sculpture and place a limit on our intentions, but this makes it true that intentions are insufficient (even if they are necessary) only in the trivial sense that we can only use materials if they exist.

The involvement of conventions, I suggest, places similarly non-threatening limits on the sufficiency of intentions in determining the facts of sculptural status. Generally speaking there are of course many facts of use for which the intentions of the agent are necessary but only jointly sufficient as determinants. For example, that I wave a greeting with my hand is in a sense determined not only by my intention to use movements of my hand to greet a friend but also the existence of the social conventions of greeting which make it possible to greet my friend by moving my hand. Nevertheless, knowledge of the conventions which form part of the context for intending and acting is partly constitutive of my intending to greet my friend by moving my hand, and it is my having the intention and acting to greet my friend by moving my hand which within a context which includes such conventions, brings my movements under the greeting conventions, which selects the greeting conventions as the relevant conventions, and which thereby makes it the case that I wave a greeting rather than simply move my hand about. Thus, although conventions in context place a certain kind of limit on what can sensibly be achieved by doing certain things, and furnish us with resources for acting in certain ways, it is still our intentions which, in the end, determine what we have done.

Even if conventions have a role in determining the facts of use, they do so *as* conventions for intentional activity, and as conventions which are established conventionally both in the sense that they originate from the intentional activity of agents (even if they are not established by decision) and because they are selected as the conventions under which we act by the intentions of agents. The same is true of the conventions involved in the sculptural functioning of the use of the three-dimensional properties of materials as an artistic medium. In so far as functioning as an artistic medium in this way is (as a matter of fact) something which involves and depends upon conventions it is in the sense that such conventions are among the contextually available

resources which facilitate or even make it possible for me to so use the three-dimensional properties of materials. Intentions remain fundamentally determinative, and largely sufficient relative to resources used, in so far as conventions are to be considered as themselves *among the resources which are used* by sculptors.

But in so far as there is a difference between the question “what makes something sculptural?” and the question “what makes something a sculpture?”, we cannot simply assume that if intentionalism is true with respect to the sculptural that it is also true with respect to sculpture. Indeed, given that being a sculpture is a matter of being the product of an art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard, and since art practices are defined partly in terms of the conventions and standards internal to them, then I think the correct story about the determination of a work’s status as sculpture must differ somewhat with respect to the role of intentions. Nevertheless, I think this story should still be a largely intentionalist one. Although perhaps materials must be used in accord with the conventions and standards of the historical art practice of sculpture for something to be a sculpture as opposed to, say, painting, it is nevertheless the *intentional use* of materials in accord with those conventions and standards, and the intentional selection and/or use of those conventions (participation in the tradition of art practice), which in the end determines something’s status as a sculpture. The conventions in themselves determine something’s status as sculpture only relative to intentional activity which selects the conventions and standards of sculpture as the ones which have application: without such intentional activity and without such selection of conventions and standards, there is nothing to be (or fail to be) in accord with the conventions and standards.²⁴³

²⁴³ Perhaps, therefore, one cannot make a work of sculpture without having the concept of the art tradition of sculpture, although one could well make a sculptural work without having such a conception. In cultures without a concept of the art tradition of sculpture there may be no sculpture, although there may be sculptural artefacts (masks, statues, etc.).

7.4 Representationality

Representation, on my view, is most minimally the activity of using one thing to stand for another - what could be called the denotative aspect of representation. Less minimally, extending beyond denotation, it also involves the attribution of some or other properties to the denoted object. Rather than develop a lengthy theory of the nature of denotative and attributive representation, my interest here is confined to the issue of what determines that something, in this case a sculpture, is in a standing-for relation to another? What determines a sculptural work's status as representational? As noted, each of the theories of representationality addressed so earlier in the chapter are what could be called "content dependent" accounts of representationality. The accounts are also object-dependent in so far as a thing's being representational is held to be dependent upon its having an object. Implicit in this the view that for something to be a representation it must not only have an object but must also at the same time portray that object as being some way. Although the assumptions object dependent and content dependent assumptions of these accounts of representationality could conceivably be true, there seems no reason to begin by assuming that they must be. In particular, there is no reason to assume that the criteria which determine representationality need be the same criteria as determine either the object of representation or representational content.

My contention is that an object's being used in representation is necessary and sufficient to determine (in the sense of constitute) its status as representational. A sculptural work will be representational just in so far as the artist has used material sculpturally in representation, that is, minimally, to 'stand for' another. In this respect representationality is like some other possible features of artworks, such as, for example, fictionality. One promising account of fictionality holds that it is determined as a feature of the work by the intention of the artist (actual or hypothetical) that the audience take an attitude of make-believe toward aspects of the work.²⁴⁴ On this account, the content of the fiction is another issue, and is a fact independent of that content's fictional status in so far as the very same sentences, if not uttered or inscribed with the intention that the

²⁴⁴See Gregory Currie's, *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, 1990; and his "Works of Fiction as Illocutionary Acts", in *Philosophy and Literature*, vol.10, n2, pp.304-308.

audience take an attitude of make-believe toward their content, would not be fictional although their semantic content would remain the same. The account of representationality I propose is both object independent and content independent, and it is also intentionalist. My theory is object-independent and content-independent in that it gives an account of a work's status as representational which is independent of facts about the object of the representation and the content of the sculptural representation. This part of the account makes no assumptions about the truth of intentionalism in relation to the determination of the object or content of sculptural representations. Resemblances, that something can be seen-in another thing, that something can function as a prop in a game of make-believe, and other properties of materials, may be relevant to the usability of materials in particular kinds representation, but it is their use (rather than their usability, or usable properties) in representation which determines the work's status as representational.

There are several different ways in which an object may acquire representationality. For example, an object may be produced by its creator with the intention that it represent and that it be regarded by appreciators as a representation, or an object may be used stipulatively, or in some other way, by someone or some institution to represent some thing. Naturally, the art practice of sculpture is characterised by conventions and standards for what counts, within that practice, as a representational use of materials. Some of these may involve three-dimensional resemblance, or perceiving-in, or make-believe. For example, it might be the case that the conventions of portraiture in sculpture generally place constraints involving resemblance upon the producer. But it is not clear what the consequences of this are, or what the best story would be if, for example, someone produced a work which was intended to be a portrait of someone, and therefore also a representation of someone, but that work failed to resemble to any significant degree the person concerned, or any other person. Would we want to say more than simply that the work was a poor portrait? Perhaps that it failed to be a portrait at all? That it failed to be a sculpture? That it failed to be a representation? That it failed to be a representation of some particular individual? Or some combination of these

responses, such as that it is a representation but not a portrait, a sculpture but not a portrait, or a sculptural representation but not a sculpture?

Part of the difficulty in cases of this sort lies in the fact that the conventions and standards of art practices tend to be flexible and can, with various degrees of acceptability, be ignored or overridden or overturned without this undermining a work's belonging still to that tradition, but perhaps itself shifting that tradition. In relation to the example of portraiture, consider Picasso's *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler* [fig.64] which hardly resembles (at least in any very realistic sense) its subject, and which contributed to a shift in the terms of the art practice of painting, and of portraiture, rather than falling altogether outside. At other times, for artists less fortunate or talented, stepping beyond the terms of the practice may lead to either exclusion from membership or a negative evaluative status. In so far as the work is a work of sculpture, conventional and normative features of the art practice will place constraints upon how certain features of a sculptural object may be used and appreciated, including in representation. While an intention to use material sculpturally to represent is sufficient for a sculptural work to be representational, it may not be sufficient for it to be a sculpture. Only those sculptural representational intentions which, to a sufficient degree, conform to or shift the terms of the art practice of sculpture will result in a representational *sculpture*, and the same considerations will apply to evaluative questions within the terms of the practice. But note that the constraint here applies to the sculptural status of the work rather than its representationality.

7.5 Denotation

I have acknowledged that three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe may have an important roles to play in fixing the object and determining the further content of the sculptural representation. Nothing I have said so far concerning the nature of the sculptural or the determination of representationality counts against these possibilities. In addition to content-dependent theories of representationality, Wollheim, Walton, and Hopkins each also have content-dependent theories of the determination of the representational object, or the denotational aspect of representation. In other words,

each holds to the view that to represent something is always to represent it as having some properties. As noted earlier, the ideas of resemblance (especially recognised resemblance), seeing-in, and make-believe (especially experiential make-believe) seem to be inherently contentful in so far as if one thing resembles another it is always in particular respects.

I see little reason to assume that to represent something must always be to represent it as having some properties, and even if it is, little reason to assume that the object of representation must be determined by the same factors which determine the content of a representation. Denotation is one minimal kind or aspect of representation. To denote something is to stand for it, but is not in itself to attribute any properties to the thing denoted. In a symbol system for which 'dog' denotes the animal dog, or in which '4' denotes the number four, 'dog' and '4' simply stand for dog and four. In using 'dog' and 'four' to stand for dog and four, we need not attribute any properties to dog and four. Of course, given the contexts in which we often use these symbols, we will very often also make such attributions. But the point is that using such symbols in denotation need to commit us to any view of the characteristics of the objects which they stand for. I think representation always involves a denotative aspect. Some representations simply denote, but others involve something more contentful and go beyond denotation, attributing properties to the denoted objects as well as denoting them. But even in the case of representations which are more than denotative - i.e. which represent their objects as being some particular way - it seems possible that the denotative aspect may be determined independently of the criteria which determine the properties represented as being those of the object, and independently of the properties of the sculptural object which are being used to represent the object. At least, there seems no reason to assume that the determining criteria need be the same.

Think again of Hopkins' example of the Spitting Image model, which he claims represents Thatcher with odd properties because we experience it as resembling Thatcher with odd properties. I argued earlier against this account. Remember that Hopkins thinks that sculptural misrepresentation causes special problems for the resemblance theory of representation because to represent something is always to represent that thing

as having certain properties. He thinks that the same features of a work have to constrain *both* which particular is represented (the denotational aspect of representation) *and* how it is represented as being. Hopkins holds this to be a problem in the case of misrepresentation for the reason that how the object is differs from how it is represented as being. But I think the Spitting Image model does not so much represent Thatcher as having odd properties as represent actual Thatcher using an object with properties which would be odd were they Thatcher's, and I would claim that it could do *this* without necessarily attributing those odd properties to Thatcher.²⁴⁵ If we take a simpler example, it seems perfectly reasonable, for example, that I can stipulate now that my pencil represents Thatcher, and that the pencil can then function within a game of make-believe I thereby initiate as a sculptural representation of Thatcher without my representing Thatcher as a pencil, or as having any of the properties of a pencil, or indeed as having any particular properties whatever. In representing Thatcher with my pencil in this way, I need not represent Thatcher as having even the most basic properties of three-dimensional objects, such as dimensionality, location, weight, or spatial occupancy/displacement. This is so even though the object I use to represent Thatcher (my pencil), and hence the sculptural representation of Thatcher, obviously does itself have these basic properties of objects. I need not represent Thatcher as having these particular qualities - i.e. being the shape of my pencil (or any other shape) or being here rather than the House of Lords (or where-ever else she may be). Of course, I may represent Thatcher as having pencil qualities (and these would be odd properties for Thatcher to have), but I need not do so.

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²⁴⁵ In this particular case the satirical nature of the representation might nevertheless require such an attribution.

²⁴⁶ Separating the issue of the determination of the object of representation from the question of the determination of representational content, avoids the problems referred to by Hopkins which face a resemblance theory which makes assumptions about the dual role of three-dimensional resemblance in sculptural representation: if the role is dual, it need not occur more than once at any level (object determination or content determination). If put together with an account which gives resemblance a

The idea that to represent an object is always necessarily to represent that object as having particular properties seems plausible if we assume that three-dimensional resemblance, or seeing-in, or experiential make-believe, is the constitutive basis of sculptural representation. But were that assumption to be dropped, there would be no motivation remaining for such a view. Whereas three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe have been taken to determine the object of representation, I argue that they need play no such role. My view, (as I indicated in my earlier discussion of Wollheim in relation to this point) is that the item's intentional background is, broadly conceived, sufficient to fix the object of sculptural representation. Such factors as resemblance, seeing-in, or make-believe may in some instances have a contingent role in determining the object represented sculpturally, but only within the context of the intentional history of the sculptural object rather than functioning independently. For example, an artist might intend to represent that object which resembles the sculptural material *whichever* object that is. Or the artist might utilise conventions of representation which involve resemblance, in order, for example, to represent a woman by constructing an object which looks like a woman in particular relevant respects. But it is the artist's intentions with respect to resemblance and conventions of resemblance, specifically the artist's use of such resemblances and conventions, which makes resemblance and the related conventions relevant to the determination of the representational object at all. If we do not begin by assuming that to represent something is always to represent it as having some properties, the truth of this position can be seen to be independent of the question of how that particular or kind of object is represented as being.

If representing an object need not also involve representing it as having some particular properties,²⁴⁷ and even though it may nevertheless often be one of the purposes of the representer to so represent the object, there is no reason to suppose that it must be the particular content of a sculptural representation that makes something a representation of some particular. Generally, a sculptural representation of an object which does not represent the object as having any particular properties will of course be a pretty useless and uninteresting representation, at least in an art context. Obviously the boundaries of what can sensibly be achieved by a representer may be limited by the conventions and expectations of art and critical practice, contentfulness and perhaps three-dimensional resemblance may have a role in defining these sorts of limits. But this is really a question about the interest and value of a sculptural representation rather than the fact of what object it represents, and is a question about the content of a sculptural representation rather than about the object to which this content is being ascribed. For example, given our normal ideas of portraiture, and given an artists operating in those terms, a painting or sculpture will not be a very good portrait if representation is not morphic and if the representation does not relevantly resemble its subject (and, as I discussed before, it may even fail to count as a portrait in any significant sense). But the limits placed here by considerations such as three-dimensional resemblance are limits upon the value and interest of the representation in question, rather than object-fixing constitutional criteria, and derive largely from the fact that the conventions of portraiture afford resemblance a

contingent role in the determination of the object of representation, then these problems are avoided in a way which still enables us to make sense of the role which three-dimensional resemblance does play in many sculptural representations in a way which fits well with our intuitions and our everyday understanding that, for example, to appreciate satirical puppets involves us seeing how they both resemble and differ from their objects.

²⁴⁷The case of my non-morphic sculptural representation of Thatcher with a pencil, for example, need not represent Thatcher as having any particular property. In this way it has much in common with symbolic representation, and there may be a number of functions I can perform using this representation without requiring it to be representing Thatcher as being a particular way just as we can do a lot of things with ordinary symbolic representations.

particular kind of role. I suggest that we look at the role of three-dimensional resemblance in sculptural representation in this sort of way - as being best understood as a device which representers may employ for a variety of ends, as something which in so far as it is used by representers contributes to the content of the sculptural representation, and which is a quality relevant to the interest and value of particular sculptural representations, but not one which is necessarily involved in fixing the object of a sculptural representation. The same, I claim, is true of seeing-in and make-believe.

But can intentions really be enough, or mustn't there be some role for factors such as resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe in determining the object of representation, even if as limits on artistic intention, or at least for *some* contentful (property-attributive) constraint? What happens, for example, in the case of sculptural representation in which the sculptor intends to represent, say a horse, but ends up producing something which looks just like a camel? What are we to say? Are we to say that the artist has succeeded in representing a horse, or that they failed to represent a horse but represented a camel instead? The first thing to note is that if we are dealing with a non-morphic sculptural representation of a horse, then there is no problem with succeeding in representing a horse with an object which looks just like a camel, since three-dimensional properties are not in any case being used to represent three-dimensional properties. Indeed, we might use *anything* to non-morphically represent a horse. But what of the case in which the sculptural representation is *intended* to be morphic - where the three-dimensional properties of the camel-shaped object are *intended* to represent the three-dimensional properties of a horse? Well, even in these cases there is no requirement for three-dimensional resemblance, since sculptural representation might be morphic and yet not be auto-morphic. So just as it is possible to represent the greenness of an apple with the redness of a tomato, it is possible to represent, for example, the height of a horse with the height of a camel-shaped object, the girth of a horse with the girth of camel-shaped object, parts of horses with parts of camel-looking objects, and so forth. What we won't get is something that looks like a camel, but, I suggest, it may well still represent a horse. Only if we think that three-dimensional resemblance *must* have a role in fixing the object

will we have difficulty here. But if we drop this assumption, other responses to this kind of problem case seem plausible.

Note that there are different senses of success at issue here. One is success in the sense of representing the object one intended to represent, and the other is success in making an object which people can recognise as a sculptural representation of the object. My suggestion is that we can say that the sculptor who intends to morphically sculpturally represent a horse with something which looks just like a camel, has succeeded in representing a horse but may well have failed to have produced a sculptural representation of a horse which anyone is likely to be able to recognise as such. Such a representation of a horse may not be terribly useful or interesting (at least independent of knowledge of the sculptor's productive intentions), not only because it is hard to recognise but also because its content will not be able to tell us very much about horses. This approach keeps constitutive questions about object-fixing separate from epistemic issues of how we know what something is, and I think there are advantages in keeping this separation. For one, we may often fail to recognise a sculptural representation of an object as such, and for a variety of reasons, but this need not indicate a failure in representation/in fixing the object of representation. Also, if we think that it does indicate such a failure, particularly in cases where it is extremely difficult for appreciators to tell what an art-object represents, then we will be unable to tell certain important kinds of critical story about artistic success and failure and about the value of works. This is what I mean when I suggest that three-dimensional resemblance, and other factors such as seeing-in, and the role of props in games of make-believe, are more to do with the value of representations than with the determination of their objects. Lack of three-dimensional resemblance, for example, may compromise the value of a sculptural representation if, for example, no-one can recognise it. Thinking again of the satirical puppets, the puppet does not fail to represent Thatcher because it fails to resemble her, and it does not represent her because it resembles her three-dimensionally. But the puppet is of satirical value and interest in virtue of the ways in which it both resembles and does not resemble Thatcher three-dimensionally and in other ways.

7.6 Content

What of the determination of sculptural content? I argued in earlier sections that three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in (or its analogues), and make-believe have no necessary role as determinants of sculptural representational content, but that such features may, and very often do, nevertheless play a contingent role in the determination of this content. I suggest that the contribution of such features to representational content in sculpture is contingent upon intentional facts about the artist's use of such features in representation. It is only within sculptural representational art practices in which resemblance, seeing-in, and are among the mechanisms and materials which are used by artists in representation that they have a role in determining the content of sculptural representations. Ultimately, I argue, it is the intentions of the artist which determine the representational content of sculptural works either directly, or indirectly by establishing and/or selecting content determining criteria which, once selected/established function independently from the specific content intentions of the artist.

Three-dimensional resemblances between the sculptural object and the object represented or other real or imaginary objects, I suggest, are simply one kind of feature of a sculptural object which might be used or which might function to determine the representational content of a sculptural work.²⁴⁸ In cases where sculptural representation

²⁴⁸ Of course, the three-dimensional material properties of a sculpture which resemble the object represented (and other objects) may contribute to the representational content of a work in a variety of ways, and may contribute, in virtue of their three-dimensional resemblances, to the non-representational content of a work. For example, the three-dimensional resemblance between the forms of Giacometti's *Slaughtered Woman* [Fig.61] and the shapes of both fruit and of crustaceans may well contribute to the sculptural representation of the violated woman as resembling the split forms of fruit and shell-fish, but in addition and independently of this (i.e. even if there is no such representation-as content to the work) these resemblances also contributes to the expressive and emotional content of the work. Or such properties may contribute to the representational (and other) content of a work in ways not connected closely to the three-dimensional resemblances which these properties have with properties of the object represented or other objects, as in, for example, non-morphic sculptural representation such as when the weight of a work is used to represent the stubbornness of some person represented by the work, not in

is morphic, then there is of course likely to be some three-dimensional resemblance. If a sculptor wants to represent someone as being tall and thin one obvious and easily graspable way of doing so might be to represent such properties morphically by producing a tall and thin sculptural object. With instances of auto-morphic sculptural representation, where one three-dimensional property is used to represent the same three-dimensional property, there will clearly be a high degree of three-dimensional resemblance. In cases of morphic sculptural representation in which one three-dimensional property is used to represent another three-dimensional property of the same kind (but not the very same property), then there will also be some degree of three-dimensional resemblance, possibly a very high degree. Such resemblances, which may be easily recognisable by appreciators, may well be intended and utilised by sculptors and may well function to mandate the judgements of appreciators. Think, for example, of some of Duane Hanson's life-size polyester resin and fibreglass super-realist sculptures of people [fig.65]. Some of these sculptures of ordinary people in casual stances from their everyday lives are so realistic and detailed in their realisation, right down to hair follicles and pores of the skin, that they can fool the closely attentive as well as the distracted eye. The disconcerting effect of their realism is to disrupt our normal sense of reality, making visible aspects of people and their individuality which are normally obscured from us, not just by their not being available for such inspection, but by our respective involvement in our own ways of life. Clearly three-dimensional resemblances between the sculptural object and the human form play an absolutely central role in these morphically representational works and in our appreciation of them. These resemblances do have an important role in determining the representational content of the sculptures. Were these properties different, then the representational content of the work would be significantly different and different judgements would be mandated by the work.

virtue of any resemblance between weight and stubbornness, but simply in virtue of some conventional metaphorical relationship between weight and stubbornness. What I have been concerned with here is simply the contribution of three-dimensional resemblances to sculptural *representational* content of sculptures in virtue of these resemblances.

But the existence of objective and or perceptually recognisable three-dimensional material resemblances and lacks of resemblance between a sculpture and its representational object can never be a simple fact which by itself determines representational content. There will, as I have suggested, very often be primitive recognisable three-dimensional resemblances between objects which would exist independently of an object being used to represent anything. If such three-dimensional resemblances become relevant to the determination of representational content, I suggest that they do so only in virtue of other factors which give them a role in representing the object as resembling something (namely as resembling something with properties resembling the properties used to represent the object). Three-dimensional resemblance on this view is a device used within sculptural representation, which contributes to the representational content of a work only within the context of representational practices in which these three-dimensional resemblances have such a role, rather than the resemblances being prior or external facts which determine representational content and mandate the judgements of appreciators somehow primitively, or independently. Specifically, my suggestion is that three-dimensional resemblances have a determining role when they have a role in a sculpture's representing X as resembling Y (or some thing in some respect).²⁴⁹

Naturally, the intentions of the artist cannot determine whether or not properties of the material of a given work resemble the properties of the object beyond the productive

²⁴⁹ Rather than saying that the sculpture represents X as having some properties because it resembles three-dimensionally things which are actually this way (as if three-dimensional resemblances had some primitive role to play here), I suggest that it can instead sometimes be appropriate to talk about things being *represented as resembling* such and such a thing in such and such a respect. For example, in the case of a satirical puppet of Thatcher which bears three-dimensional material resemblances to the actual Reagan, such resemblances may have a role in determining the representational content of the work in so far as they have a role in representing Thatcher as resembling Reagan. This avoids the problem of we would otherwise have of explaining why the Thatcher puppet resembling Reagan is not instead, in view of the resemblance, a Reagan puppet, while maintaining some role for resemblance in determining representational content.

sense in which the artist is causally responsible for the existence of the resemblance. Once the resemblance is there, and has been established as relevant to the content of the work by the artist's use of those resemblances in representation, then the content of the particular resemblances makes its own contribution to the work's content. Although resemblances are selected and established as content determining features by the artists use of them in representation, they cannot beyond this be overridden by the intentions of the artist, nor resemblances which do not exist brought into being. Artistic intentions are to this extent (but to this extent only) limited by material facts, and may similarly be limited by the nature of any resemblance-related conventions of representation which the artist uses and thereby selects and establishes as determining features. The point is, however, that it is the artist's intentions which, in so far as they do not determine content directly, nevertheless select and make the determining features, such as three dimensional resemblances, and which are realised in the use of such physical, psychological and conventional features of materials and mechanisms involved in the work.

The same is true, I suggest, of features such as Wollheim's seeing-in and Walton's make-believe. Rather than considering the capacity for seeing-in and the experience of seeing-in as being necessarily determinative of the content of sculptural representations (and expressions) as such, in any necessary or straightforwardly direct way, we should think of the capacity for seeing-in as one of the variety of perceptual and psychological capacities (what I call mechanisms) which representers may choose to make use of in their representing (and expressing), and the experience of seeing-in as something which, among other properties, qualities, and our experiences of them, may be used as material by sculptors in representing (and expressing). Seeing-in has a role in determining the content of sculptural representations only relative to its use within sculptural practices of representing, only when it features at the intentional level of medium as being among the resources used by sculptors and to be used by appreciators. It is, I suggest, not only the case that the intentions of the artist function as a standard of correctness for seeing-in, but also that they determine that seeing-in has any role at all, the role that it does have, and therein that it has a role, relative to those intentions, in the mandating of appreciative judgements.

Our capacity for seeing-in may, given its non-intentional nature, place certain kinds of limits on the content of representations with respect to value and certain kinds of success and failure, as may the content of seeing-in given its non-intentional (even if mediated by conventional and other features of the context of appreciation) psychological origin. It may, for example, be a limit on the value and interest of particular kinds of sculptural representation, as we might, for instance, say that a good sculptural portrait requires that its object be seen-in the work.²⁵⁰ But it will do so only in so far as seeing-in is one of the capacities used and drawn upon by the artist in representing and in so far as the seen-in is among the materials used by the artist. These are limits of the same kind as may be placed upon the intentions of artists by the properties of the material they choose to use, facts which nevertheless do not undermine the role of intentions in determining the content of the representation any more than the fact that it is the intention of the artist to use a given material that makes it the case that that material is indeed the material used. Certainly the non-existence of a material limits intentions to use it in so far as it makes use impossible, and similarly the rigidity of a material places limits on the intentions of an artist to bend it. But as such, such features as the capacity for and experience of seeing-in facilitate intentions by being available as among the resources for use in representing, rather than limiting the role of intentions in any more meaningful sense, except, as I say, in relation to certain questions of value and kinds of success and failure.

My view with respect to the role of make-believe in the determination of content and therein the mandating of appreciative judgements differs somewhat. Although making-believe with regard to the content of representations may be one of the activities appropriately involved in appreciating some sculptural representations, make-believe itself (as I have already argued) has no necessary role in determining the content of those representations. Nevertheless, the same considerations which mandate making-believe and which mandate the contents of our making-believe may have such a determining role. It is my view that make-believe itself will only be appropriate in so far the

²⁵⁰ Of course the value of all sculptural representations are not determined by the standards appropriate to portraiture.

representational work was produced with the intention that appreciators adopt an attitude of make-believe towards its content, and that the considerations which mandate the content of our making-believe are also largely causal/intentional in nature. Walton suggests that it the characteristics of the prop together with the principles of generation which mandate the content of our make-believe, but on my view it is only in so far as the prop plus principles have a role in determining the content of the work that they therein mandate the content of our making believe.

Walton includes artistic intentions among the scope of considerations relevant to the principles of generation, but thinks that a “loose collection” of other “circumstances”, such as conventions of representation, will generally play a determinative role as well, or more often instead. However, on my account the fact that conventional and other principles of generation are involved in the determination of the content of sculptural representations does not undermine intentionalism about determination and mandating. This is because the principles of generation are themselves generated intentionally, are selected intentionally, and are conventions for the intentional use of materials which are themselves used intentionally by artists as among the resources they may employ in making representations. Conventional and other kinds of principles of generation, and the properties of props, explain how it is that intentions determine the content of sculptural representations: that is, through their being intentionally used in representing. Principles of generation provide resources for representations which may or may not be employed by artists, and are a limit on the determinative role of intentions only with respect to issues of value and certain kinds of questions about success and failure.

It is sometimes claimed that intentionalism cannot be a viable theory of the determination of work content because it makes the idea of artistic failure incoherent, and because of the related idea that it inappropriately privileges intentions over conventions, and over the properties of the artwork and the materials out of which it is made.²⁵¹ The claim is that subscribing to intentionalism would be to hold that representational

²⁵¹ A good general discussion of the intentionalism vs. conventionalism issue can be found in Dennis Dutton’s “Why Intentionalism Won’t Go Away”, in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1987.

sculptures represent just whatever an artist intends to represent, and as having whichever properties the artist intends the object to be represented as having, *independently* of the properties of the material and any conventions of representation. Thus, if I intended to represent with an object of identical composition and appearance as this dissertation the moment of the origin of the universe as being like an explosion, I *implausibly* could not fail to do so. Conventionalism claims that failure is possible and, further, that it is the conventions of representation together with the properties of the material art object which serve to determine the content of the work independently of artistic intentions and which thus make failure possible. However, these objections miss their mark if deployed against my account of the determination of sculptural content, for my view neither renders all meaningful varieties of artistic failure impossible, although it does (*plausibly*) disallow some varieties of failure. Nor does my account involve a commitment to the view that artistic intentions determine *independently* of conventions and facts about art materials.

The role and place of the artist's intentions in determining content and mandating interpretation is an issue which has been explored most fully in relation to the interpretation of linguistically based artistic media. In the linguistic arts, the focus has tended predominantly to resolve upon the relevance of the author's intentions given the existence of semantic rules for the meaning of the words and sentences determine content and prescribe or make appropriate given interpretation. The existence and nature of semantic rules means that intentions cannot determine the content of a given word or sentence. Although the agent's intentions may have some role in selecting the semantic rules which apply, they do so in a way which cannot be transgressed by the intentions of the speaker. If I use the sentence "Is the window open?" its meaning is determined by the semantic rules and the context of utterance, not by my intentions even if my intentions have a role in selecting the semantic rules which apply (the ones of the words in the sentence). While the artist's intentions do not by themselves determine the content of an art object, but together with the properties and conventions intentionally used, this content is nevertheless the content its artist gave it. Although the artist's intentions do not directly determine the semantic content of a sentence, the actual artist does have an important indirect role in determining this content in choosing the conventional framework in terms

of which the sentence acquires a particular content. It is, for example, the artist's actual use of words in accordance with or in deviation from the standard programme for their application which determines whether a given sentence is a literal, metaphorical or ironical statement, and hence whether it has a literal, a metaphorical, or an ironic semantic content. It is the artist's intention to use particular conventions which determines the semantic-framework in terms of which a sentence acquires a given semantic content, rather than being just a matter of what conventions could fit the art object.

Similarly, at the level of speech acts, whether I am asking a question, trying to get someone to open or close the window, and so forth, is determined largely by the linguistic conventions and context of utterance, such that I cannot be presenting (in English) just anything I intend. Facts about the material art object - the graphemes or phonemes - play a role in determining the semantic content of the work, in relation to the conventions for the use of those graphemes and phonemes, which cannot be transgressed by the utterer's intentions. But the intentions of the artist in choosing the conventional-framework in terms of which the content of an artwork is determined are also important at the level of sentences as speech acts. The pragmatic content of sentence, (that is, whether it is a description, a lie, an intimation, an hypothesis, and so on), is determined ultimately not by what the sentence could be, but how it has actually been used. It is the artist's intentional use of language in a particular way which determines what sort of speech act they have made. For example, it is the artist's intention to describe that makes a sentence a description rather than an hypothesis. Because it is the artist's use of language which gives a sentence its status as a particular sort of speech-act, it is this use of language which interpreters must grasp if they are to understand the artwork properly.

To some extent arguments developed in relation to the linguistic arts have been transferred and applied more or less directly to the non-linguistic arts (consider, for example, Nelson Goodman's account of meaning in pictures in terms of denotative symbol systems, and other conventionalist theories of pictures²⁵²). But there are some important differences between the art of sculpture and the kinds of conventions which it involves and semantic rules which undermine the direct application to the non-linguistic

²⁵² *Languages of Art*, Oxford, 1969.

arts of theories of the role of artistic intention in language, making the grounds against intentionalism far weaker than they are in the case of the linguistic. Although there are many conventions relating to sculpture, there is nothing of quite the same sort or which plays quite the same role as semantic rules. Rather, the kinds of conventions are more like literary than linguistic conventions - formal conventions, story-telling conventions, conventions of genre, and so on - which are all of a kind which *can* be transgressed by the author. The conventions of sculpture, like literary (as opposed to semantic) conventions, are of a sort which may be overturned or abandoned by the artist's intentions rather than constraints on what is possible for the artist to determine. Sculpting or writing unconventionally may compromise the value of a representation (e.g. if no-one can recognise it, or if coherence goes out the window), but may also contribute to the value of a work. Just as we don't read works of fiction to understand the meanings of the words, but rather we want to understand the meanings of the words so we can understand what is being done with them as the material of literature, so with sculptures to identify meanings, or conventions, or the materials themselves as the object of interpretation rather than the work would be as strange as treating the artists intentions as themselves the object of interpretation rather than something which we deal with in order to have access to the work, which is the key and the point of the activity in the first place.

It is true that on my account certain varieties of artistic failure are rendered impossible. But it is neither the case that it is implausible to rule out these varieties of failure, nor that failure is ruled out altogether. What makes the idea that certain kinds of content intentions are immune to failure seem implausible is the existence of certain conventions of representation. Given the existing conventions of sculptural portraiture, for example, my earlier example of the camel-shaped object representing a horse may seem implausible. But in the absence of conventions, or when a use is unconventional, conventions fail to apply and cannot be appealed to as grounds for failure, and there seems no reason to suppose that the nature of use cannot be determined by the agent's intentions, just as the nature of many actions is dependent upon intentions rather than conventions. As I suggested before, it is the intentions of the artist which in any case bring a use of materials under the application of a convention, and which select that

convention (itself a convention for intentional use of materials) as relevant through its employment as one of the resources for representation. This view implies further that even when conventions have a role in determining content it is impossible to fail to use the conventions one intends to use, or to bring the use under the conventions for use which one intends. For example, there are conventions involving the role of resemblances in representation. What makes these intentions apply to a work is the intention of the artist to use materials (resemblances) in a particular conventional way, and there is no reason to either suppose the convention applies, and hence determines content, independently of such intentions, or that artists can fail to use resemblances in representation if this is their intention. Of course, it may be the case that within the art practice of sculpture there are certain conventional and other constraints which mean that although some such intentional representational ends do not themselves fail, certain borderline cases may fail to qualify as works of sculpture. As I discussed earlier, there seems to be no clear cut point at which this line can be drawn in general: such issues are rather something to be judged in individual cases, given the particular features of the work and its relation to the terms of the art practice, and is itself a largely evaluative question, an issue for judgement in the art practice's own terms, and which may be contested.

This is not to say, however, that the artist cannot fail, but just that a certain kind of failure is ruled out. More ordinary cases of intentional failure are possible, as for example when an artist intends to take off only a little stone with a chisel in order to form the contour of a shoulder and either fails to act on that intention at all, and hence does not use materials, or by mistake takes off rather more than intended. But such failures are generally brought back within the intentional process of the production of the artwork: the process of production is also a process of the reforming and development of productive intentions guided by the artist's own appreciative uses of materials. The more important kind of failure that *is* possible on my account is related to issues of value rather than determination. If an artist intends to sculpt a woman and makes use of conventions of representation involving resemblance, he or she may of course produce an object with such little salient resemblance that the work is, in being unrecognisable for what it is by

people without special access to the artist's intentions, next to useless. Similarly, I might represent the head of a man as being like that of a bird more or less successfully, not with respect to the fact of whether I represent the head of a man as being like that of a bird, but in failing to make the fact that I am so representing it recognisable. These are significant failures, but they are a matter of the value of a given realisation of representational content rather than of ontological failure with respect to the determination and existence of this content.²⁵³ There is some advantage in construing such failures as being evaluative rather than ontological in nature. For example, it recognises the fact that failures in relation to content can only be thought of as failures relative to the intentions they fail to realise. Only if we first accept that it is the intentions of the artist which determine the content of sculptural work by determining the use made of materials can we evaluate the work as a success or failure with respect to those ends. To put it another way, only if we begin by accepting that the sculpture represents the head of a man as being like a bird can we then point out the ways in which it does so well or inadequately. If it did not so represent the head of a man, then it is not clear how it could do so poorly or with such success. To construe it otherwise cuts the connection with the activity of artists, reducing them to causes rather than makers of works, creatures who effect materials and bring about works rather than who use materials as an artistic medium.

²⁵³This implies that the most charitable way to understand a art object , or the way of viewing it which makes it seem best, will not, on this account, necessarily be the correct way to understand it.

Concluding Summary

My purposes in this thesis have been to identify a space for philosophical enquiry about sculpture, to provide an account of the nature of sculpture and the sculptural, and to apply this account to a theory of sculptural representation. Where key recent and contemporary, broadly analytic, philosophical views on these issues have been found wanting, I have proposed alternatives.

I began by noting the relative scarcity of philosophical attention to sculpture, and exploring some ideas about what could make sculpture of distinctive philosophical interest. Rejecting existing theoretical accounts which appeal to sculpture's "independence" or "autonomy", I suggested an alternative approach which focuses on difference. Where as these analyses focused on the properties of individual sculptural art works, all be it considered collectively, and tended inappropriately to conflate art-objects and art-practices, I argued that questions of philosophical interest concerning the nature and functioning of sculpture (and their answers) belong more appropriately at the level of the art practices within which works are produced. In so far as the mode of appreciation internal to an art practice is partially (and centrally) definitive of the practice, then an analysis of the vocabulary of sculptural appreciation and criticism provides a way, firstly of locating the distinctive space (if any) for philosophy of sculpture, and secondly of giving our philosophical enquiry an orientation within it. I then looked at some examples of critical writing about sculpture and painting and drew out some characteristic thematic differences in the ways we treat works of these kinds: in terms of the ways in which they exist for appreciators as objects; and in terms of the activities (physical and other) in which appreciators engage.

Chapter 2 considered the "physical thesis": the view that the nature of sculpture lies in the distinctive physical characteristics of sculptural works. In its most basic form the thesis holds that sculptures are those art objects which are three-dimensional, as contrasted with, for example, the pictorial arts which are two dimensional. Rejecting the basic thesis on the grounds that all instantiated artworks are three-dimensional in their material construction, I then turned to more sophisticated versions of the view, arguing

that these too ultimately fail. The physical thesis, by focusing simply on the physical properties of the material bodies of artworks fails to provide an explanation of the ways in which these properties contribute to the artistic functions of works either in their production or in their appreciation. I suggested that if there is a difference in the role such properties play in sculpture and painting, then this will be a matter of the use we make of these features in producing and appreciating sculpture, and how this differs from the use we make of the same kinds of features in painting.

In Chapter 3 I began my critical assessment of the “perceptual thesis”: the view that the distinctive nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art lies in features of our perceptual experience of sculpture. I looked first at claims about the significance of general theories of perception for our understanding of the distinctive nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art, arguing that such general accounts can be of little help. I then examined several versions of the broad view that sculpture’s distinctiveness lies in the modes of perceptual access actually or properly distinctively involved in appreciating sculpture. In particular, I looked closely at several versions of the view that touch is somehow essential to the sculptural, and argued that none of these provide an account of the nature of sculptural works and sculpture as an art which is explanatorily adequate or which identifies any suitable facts which might count as necessary or sufficient conditions.

In Chapter 4 I examined the other main strand of the perceptual thesis: the view that the distinctive nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art lies in the distinctive phenomenal content of our perceptual experience of sculpture. Looking at relevant elements of some existing accounts of this kind, I argued that such accounts cannot ultimately provide adequate necessary or sufficient conditions, failing to sustain explanatorily valuable or well grounded distinctions of difference in kind between sculpture and other art forms without appeal to causal origins in physical differences of kind. I proposed that key differences between the sculptural and other arts are to be found in the way we regard the sculptures we perceive, the way perceptual phenomena figure in this way of regarding, rather than being located in the phenomena of perception as such.

In Chapter 5 I proposed an alternative theory of the nature of sculptural works and of sculpture as an art form which is both consistent with the explanatory criteria and objectives I argued for in Chapter One, and which avoids the shortcomings of the physical and perceptual theses I identified in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, while nevertheless making sense of insights which those approaches offered. I argued firstly that an artwork is sculptural in so far as the use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art-object functions directly as an artistic medium for the work, implying that such a use of the three-dimensional properties of the material art object is necessarily relevant to appreciating sculptural works. Secondly, I argued that the category of “sculpture” refers to the relationship of a work to a tradition of art practice in which the sculptural use of materials is standard, something which is partly determined relative to the various (historically variable) standards and conventions of the tradition of art practice.

In Chapter 6, the first of two chapters concerning sculptural representation, I examined how well, if at all, three influential theoretical stances - the “resemblance” theory, the “seeing-in” theory, and the “make-believe” theory - might apply to *sculptural* representation. The views I examine each give what could be called “content dependent” accounts of representation, holding that the very same factors determine the content of a representation as determine the object of representation and a thing’s status as representational, but I argued that there is no reason to begin by assuming that this is the case. I then assessed each theory in relation to four heuristically distinct questions about the nature of sculptural representation: which features make a representation sculptural; what determines a sculpture’s status as representational; what determines the object of a sculptural representation; and what determines the content of a sculptural representation. I argued that none of the theories examined offers a wholly satisfactory account of sculptural representation, and prepared the groundwork for an alternative approach.

In the final chapter I proposed an intentionalist account of the determination of a representational work’s sculptural status, a content-independent and intentionalist account of representationality in sculpture, a content-independent and intentionalist account of the determination of the object of sculptural representations, and an intentionalist account of

the determination of representational content in sculpture. I argued that although features such as three-dimensional resemblance, seeing-in, and make-believe do have a role to play in some instances and kinds of sculptural representation, they do so only contingently within the limits circumscribed by the intentional context of the particular work's production. I gave motivation and support to my account in terms of an integrated account of sculptural appreciation which suggested that the kinds of processes and activities of judgement involved in appreciating sculptures are intimately connected both with the way such judgements are mandated and with the way such facts are determined.

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