

8 Material, Medium, and Sculptural Imagining

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The Object of Our Engagement with Sculpture

In what follows I discuss a limit that is commonly attributed to certain forms of figurative sculpture. It is one that, for example, Kant characterizes in his *Critique of Judgement*. There, he wisely observes that in pictures or descriptions, one can offer a beautiful representation of things—the Furies, diseases, devastations of war—that themselves are assuredly not beautiful. But perhaps not so wisely, Kant denies that sculptural depictions enjoy such an aesthetic independence from the things in the world they portray. In a sculpture, he writes, “art is almost confused with nature,” and thus, it must confine its direct representation to only beautiful things.¹

It is a limit that Baudelaire complains of in his review of the 1846 Salon, under a section with the snarky title, “Why Sculpture is Boring.” There the poet suggests that, whereas painting and literature can elicit thoughts of abstract ideas, absent objects, and fantastical states of affairs, sculpture cannot provide an experience whose content excludes an awareness of the work as an ordinary object in our environment, “as brutal and positive as nature herself.”² Later, Walter Pater takes up the charge, asserting that sculpture suffers from a “tendency to a hard realism...[a]gainst this tendency to hard presentment of mere form trying vainly to compete with the reality of nature itself, all noble sculpture constantly struggles.”³ Rephrased in the deprecatory ontology proposed by the painter Ad Reinhardt, “sculpture is something you bump into when you back up to look at a painting.”⁴

These invidious comparisons among the arts echo the standard charge against sculpture made in Renaissance notions of the *paragone*: that its powers of representation are much weaker than those of painting because it cannot depart from the actual shape of what it depicts. Hence, in a tradition that goes back at least as far as Pliny’s story of the adolescent boy’s libidinous reaction to Praxilites’ statue of Aphrodite while locked in her shrine overnight, explanations of how viewers of a sculpture could respond to it—a mere object—with real emotions or desires, proposed that they confuse the artwork with the actual thing in the world it only represents.⁵

There are, of course, better ways of account for our feelings for sculptures than that we mistake them for what is real. The familiar framework that I adopt in what follows identifies the *object* of our response (affective, evaluative, conative) as not the physical artifact before us but what the artifact elicits us to represent via the imagination.

In a moment, I will lay out some features of that framework that apply more or less generally across our traffic with different kinds of artworks: sculpture, painting, theatre, literary fictions, and so on. Then I will turn to three different grounds or causes of our responses to sculpture in particular. My question is whether, once we distinguish the imagined object that causes and justifies our emotions and other responses from the physical artifact before us that elicits that imagining, Baudelaire's type of criticism still holds. When I imagine x in engaging with a sculpture, do I respond in relevant ways just as I would if I were to believe or perceive x , that is, encounter it as a real thing face to face?

This question can take both descriptive and normative forms. Descriptively, the question is: Are my responses to what I imagine modeled on those I have to what I merely perceive or believe? An answer there will appeal to potentially shared mental mechanisms in the processing of the contents of, respectively, sculpture-elicited imaginings and analogous beliefs and perceptions. But my interest is mainly in the question taken in a normative sense: Are what counts as reasons or justifications for our responses invariant across an engagement with what a sculpture elicits us to imagine and an engagement with an analogous object or state of affairs in real life.⁶ Or are there features of sculpture *qua* sculpture that serve as reasons for apt or fitting responses that would not serve as reasons for those responses for the real thing the sculpture depicts? Of course, many works of sculpture present states of affairs that we could not witness in real life. So my question can be taken this way: insofar as it is possible for the state of affairs represented by an artwork to be encountered in the actual world, do the relevant norms that govern appropriate responses to the real thing apply invariantly to responses to the work of art? Or are there dimensions of a work of sculpture that license, or perhaps mandate, responses that would not be elicited by and fitting for a real thing of the same relevant kind?

I refer here to epistemic, affective, and evaluative reasons for a response: reasons that justify how a response veridically *presents* something as being. I am not speaking of practical reasons for a response. You might have a very good instrumental reason to respond with love and devotion to a monument depicting your country's Dear Leader, without any property of the monument or the real Dear Leader himself meriting those emotions. Thus, I want to: (i) answer the question of how sculpture can properly evoke responses in ways that ordinary objects do not; and (ii) answer the question of what it is to respond to a sculpture *qua* sculpture, i.e., in a way that sustains the distinction between it and other arts.

I think I come somewhat close to answering the first question but remain far from arriving at a satisfactory answer to the second.

Sculptural Imagining

First, let me present a quick sketch of that framework of the cognitive imagination. In Kendall Walton's influential theory of fictions, a work of art functions as a prop in a pretense—what he calls a game of make-believe.⁷ A simple game of that sort is exemplified by children pretending to duel with sticks, as if they were swords. Some of the rules that structure this game may be formally agreed upon, but others may have a naturalness in that context such that, without being explicitly stipulated, they govern what counts as properly playing the game. If one's stick breaks, so has (it is implicitly understood) the sword it represents. Walton proposes that works of art, verbal and visual, can have analogous roles as props in more tightly constrained forms of pretense, where, for example, we imagine of a fictional story that we are reading a narrative of actual events; or imagine of Bernini's *Rape of Persephone* (1622) seeing Hades abduct the young girl. Although a work of art can explicitly describe or depict many features of the scenario that it asks us to imagine, other sources also help to fill in the content of the imagining. There may be no canonical set of such sources, but some of the more central ones include:

- 1 Facts that we import into the content of the representation. Insofar as I assume the living bodies represented by a sculpture are like our own, I imagine, often implicitly, other facts about them, such as that they have hearts, lungs, muscles, and so on, like our own.
- 2 Inferences that we draw from facts depicted by the work: in Michelangelo's Roman *Pietà* (1499) (Figure 8.1) Jesus is dead but his body is intact. From that I infer part of the content of the work: that we see him soon after his being taken down from the cross.
- 3 Knowledge of the conventions of the genre of what is depicted. Jesus's apparent caress of the folds of Mary's cloak prompts me to imagine that he will be resurrected, but so does my knowledge that the event is part of the story represented by such religious compositions.

Of course, these imaginings must be partly *quarantined* so as to block some kinds of facts from being imported into the depicted scene. Principally, those beliefs and inferences that saliently contradict what is posited as true within that world of the work are typically not entered into the contents of what the work elicits us to imagine. Such quarantine also constrains the export of much of our imaginative representations. Thus what we imagine is typically held "offline," inhibited from being integrated with truth-apt real-world directed representations such as beliefs, memories, and perceptions, as well as motivations for action. I do



Figure 8.1 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Pietà*, 1498–9, St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Italy. Photo Credit: Manuel Cohen/Art Resource, New York

not seek to free Persephone from Hades' grasp, any more than I would intervene on stage to try to stop Othello from murdering Desdemona.

Finally, some things that are true of an artistic representation are not imagined as true in the state of affairs, or of the object, that is represented. This is because of the joint perspectives, *internal* and *external*, that we can take toward any representation.⁸ The external stance on a work of art describes it in terms of its identity as an artifact, with reference to its style, medium, technique, genre, and other properties of the vehicle of representation. The internal stance, by contrast, describes the contents of that representation imagined as if they were real. From the external perspective, Michelangelo's *David* (1504) is carved in emulation of idealized Greek and Roman sculptures of gods and athletes, both in such broad features as his *contrapposto*, and in more fine-grained ones such as the hard edge of his lips, which, unknown

to Michelangelo, was needed in Classical sculptures to keep their gilding in place. From the internal perspective, David's posture and facial features bear no such historical resonances. He is not preening like a Greek god's physical ideal before his contest with Goliath—he is supposed to be the little guy in the fight.⁹

Although in specifying what a work of art asks us to imagine I have resorted to stating a series of propositions, e.g., *that* such and such is the case, this does not exclude affective, sensory, experiential or other forms of non-propositional imagining. Rather, in the framework employed here, such nonpropositional imagining can supply the contents of the propositions that we are elicited to imagine to be true: Bernini's work prompts me to propositionally imagine *that* Hades abducts Persephone, but also to experientially imagine the event as being like *this*, where the relevant reference is to some sensory or experiential properties of the sculpture, but not others.¹⁰ For example, I imagine Persephone's flesh as bearing the impress, as the sculpture presents it, of Hades' violent grasp, but I do not imagine that flesh to have the cool hardness of the marble from which it is carved.

I should also say that I do not assume that all sculptures are designed to elicit an imaginative engagement. In calling the creations of his minimalist contemporaries "specific objects," Donald Judd stressed how they invite being understood not as representations, but as things made of identifiable materials and placed in significant configurations in the viewer's actual environment. Still, it is worth considering that when such works as Judd's stainless-steel serial constructions, Richard Serra's steel sheets, and Carl Andres' lead floor tiles are said to give a novel qualitative identity to a viewer's ego-centric space, it is not true that they *literally* remake that space. What a work of that kind plausibly does is induce viewers to imagine that the space within which they and the work reside takes on such and such a character.

Three Grounds of Response

Now let me identify three grounds of our responses to sculpture. Only one of these, the third, seems to identify a way in which our engagement with sculpture is discontinuous—descriptively and normatively—from our engagements with the things in real life that sculpture represents.

- 1 The first of these is found in the way sculptural representations evoke affective and other sorts of responses just through soliciting us to imagine something that would evoke those responses if we were to encounter it face-to-face. Appealing to the imagination helps explain how it is we can have such responses to a representation made of marble or wood, just as it explains how we can have such responses to representations made of paint on canvas or conveyed by

words on a page. These representations elicit us to engage in certain imaginings, imaginings of what is before us, or of what we read or hear. And our affective and other responses follow the contents of those imaginings in ways similar to how they follow the contents of truth-apt beliefs and perceptions.

Of course, the explanation of why mere imaginings evoke such responses is controversial. Is it because some of our affective responses are source-indifferent? Are they automatic quasi-perceptual responses that initially proceed independent of cognitive identifications? Do they trigger real-world-directed emotions, for which no special explanation is needed? And so on. This is the paradox of fiction.

Whatever the answer, in the approach I address here, the explanation of our responses is invariant across our engagements with how our imaginings present the world and how our truth-apt attitudes such as beliefs and perceptions do. Why we respond to some state of affairs is answered the same way, whatever representational relation (imagining, believing, remembering, desiring, and so on) is plugged-in to connect us to the object of our response.

In any case, if the imagined object provides grounds for a response that would count as grounds for a response if that object were taken to be real, then we have not identified anything peculiar to, or prototypical of, how sculpture evokes our responses *qua* sculpture. Sculpture is just like nature, as Baudelaire charged.

- 2 A second kind of approach relies on the insight that sculpture, among all the arts, is comparatively powerful in inviting imaginative engagement that is not limited to merely propositional and perceptual forms of imagining. The thought here is that, engaging with a work of sculpture, particularly one that represents a body relevantly similar to our own, may elicit motor simulations that allow us to feel as if we inhabit the scenario represented by the work.¹¹

In the background of this approach are a family of theories that stress the analogies between our capacity to engage in the sensory imagining of a given thing without actual perceiving it and our capacity to simulate performing an action, or taking a given stance, without actually doing so. An illustration of such motor (rather than sensory) simulation can be seen in how, when one is asked of a pictorial or sculptural representation of a person's hand whether it is the right or left, one determines the answer by imagining one's own hand moving from its current orientation into the position of the represented hand. Theorists surmise that, because such simulation tends to take roughly the same amount of time as would actually performing the action—e.g., genuinely moving one's own hand into the appropriate position—the simulated movement

is executed by roughly the same neurophysiological mechanisms that operate in the performance of the corresponding actual movement.¹² A related kind of simulation is posited to involve involuntary motor representations that occur through the activation of so-called mirror neurons, which are triggered both when one actually performs an action, and when one sees someone else perform an action of the same relevant kind. That there are shared neural circuits for both tactile perception and tactile imagining is suggested in studies that show the secondary somatosensory cortex, which registers oneself being physically touched, also becomes activated both when seeing others being touched and when merely *imagining* seeing others being touched.¹³ Finally, several studies found that when participants were shown pictures of people in painful poses and asked to imagine themselves or others in those positions, both perspectives activated regions of the brain that come into play (with much greater magnitude) during one's own experience of actual pain.¹⁴

The proposal here is that as we stand before a sculpture, we form various low-level, tacit, motor representations that *simulate* certain experiences constituting an identification with some dimension of the work. These motor representations may sometimes depend upon the presence of antecedent propositional imagining but instantiate a distinct modality of imagining that is non-reducible to other kinds. As we focus on Apollo's reaching for Daphne in Bernini's 1625 work (Figure 8.2), we ourselves simulate reaching; as we attend to Daphne straining to elude his grasp, the neurophysiology governing our own straining in that fashion is activated.¹⁵ Why we do not really perform the action seems to be explained by additional inhibitory neural signals that prevent such movement.¹⁶ Such bodily imagining might also operate in our response to representations of stationary individuals. Michelangelo's *Slaves* (c.1523; c. 1534) bear the crushing weight of their marble prisons. Their condition is a psychic one, something beyond physical restraint. But to generate that meaning the visual appearance of the sculptures elicits us to imagine ourselves being weighed down. Similarly, architectural columns that exhibit *entasis*, a swelling along their vertical axis (as in the Doric temples at Paestum) appear to bear a heavy load not only because, in fact, they do (stone is heavy) but because their swelling in the middle elicits from us a form of motor imagining of undergoing a compressive force.

Unfortunately for a theorist looking for something distinctively sculptural here, such explanations of our responses to what we imagine of a sculpture do not posit mechanisms that are different in kind from those operative in our affective responses to the real counterparts of what we imagine. Indeed, although psychologists and philosophers from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, such as Theodore Lipps and Herbert Langfield, addressed empathetic bodily identification in relation to, specifically, objects, most of the current research characterizing that phenomenon comes from studies of motor simulation we have for other human beings.¹⁷



Figure 8.2 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1625, Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy. Photo Credit: Scala/Luciano Romano/Art Resource, New York

However, I think a certain kind of limit to that simulation suggests a different ground and cause of our responses to sculpture.

- 3 Unlike propositional imagining, the motor or bodily imagining described above is constrained to some extent by our awareness of the apparent *physical relation* between the particular three-dimensional material configuration of a sculpture and the size and disposition of our bodies as we stand before it. Only within certain ranges of, e.g., size and proportion, does a work of sculpture elicit the kind of motor mirroring or simulation I described above. *In principle*, a physical artifact of any size can elicit from us an imagining that such and such an object (its represented content) stands before us face to face. That is because, barring certain cases of imaginative resistance and metaphysical impossibility, our imagination seems unconstrained from representing anything on the basis of any, or no, prop at all.

However, in practice, it is sometimes comparatively difficult for objects with a given set of sensory qualities to evoke imaginings of objects with

very different sensory qualities—especially if what is to be imagined, and what is perceived, are in the same sense modality. One explanation for this difficulty is that the *actual perception* of something and the *perceptual imagining* of it tend to exclude one another. Thus, an inadequate visual representation may make it harder to visually imagine as real a work's contents than would a representation that does not aspire to show us how things look. For example, painted wood sculptures of the northern renaissance (paradoxically) *inhibit* imagining what they represent more than plain, merely varnished wood ones do. In the case of plain sculptures, we “fill in” the colors in our visually imagining the people they represent; in the case of painted sculptures, our perception competes with our visual imagining. An analogous phenomenon in relation to motor imagining is reflected in the way a tiny sculpture is limited, in not having the necessary relation to our bodies, in eliciting an imagining of a giant person. Compare, for example, how the imagining that can be elicited by tourist trinkets that replicate Michelangelo's *David* falls short of the imagining prescribed by the actual sculpture.

What is helpful in these sorts of examples is that they point to a way in which a feature of a sculpture that can be described only from an external standpoint—its actual color and size—makes a difference in our responses to the content of what we imagine, to what is true only from an internal standpoint: e.g., that David (the person himself) is powerful.

The question is whether we can explain some part of our responses to sculpture partly through appeal to such properties that it has only under a description as an artifact—descriptions that refer to its scale, color, medium, techniques employed to create it, relations it has to other works, and so on. Specifically, we can explain our responses through appeal to such properties under the following conditions:

- i those properties are not merely the source of inferences about how we should respond to the imagined object or state of affairs; and,
- ii those properties provide grounds for emotions and other responses to what we imagine without those grounds being merely attributed to the object of our imagining (the content of the imaginative representation).

For example, an explanation of our solemn response to a sculpture of a person dying of famine that appealed merely to our recognition that it exemplifies a memorial would fail condition (i). And an explanation of our solemn response to that sculpture that appealed solely to the human suffering it represents would fail condition (ii).

If we can find explanations of our attitudes toward sculpture under which conditions (i) and (ii) hold, we will have identified features of sculpture that properly evoke responses *qua* sculpture—features that distinguish it from things that properly provoke those responses *qua* ordinary objects.

Internal and External Properties

Let's look at some cases that satisfy conditions (i) and (ii). Here we will see how the response that a sculptural artifact elicits through one or more of its properties would not be the response justified by those properties if they belonged to the real thing (represented by the sculpture) encountered "in the flesh."

It is externally true of Michelangelo's *Pietà* that he has represented Mary's face in a pure, unveined area of the marble block. That pristine quality of the marble elicits from us an imagining of Mary herself as unblemished in a more-than-physical sense. But, of course, any analogous conclusion about a real person's character grounded on a perception of her complexion, although a common bias of "beauty of soul," would be unwarranted. Likewise, Michelangelo represents Mary as a young woman, not because we are to imagine that, in fact, she is so young (indeed she appears younger than Jesus), but because such an appearance induces us to see her as pure and ageless, uncorrupted by earthly decline. She is also significantly more massive than Jesus, but what we imagine as a response is not that she could have had a career playing rugby, but rather that her embrace of the 33-year old man is that of a mother cradling her child.

In Marc Quinn's works, the medium is often taken from the very thing it is molded to represent. In one sculpture, for example, he used the liquefied placenta of his child to mold a sculpture of the baby's head. In an earlier series, at least eight pints of his own frozen blood were cast into a self-portrait. What that self-portrait represents—what we are to imagine seeing—is Marc Quinn. However, what is true of it externally, that it is an object made of frozen blood, leads us to imagine Quinn differently than if it were cast in another medium, such as wax or bronze. We see it with disgust, or perhaps with the kind of aura possessed by relics, or perhaps as precariously balanced between ensouled form and formlessness (the container preserving that frozen state might thus be part of the work). In any case, the point is that in using flesh to represent flesh, the artist evokes a response to what is represented via the imagination that would not arise in response to the real thing—himself.

Michael Baxandall has argued that it is a salient feature of Renaissance limewood sculpture (visible to its contemporaries but unnoticed by viewers today), that some works were carved in ways so as to accommodate and follow the internal mobility of their medium as it expanded and contracted, whereas others were carved against that tendency of wood, often risking fracture, but thereby achieving a distinctive expressive quality.¹⁸ Although two sculptures of a Madonna and Child may look similar to us—evoking the same imagined state of affairs—to a culture sophisticated about wood as a raw material, one work evokes a state of affairs that is stable and timeless and the other a situation that is tensioned and dynamic.

The enormous controversy greeting Edward Degas' first exhibition in 1881 of his *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* (Figure 8.3) was due in part to his asking audiences to imagine a contemporary young girl from the stage—widely characterized as bearing subhuman, primitive features—in place of an idealized figure typical of traditional sculpture. But the loathing critics expressed was also prompted by the dancer having been sculpted in wax, not cast in bronze or other traditional materials, and through that evoking associations with ephemeral models or sketches, wax anatomical figures of science expositions, and cheap kitsch entertainments such as Madame Tussaud's. This impression was strengthened by the actual linen, satin, and human hair Degas affixed to her. The material with which the sculpture of the girl was created inflected how she was represented in their imagining.

Those examples feature the effects of the constituent materials of a sculpture on what we imagine of it. The processes by which those materials are formed into a sculpture can similarly shape how we respond to its contents. So while Rodin's carvings in marble are smoothed over,



Figure 8.3 Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1878–81, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, National Gallery of Art, DC, USA. Photo Credit: Art Resource, New York

with even surfaces that appear regular, soft, and translucent like the skin of the figures the works depict, his castings in bronze and plaster, with unrefined, unpolished surfaces, pitted and seamed from the inner surface of the mold, evoke imaginings of individuals that are both more vigorous and more immediately present. His *Balzac*, for example, although worked on over several months (only finally cast in bronze after Rodin died), appears like a rapidly and vigorously carved monolith, presenting an intense, raw and imposing individual, even without much of a visual correspondence between the sculpture and the writer.

Analogously, Robert Gober painstakingly creates his works by hand, even though they are typically domestic objects such as sinks, cribs, and doors, for which he could have substituted real counterparts. But being made aware of their genesis (through, e.g., noticing their irregularities) brings us to see whatever they represent in intimate, almost tender terms. Although, for example, one of his sinks is a near-copy of a mass-produced commercial product, it invites being imagined as akin to a vulnerable human form, with pouring spouts suggestive of bodily organs and fluids.¹⁹

Our beliefs in the standard subjects of sculpture can inflect our attitudes toward what a given instance represents. Claus Oldenburg's human-sized soft sculptures of wall switches (Figure 8.4) may allude to one's tenuous dominion over one's body, especially as it declines with age (the switches suggest both nipples and flaccid penises). But being so ridiculously outsized, and made of cheap vinyl, a material initially developed as a substitute for leather—i.e., skin—the works ask us to see that theme from an earthy, amused perspective.

Finally, our knowledge of the typical limits to a genre can shape how we respond to what we imagine of works in which those boundaries are transcended. Bernini's twisting, arching, gasping figures break from traditional static sculptures oriented toward a single point of view. They ask us to imagine their objects not as posed but as so-configured only for an instant in time. And his surfaces, rather than emphasizing the virtues and qualities of stone, are carved, polished, and incised to mimic other materials—fur, hair, skin, rope, sweat, and fire. Even a viewer only dimly aware of the putative limits to marble would experience the represented story of the marvelous metamorphosis of Daphne's body, where she seems to flow into the laurel tree, as inflected through their marvel at the metamorphosis the artist brings about in his materials. Let me add that a sculptor's choice to refrain from exploiting a medium's affordances or possibilities could have an analogous effect. In his marble bust of the composer Gluck (1775), Houdon dispensed with the refined finish—one obscuring the process of creation—that was expected of neoclassical sculpture. Instead, he retained visible traces of the cutting, chiseling, and scraping required to manipulate the stone into a



Figure 8.4 Claes Oldenburg, *Soft Switches*, 1964, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Gift of the Chapin Family in memory of Susan Chapin Buckwalter. Art © Claes Oldenburg. Photo: Joshua Ferdinand

representation, prompts that lead us to see its subject as a person who is frank or lacking artifice, “unstaged” like his operas.

Causes, Reasons, and the Constitutive Features of Sculptural Imagining

Those cases illustrate how external features of the work—features that do not directly give us propositional, perceptual, or experiential information about the objects of our imagining (antecedent to imagining them)—inflect our imagining. We are *caused*, I want to say, to feel a certain way about what the sculpture represents, without that cause always counting as a reason to feel that way. That is, these causes would not count as reasons if we were to encounter the imagined thing face to face.

Of course, that is not typically how we experience these effects. As Hume notes, “the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects.”²⁰ Through a process of projection we sometimes take a feature of our experience of the world as an independent property of the world. For example, I might, from ingesting too much caffeine, acquire

the physical symptoms associated with anxiety, but thereby readily be caused to “discover” features of my environment that give me (justifying) reasons for that feeling. So, by analogy, when I am led by the medium, scale, technique, or other external feature of a sculpture—some dimension of its identity as a material artifact—to respond with a particular feeling toward the object that it depicts, I will take that feeling to be justified by some feature of the imagined object, a feature it putatively possesses independent of the mode by which it is represented.

This phenomenon, by the way, occurs in many of the biases identified by social psychology. Even if it is your beauty alone that causes me to think you are intelligent or morally good—the halo effect—I am likely to posit some dimension of your behavior as the real reason why I hold that opinion. If you tell me this wine is very expensive, I am likely to think I can identify aspects of it that “confirm” its exceptional quality.

The important difference here from those ordinary objects or people onto which we might project certain properties is that the kinds of works of sculpture discussed above are *essentially constituted* by how they are to be imagined. We not only imagine the content of a sculpture—what state of affairs it depicts—but we imagine that content in some manner determined by its medium, scale, process of creation, fragility, and so on. There is no alternative to the heroic, inward-focused David that we imagine in connection with that sculpture by Michelangelo, even though, of course, there are different representations (e.g., by Donatello, Verrocchio, and Maurizio Catalan) of David that prompt different imaginings. By contrast, we can adopt alternative attitudes toward an ordinary thing, without any particular attitude—be it amusement, awe, tenderness, and so on—making the thing what it is.

That constitutive role sometimes played by a sculpture’s medium serves to distinguish the grounds of our responses to what we imagine *of* a sculpture from the grounds of our responses to the ordinary objects or people the sculpture represents. By “grounds” I mean to signal a distinction in not only the causes of our responses, but what justifies them. But, of course, that ontological relation does not itself distinguish sculpture from other art forms. For the phenomenon of external features of an artwork determining our responses to what is internal to the imagining it elicits, is perfectly general. We are often solicited to construe the literal qualities of a work in any medium as literal or figurative properties of whatever content the work depicts. A delicate line might suggest the delicacy of the person whose visage it is used to render. A film may cause us to think of the lives it depicts as wretched through a color scheme marked by blues and grays. The names of characters, such as Gradgrind, induce us to tacitly attribute qualities to those characters that the mere possession of such names, in real life, would not indicate.

In light of that last point, I conclude with the suggestion that the project of distinguishing sculpture from the other arts is the project of

identifying the *distinctive* resources that sculpture has for shaping our attitudes toward the states of affairs or objects that it has us imagine. I have illustrated a few of those resources, and, of course, any such identification will be indexed to an ever-changing practice in which new resources are discovered, and old ones are laid aside.

Notes

- 1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. P. Guyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 190–1 [§48].
- 2 Charles Baudelaire, *Art in Paris, 1845–1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions*, ed. and trans. J. Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1965), 111–2.
- 3 Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* [1873], ed. D. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 51.
- 4 Quoted in Lucy Lippard, “As Painting is to Sculpture: A Changing Ratio,” in *American Sculpture of the Sixties*, ed. M. Tuchman (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art Press, 1967), 31.
- 5 Pliny, *Natural History*, trans., D. E. Eichholz (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), X, 36, 21.
- 6 For the question applied to fictions, see my *Apt Imaginings: Feelings for Fictions and Other Creatures of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- 7 Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- 8 See Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen. *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 144–5.
- 9 Such discovery of what is true in a work is not, of course, a substantial interpretation. Rather, it is conceptually prior to—and serves up potential ingredients for—an analysis of what the work is about, what it expresses, what it evokes, and so on. Only with a sense of the contours of the state of affairs the work asks one to imagine can one ask what the work means. See my “Imagination,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, ed. N. Carroll and J. Gibson (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 394–404.
- 10 Jane Heal, “Indexical Predicates and Their Uses,” *Mind* 106 [1997]: 619–40; Gregory Currie and Anna Ichino, “Imagination and Make-Believe,” in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. B. Gaut and D. Lopes (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 342–51. Either or both forms of imagining described above can be egocentric: where I imagine not just what the abduction looks like, but imagine seeing it. Egocentric imagining is particularly salient in relation to portrait busts where we do not only visually imagine, e.g., Diderot, but imagine (the experience of) seeing him.
- 11 David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, “Motion, Emotion and Empathy in Esthetic Experience,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11.5 [2007]: 197–203.
- 12 Alvin Goldman, *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 157–60.
- 13 Christian Keysers et al., “A Touching Sight: SII/PV Activation during the Observation and Experience of Touch,” *Neuron* 42.2 [2004]: 335–46.
- 14 Philip Jackson et al., “Empathy Examined through the Neural Mechanisms Involved in Imagining How I Feel versus How You Feel Pain,” *Neuropsychologia* 44.5 [2006]: 752–61.

15 Adam Smith writes,

The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do if in his situation.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 10.

16 John Schwoebel, Consuelo B. Boronat, and H. Branch Coslett. “The Man Who Executed ‘Imagined’ Movements: Evidence for Dissociable Components of the Body Schema,” *Brain and Cognition* 50.1 [2002]: 1–16.

17 See Gregory Currie, “Empathy for Objects,” in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. A. Coplan and P. Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 82–95.

18 Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

19 Goyer began to show these at the height of the AIDS crisis in the mid 1980s, and their invocation of hygiene and bodily fluids is often interpreted in that context.

20 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd ed., ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 167 [I. iii. 14]. See Kendall Walton, “Projectivism, Empathy, and Musical Tension,” *Philosophical Topics* 26.1/2 [1999]: 407–40.