AESTHETICS OF THE UNAVOIDABLE
Aesthetic Variations in Human Appearance

Ossi Naukkarinen
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ISBN 952-5069-04-4
ISSN 1239-193X

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to thank my teachers and good friends Cheryl Foster and Arto Haapala. Without their continuous support, encouragement and wise advice I would never have finished this book. The time and help they have given to me has been much more valuable and inspiring than I can express in words.

Jukka Gronow and Richard Shusterman kindly read the manuscript when it was almost finished. Their comments were very helpful in giving the final touches to the work.

I am also indebted to my other teachers and colleagues at the University of Helsinki, at the University of Art and Design Helsinki and elsewhere. Pauline von Bonsdorff, Aarne Kinnunen and Yrjänä Levanto have especially helped me in many ways at different stages of the process. I also thank the leaders and members of the Nos-H research project Interpretation, Literature and Identity.

Students are an inexhaustible source of fresh insights and fierce criticism. If I had not had the chance to discuss my thoughts with them this work would be very different – and certainly not better.

I am grateful to The Academy of Finland, The Emil Aaltonen Foundation, The Finnish Cultural Foundation, The International Institute of Applied Aesthetics and especially to The Nos-H (Nordisk samarbetsnemnd for humanistisk forskning, Joint Committee of the Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities) for financially supporting my research. Special thanks to Olli Immonen at the Institute.

The language of the book is in proper English thanks to Rod McConchie and his patience, and Sami Saramäki made the book look like a book.

Life is not philosophizing and aestheticizing only, and I have no doubt that if other strands of life are not in order, down go the academic aspects as well. I am lucky to have a great family and many good friends who all make my work possible and life worth living. In particular, I thank my mother, for everything. Then, in no special order, Eija and Asta (and their families), Eeva and Erikki, Esa and Petri, Pirko and Mika, Timi and Sari, Timo, Kari and Terhi, Ville and Kristiina, Emily, and all the others not mentioned here. And I could hardly forget Viinin pitäjä and its members!

This work is dedicated to Johanna and Pyry. Without their love – a word that means a million things – this book, as everything else, would be meaningless.
Introduction

I sit in a café, sip my espresso and try to write. It is hard to concentrate, however, because I cannot stop watching people around me. Too many simply look too interesting to be ignored.

That elderly gentleman with a grey moustache wears a perfectly cut, light brown suit with somewhat darker shoes and a dark yellow bow-tie; some people just know what suits them. The blond waitress has incredibly curly hair, an astonishing body and more than beautiful eyes. There, in a corner, next to a window, a suntanned guy in a leather vest that bares his aggressively tattooed arms, puffing and chewing a cigar like Jack Nicholson. Is he cool or just brutal? And how does that lady walks! What carriage, even though she must be well over 70. Almost an overdose of aesthetic gratification. Much better than a poor exhibition or concert! No wonder I keep coming back.

I cannot help wondering what these people know about aesthetics? Surely something, or how could they manage to look so alluring otherwise? But do they have their own aesthetics? What would they say if I asked them? Or is the fact that they look as they do an answer in itself? What about the customers who do not look that special, then? What about their aesthetics?

And I cannot help wondering what I would say if someone asked me what the aesthetics of human appearance is? How could I explain what I see around me here from the aesthetic point of view? In the end, what has aesthetics to do with human appearance and with many other things we encounter all the time in our everyday lives? Something, obviously. But what?

Probably the most widely accepted idea about aesthetics in the
20th century, although recently often questioned, has been that it is the philosophy of the fine arts. In fact, this has been a dominant, if not the dominant conception, about this field of knowledge since Hegel. His Lectures on Aesthetics begins with the following well-known definition:

The present course of lectures deals with 'Aesthetic'.
Their subject is the wide realm of the beautiful, and, more particularly, their province is Art— we may restrict it, indeed, to Fine Art ... The proper expression, however, for our science is the 'Philosophy of Art', or, more definitely, the 'Philosophy of Fine Art' (1993, 3; 1989, 37).

In recent decades the practice of describing aesthetics as the branch of philosophy that deals with art and art criticism has been especially influential in the Anglo-American tradition of analytic aesthetics. This attitude is apparent on the very first page of Monroe C. Beardsley's Aesthetics. Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism, where he boldly claims that "There would be no problems of aesthetics, in the sense in which I propose to mark out this field of study, if no one ever talked about works of art" (1981, 1).¹

Few would deny, however, that aesthetic issues also matter outside literature, music, theater, dance, and other areas generally called 'fine arts'. Aesthetics should thus reach beyond the art world as well as it has sometimes done. For example, before Hegel, although Kant did not pay attention primarily to works of art in his aesthetics, he often focused on problems connected with nature and with our relation to it. More recently so many writers have followed Kant's steps in this that nature-oriented environmental aesthetics has become its own important strand within the field. Moreover, there have been other ways of spreading aesthetics beyond its normal area than that provided by environmental aesthetics. In recent years feminist scholars have shown a lively interest in aesthetic matters outside the traditional fine arts area, urging aestheticians to pay attention to even the most commonplace issues. As Hilde Hein has put it, "Aesthetics can no more transcend the perversely fluid messiness of the ordinary and commonplace than ignore the extraordinary and irreproducible" (1993, 4).²

A general and systematic answer to the question of what aesthetics is outside the fine arts has been lacking, however, and it is the aim of this study to try to supply one. The goal of the study is to establish a meta-aesthetics or a philosophy of aesthetics of non-art, and to illuminate the most important ways in which aesthetics is manifested outside the art world. In other words, the study attempts to elucidate the principal ways of dealing with aesthetic matters beyond the borders of the fine arts. Aesthetic ideas, values, conceptions and practices can be made discernible or manifest in various ways, and the point of this study is to show how. Aesthetics itself is understood very broadly to be anything that deals with aesthetic matters or with the aesthetic dimensions of anything: 'aesthetics', 'dealing with aesthetic matters or issues' and 'dealing with aesthetic dimensions' are used interchangeably. What this means and why it is reasonable to do so will be specified in the course of the study.

Mary Carman Rose describes 'meta-aesthetics' in the following way:

Meta-aesthetics is philosophical inquiry about aesthetic inquiry. In part, its work derives from the fact that there are diverse aesthetic theories ... It compares, contrasts, and assesses the diverse methods of working out, assessing,

¹. What analytic aesthetics is remains a matter for dispute as Richard Shusterman's (1989) and Lars-Olof Åhlberg's (1993) remarks show. That Monroe C. Beardsley was one of its most powerful representatives should be beyond doubt in any case.

². On feminist approaches to aesthetics see also the special issues of Hypatia (5:2, Summer 1990) and The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (Volume 48, Number 4, Fall 1990).
and defending aesthetic theories. And it examines the multifaceted relations between aesthetic theory and extra-aesthetic areas of inquiry... (1976, 3)

Rose’s definition can be applied to this study if the expression ‘in part’ is stressed; I do not take aesthetics to consist simply of theories and thus the object of meta-aesthetics presented here is not the level of aesthetic theories exclusively.

The use of the prefix ‘meta’ does not suggest that this study will try to raise itself above other manifestations of aesthetics, or that it could stay absolutely neutral with regard to its objects. Rather, ‘meta’ is used in the Aristotelian sense of ‘after’; there have been and still are many ways of dealing with aesthetic matters beyond art, and the aim of the study is to systematize them in relation to each other. It is thus perhaps not reasonable to talk about a ‘meta-level’ at all, but about a ‘meta-stage’ or ‘meta-phase’; the choice is the reader’s.

In any case, the need to form a general overview is evident. The idea that aesthetic factors are crucial practically everywhere in western cultures in the late 20th century is stressed in the most various and surprising contexts. It has become commonplace to say that politics, religion, sport, everyday life, jurisprudence, epistemology, ethics, and many other areas besides these have become aestheticized. To put it simply, the world in general has become aestheticized, and one of the few things that is sometimes said to have become de-aestheticized is art! Aesthetics is seen to guide people’s action and behavior (Schulze 1993), to be an important factor in forming scientific theories (Wechsler 1978, Mc Allister 1991) and in the image-based marketing of consumer goods (Featherstone 1991). The whole world is seen to be saturated with the aesthetic, or crowded with things that can be best illuminated from the aesthetic point of view, so that Joseph Margolis writes: “And I am persuaded that aesthetics is the most strategically placed philosophical discipli

... of our time...” (1980, v-vi). The conviction is that by concentrating on aesthetic questions one can pierce the very core of our contemporary culture.

These thoughts are fascinating but it is not very clear what is meant by them. What is ‘aestheticization’? Has the world really become aestheticized? Why, when and how? What is aesthetics? What is the aesthetic? Is it always the same? These and related problems cannot be looked at from several points of view and resolved in various ways. One obvious possibility would be to approach such questions through the discussion centering on the concept of postmodernism, since that is where the term ‘aestheticization’ has most frequently been used. The choice of this study, however, is to concentrate on the question of the nature of aesthetics and its variations. Other questions are dominated by and illuminated, more or less explicitly, through this task.

When one finds an answer to this question it is easier to form a picture of the complex contemporary discussion about the cultural functions and roles of the aesthetic and aesthetics. The answer helps one place the various contentions of the debate in a larger pattern and to compare them with each other. A purpose of the study is then to provide instruments by which it is possible to understand and analyze one of the central questions in contemporary western culture and cultural philosophy, and so the study is perhaps not aesthetics in the narrow sense of the word.

In addition to making a contribution to general philosophical discussion, this study has another aim that is more clearly associated with aesthetics as an individual branch of knowledge. While aesthetics has traditionally had works of high art as its object, it has often dealt with things that many pass by without paying attention

to, or with things that can easily be avoided if one does not want to be in touch with them. But there are other things that are not art works, that form the major part of our everyday world, and that force us pay attention to them just by existing around us so voluminously - advertisements, cars, hairdos, clothes, other people, household utensils, credit cards, eye glasses, cd players, computers, shoes, pencils, neon lights, wallets, lighters, beer bottles, traffic lights, and so on. These things are unavoidable, and this world of unavoidable objects, the non-art world, has its unavoidable aesthetics, in the plural. The inescapable nature of this world is enough to make it an important object of study, and when one thinks how neglected it has traditionally been in academic aesthetics, the need to penetrate it is even stronger. There are always aesthetic factors in everyday objects, and the cardinal question in this study is how one deals with them.

The main ideas defended in the study are a) that the aesthetics of non-art is not manifested in one way only, b) that even if some manifestations of it differ radically from the traditional academic forms of aesthetics, they should still be seen as versions of it, and c) that if these ‘other’ forms of aesthetics are omitted - as they often have been in academic aesthetics - much of the way we deal with aesthetic issues in everyday life cannot be properly understood.

The question of the nature of aesthetics outside the fine arts is, however, too nebulous and large as such. The strategy of this study is thus to focus on only one aesthetically interesting and culturally significant phenomenon of non-art and to illuminate the general question through it. The study shows how aesthetics is manifested in the context of human appearance. The question is what are the characteristic features of aesthetics in human appearance? This is what the study examines explicitly, while the general problem remains implicit until the very end of the study. Even there, however, the generalizations are suggestions rather than inductions, and an application of the ideas discussed here to other fields is left to the reader.

As the purpose is to develop a general, meta-level systematization of a very broad issue - albeit through paying special attention to human appearance - many details will be overlooked and the answers given are not the only ones possible. However, the study tries to illuminate the paradigmatic and typical characteristics of aesthetics in non-art, and in doing so it cannot and does not stress exceptions and borderline cases. Thus, the vital issues are not neglected and the answers suggested will elucidate the core areas of the field. If the result seems mechanical and simplified it does not mean that the ‘reality’ should be taken to be such but that a simplifying map has deliberately been made of it in order to render an otherwise amorphous field more understandable. The map is not a detailed picture of its reference but an instrument for making sense of it.

The study concentrates on the aesthetics of non-art and tries to picture it. I believe, however, that the formulations offered elucidate some essential features of variations in aesthetics in general, both inside and outside the fine arts. Underlying this view are the convictions that art and non-art are not always very different from each other, and that the border between them is blurry if it exists at all. Furthermore, the system built could probably be used even in examining the history of aesthetics, or different forms of art criticism. I cannot pursue these ideas further, however, as this would expand the study beyond the limits of control.

I begin by construing an operational description of ‘human appearance’ and by showing how it functions as an example of non-art. Secondly, I move to the question of ‘the aesthetic dimension’ in
human appearance and show how that dimension is identified. These two questions and their answers, in four chapters, form the introductory first part of the study. Part II consists of chapters that analyze the essential differences between manifestations of aesthetics. This part begins with an overview of questions that follow, and then moves on to analyze ‘explicit’, ‘semi-explicit’ and ‘tacit’ forms of aesthetics (chapters 5 and 6). Chapter 7 focuses on questions of originality and unoriginality, and chapter 8 on volatility and stability in aesthetics. The problem in chapter 9 is how typical characteristics of the aesthetics of human appearance influence its ability to deal with aesthetic issues, i.e., what can be done by typical cases of human aesthetics? The concluding chapter gathers together what has been said, and will return to the more general questions raised in this introduction.

The structure of the study is not strictly linear, developing step by step, but rather resembles a spiral that deals with an issue now, leaves it behind, returns to it, leaves it again, and so on, until the issue in question is ‘finally’ resolved at a certain point. The advantages of this strategy for this particular study will, I hope, become clear by the end.
1. Human Appearance

Despite the fact that aestheticians and philosophers in general have not paid much attention to human appearance in their studies it is evidently one of the most important factors in our daily life. We necessarily and constantly make inferences about other people based on how they strike us, we spend lots of time and energy on our own looks, and there is a busy industry built on practically every facet of human appearance.

There are a number sociological and psychological studies that show how important a factor appearance is, physical attractiveness in particular, when we form opinions of other people - how successful they would be at certain tasks, what kind of professional career they will probably have, how happy they will be in their marriage, and in general of what kind of people they are. Studies have shown that physical attractiveness is an obvious social advantage, bestowing many privileges on 'the beautiful ones', and having halo effects that influence our opinions about peoples' abilities, such as their intelligence, professional competence and sensitivity to other people (Patzer 1985, Hatfield & Sprecher 1986). Extensive interest in appearances at large is not a new phenomenon either and there is a long, although not necessarily very proud, scholarly tradition known as 'physiognomy' stemming from it (see Finkelstein 1991). The first work in the field, *De Physiognomica*, is attributed to Aristotle.

1. Gordon L. Patzer (1985) finds studying physical attractiveness so important and well-established a field that he proposes his own name for it: papolgy. 'Pap-', here, means 'physical attractiveness phenomena'.

It has also been shown that it is indeed often the aesthetic aspects and not, say, utility, that are at the center of focus when people pay attention to their appearance and choose such things as their clothes (Morganosky 1982). People undoubtedly and understandably want to 'look good', and barbers, cosmeticians, surgeons, color analysts, hairdressers, aerobics teachers, clothes designers, and countless other professionals are eager to help them. It is worth noticing that emphasizing the role of aesthetic factors is nothing new, since the so-called 'adornment theories' of clothing that were popular around the turn of the century took adornment and ornamentation as the initial - and in that sense the most important - reasons for wearing clothes (Kaiser 1990, 16-17). Human appearance is without a doubt a crucial and at the same time an aesthetically lively cultural area outside the fine arts.

The question of why human appearance is not a popular theme in philosophy is not a central one in this study, the situation being taken as given. Answers to this question could perhaps be sought in the same place as Karen Hanson (1990) has found reasons for "the philosophic fear of fashion". Hanson suggests that philosophers have contempt for fashion (in clothing) because a) they strive towards stable and everlasting truths while fashion is in eternal flux, b) fashion seems to be something superficial and inessential while philosophy wants to deal with deep and essential truths, c) fashion is closely connected with the human body while philosophy prefers to stay in the realm of ideas, d) philosophers want to be the ones

2. The French word *esthéticienne* ("cosmetician") reminds us of the closeness between aesthetics and cosmetics in human appearance very nicely. This is perhaps a good way to remind ourselves that an extreme concentration on (female) beauty has too often had less admirable consequences in anorexia, bulimia and plastic surgery, as many feminist scholars and other writers have pointed out (Wolf 1990, Finkelstein 1991). The repulsive side of aesthetics in human appearance is, fortunately, not the whole story.
who are active and scrutinize things, and fashionable clothes tend to make their wearer a passive object of scrutiny, and e) fashion, while it is always in a state of awaiting its own death, reminds philosophers (and other people) too painfully of their own mortality.  

Be that as it may, it seems that as human beings we cannot help but deal with the aesthetic features of human appearance in one way or another. Taken more generally this notion means that when there are interesting and important aesthetic features in a phenomenon, there apparently are ideas and practices related to these features; in other words, there is an aesthetics that deals with aesthetic issues. The interesting question in the context of human appearance is what kind of aesthetics there is, for it seems that it is not typically one of an academic or philosophical kind. We do encounter aesthetic issues in human appearance, but how? These are questions that should interest philosophers as well.

Before going more deeply into these questions, however, something has to be said of human appearance; principally, what it is.

It is a common conception that appearance is something prima-

rily visual. If we assess someone's appearance we take notice of what he looks like. Susan Kaiser, who has studied human appearance in general and clothing in particular from the point of view of social psychology, defines 'appearance' in the following way:

The total, composite image created by the human body and any modifications, embellishments, or coverings of the body that are visually perceived; a visual context that includes clothing as well as the body (1990, 4).

Kaiser's definition suggests that appearance is composed of everything that we see. Neither clothes, jewels, hairstyle, make-up, complexion, or anything else is more important than some other part of the visible whole. It is the visual totality that matters. The definition Kaiser puts forward is pretty simple, however, and it raises the question of whether it is reasonable to understand 'appearance' in this way. Is it only or primarily visual, and if yes, what does this mean? Furthermore, is it fairly static as the definition seems to suggest, an 'arrested' visual image present at a particular moment?

Kaiser herself notes that appearance can also be conceived as a process of social actions (ibid., 5-11). This means that appearances and opinions about them come about through two kinds of operation, i.e., through appearance management and appearance perception. The former indicates everything one does and even thinks when producing a certain kind of look - dieting, planning what to wear, exercising, making up, and so on. In Kaiser's own words, 'Appearance management encompasses all attention, decisions, and acts related to one's personal appearance (that is, the process of thinking about and actually carrying out activities pertaining to the way one looks)' (ibid., 5). 'Appearance perception' in which classical physiognomy was interested refers by contrast to everything we do when we assess another person's (or our own) appearance. It is "the process of observing and making evaluations or drawing inferences based on how people look" (ibid., 7). Appearance is thus a liv-

3. I will not examine Hanson's suggestions further, but whatever the reason for the philosophical neglect of human appearance, one should bear in mind that what philosophers write in their seminal studies and what they otherwise do in their private lives may not be the same: Kant was not a philosopher of fashion or clothing but he is nevertheless said to be well-known for his practical interest in good and pleasant behavior of which appearance is undoubtedly a part (De Quincey 1877). It seems that at this level the importance of appearance is hard to undermine even by a philosopher. Moreover, it cannot be claimed that issues pertinent to human appearance have been wholly absent from philosophy, since there are studies on the human body and corporeality, for example, notably by Merleau-Ponty and his followers, and even Kant wrote a note on fashion (1991a, section 68). One must not forget philosophical traits in the tradition of physiognomy either. It is still true however that these cases must be seen as exceptions, and human appearance has really been far from the center of philosophical discourse.
ing point of intersection between these processes, and is not static by nature; it changes and is subject to active modification and evaluation. One could say that it happens or takes place in a situation rather than that it is. But even so, the question of how visual it is still remains.

David Novitz stresses that appearance cannot be understood as something that one approaches with mere senses, i.e., we cannot see it in any simple way. For Novitz, appearance is not “raw and unmediated sounds, tastes, colors, shapes, smells, and tactile sensations” (1992, 117), but rises above “mere sensory appearances to the overall impression that a person or a group creates” (ibid.).

Novitz emphasizes that the ‘overall impression’ is greatly affected by factors that are not sensory per se; he states that “…the appearance of a person, a family, a culture, or a nation depends crucially on the knowledge, beliefs, and values of those who view or assess them” (ibid., 117; see also 67). Moreover, he notes that “how wealthy a person appears to be, how circumspect, wise, or kind, depends only in part on the perceptible qualities of that person” (ibid., 117). In other words, we can see that someone looks or seems nice, fascinating, wealthy or whatever, but exclusively through the ideas we have about ‘nice’, ‘fascinating’, ‘wealthy’ and so forth; assessing an appearance (‘appearance perception’) is a cultural and conceptual process. According to Novitz, this means that if we want to affect appearances, we have to try to affect the ideas about and attitudes towards what people see. I cannot easily change the form of my nose, but I can try to affect what you think about it, since I can affect your values and beliefs. Or, I cannot (easily) change how my nose looks but I can affect how it appears to you. This is not incompatible with Kaiser’s definition, since she depicts appearance as a ‘composite image’, and ‘image’ is generally used to refer to both mental representations and ideas.

Novitz also presumes, as against Kaiser, that it is not wise to think that all the perceptible features of a person are parts of his appearance as such. Rather, the fact that people normally have two legs and arms is a standard feature of the human being in Kendall L. Walton’s (1987) sense of the word, being features that belong essentially to the very concept of a human being, while their non-existence counts as a contra-standard feature. For Novitz, appearance consists of features that are personal, and is built on the basis provided by the standard features. Standard features “form the background relative to which my appearance as a person is discerned and judged” (1992, 116). Similar elements form the unquestioned basis of any work of art, and are not normally the things to which attention is paid. Thus it is not interesting that a person has arms, but what kind of arms he has, or how he has arms. One could add that not all the perceptible features of a person count equally: if someone has very long hair or an exceptionally hooked nose, it probably attracts attention and affects the ‘overall impression’ or ‘composite image’ more than more neutral elements.

However, what ‘background’ is, and when, is not a question that could be settled at a general level. For example, if there are ten people all wearing the same kind of uniform, the existence of the uniform is probably not the best possible basis by which to evaluate the appearance of one member of the group and how that member’s appearance is related to those of the others. But a uniform may be crucial if the person appeared in some other kind of group.

Despite their slight disagreement about what elements of the whole pertain to appearance and what to its ‘background’, both Kaiser and Novitz use ‘appearance’ in pretty much the same way as ‘impression’ is frequently used; Novitz employs the latter term explicitly. It is the ‘effect’ something has on us, not the ‘something’ that produces the effect that is of interest for them, even if these two cannot be separated from each other in a simple way. Moreover, this impression is affected by the cultural values and beliefs the
perceiver possesses.

It is easy to agree with Kaiser, Novitz and many others when they state that background information, beliefs, values and concepts affect the appearance of a person we meet. This is a version of the classic conception advanced by Rudolf Arnheim, Ernst Gombrich and Nelson Goodman that there is no ‘innocent eye’ when we look at something. Nevertheless, it should be obvious that in the cases I examine in this study, appearance necessarily includes a strong visual component which, however, must not be understood naively. The term ‘appearance’ can certainly be used in other, completely non-visual senses as well. It is perfectly understandable that a person may appear, say, brutal on the telephone, but I do not consider such cases here.

Both Kaiser and Novitz, although emphasizing that non-sensory aspects play an important role in appearance management and perception, stress the visual nature of appearance. That is, neither develops the idea that scents, sounds, or tactile sensations form a crucial part of appearance. But why would someone’s scent or voice not be a part of the ‘composite image’? One good reason to claim that at least scents really are an important element in appearance is that in fashion magazines like *Arena, The Face* or *Vogue*, magazines that undoubtedly concentrate primarily on appearances, perfumes are often very impressively presented, both through advertisements and articles. Occasionally advertisements are even perfumed and so the scents can be smelt. Thus, even if ‘appearance’ is used, as here, as a term primarily referring to visual phenomena, one should not exclude other factors.

Moreover, it can sometimes be hard to decide which visible items still belong to a person’s appearance and which are something else like ‘background’ in Novitz’s terms, or something that does not belong to the person in question at all. A tie and a watch are parts of appearance, but what about the car one is driving? Would James Bond seem the same equipped with a standard Volkswagen Golf? Or if he spoke Scots? What belongs to and what is important with regard to a particular appearance must obviously be decided on a case-by-case basis and contextually. The problem is similar as regards concepts like ‘habitus’ or even ‘aura’. In what follows I will try to keep to cases that are fairly easy to accept as relevant to appearance, mainly to clothes, but I will return repeatedly to the question of what can form part of and affect an appearance.

In any case, the fact that ‘appearance’ is a phenomenal concept here, indicates that I need to be in touch with a person directly before I can know how he appears to me. I cannot really know how people appear to me without seeing them - a person of whom somebody only tells me something does not appear to me at all - and this is what counts here. Appearance takes place in the interaction between me and the person I encounter.\(^4\)

In the eyes of those who are familiar with analytic aesthetics, this notion comes close to Frank Sibley’s idea that in order to be able to use aesthetic concepts one has to have direct perceptual contact with the thing which one wishes to evaluate aesthetically (1987, 34 and *passim*). One should not draw hasty conclusions from this anal-

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\(^4\) One should notice that by saying this I do not take a stand with regard to how things exist. The question of how existence is related to appearance (reality to appearance, qualities to properties, etc.) conceals very deep philosophical questions (both epistemological, existential and ontological) concerning the disputes between realism and constructivism, objectivism and subjectivism, etc., but it is impossible to go into them in this study. On the long history of this discussion see Hacker (1987). To get a fuller picture of the field, complement Hacker’s description with the time- and event-oriented ontological conceptions of hermeneutic-phenomenological thinkers (e.g. Heidegger 1953 and Gadamer 1993). Even if I personally tend to favor something other than extreme constructivism it must be noted that the analysis of the aesthetic dimension I put forward in what follows could pretty easily be combined with constructivist views as well.
ogy, however. For Sibley, his idea indicates that the use of aesthetic concepts cannot be condition-governed and he expressly claims that "no description in nonaesthetic terms permits us to claim that these or any other aesthetic terms must undeniably apply to it" (ibid, 34). Moreover, he thinks that correct use of aesthetic concepts calls for a special ability, taste. As is well known, Sibley’s ideas have turned out to be questionable because, firstly, there can be cases when aesthetic terms or concepts are condition-governed (Kivy 1979a). Secondly, it is doubtful whether there is any need to postulate a special ability through which one can understand aesthetic issues and with the help of which one is able to use aesthetic concepts correctly. Aesthetic perception can probably be done with normal eyesight and hearing or “with normal intelligence and sense organs” as Ted Cohen puts it (1979, 578), even if we had to train them in order to be able to discern some features of aesthetic objects.

Sibley’s assertions are thus questionable with regard to the use of aesthetic concepts (related to qualities of objects) and one must notice here that they surely would be so if applied to approaching appearances in general. Assessing appearances does not call for a special ability (taste or something else), and one need not assume that it could not be condition-governed at least in some cases and as regards some features of appearance (think of the ‘ideal’ bodies of participants of beauty contests and deviations from it). This does not mean, however, that the basic assumption that one has to have

5. Kivy indeed admits (1979a, 431) that he has not succeeded in showing conclusively that all or even some aesthetic terms are condition-governed, but he points out that the opposite has not been shown either.

6. However, as J.F.Logan (in Beardsley 1982, 97) has stated, the term ‘taste’ “need not denote a distinct faculty of perception; it could just as well denote a special achievement in the employment of the familiar faculties.” Thus, the term ‘taste’ can be used as an abbreviation for a particular use of normal ‘intelligence and sense organs’. I will return to this possibility later.

(had) direct contact with the appearance one assesses would be pointless. This is simply because appearances cannot be evaluated in any other way, since they ‘happen’ in a situation when someone is encountered. One can certainly know many things about someone’s appearance without actually encountering it, but in that case one cannot assess it as an appearance. One can know something about an appearance through a description, but a verbal description or even a picture is not a genuine appearance and cannot make it actual because it lacks many of its elements such as movement, gestures and scent. And of course, while it is possible to talk about many aspects of appearances generally without associating one’s notions with any specific appearance, nothing really appears to one in that case either. We can understand descriptions of and generalizations about appearances only because we have phenomenal experiences of them, and thus even the most abstract considerations about appearances have phenomenal roots.

One must notice, however, that this says nothing yet about the nature of aesthetic assessment of appearances and even less about aesthetic evaluations in general. It is true that if an appearance must be approached directly - and discussions about them must have a phenomenal basis - then, necessarily, its aesthetic dimensions must also be assessed through direct contact,” but this notion is not enough to show how it happens. And what makes certain approaches aesthetic ones? This question must wait a little, however.

It must be stressed that talking about (human) appearances does not necessarily presuppose the division between ‘merely’ appearing so-and-so and ‘really’ being so-and-so - even if it may refer to that. ‘Appearance’ does not always suggest a situation where, say, someone really is pretty plain, but under special lighting looks or appears

7. One could argue with Sibley that one cannot evaluate anything aesthetically without a direct contact, but I do not claim this.
exceptionally handsome. Often, as Frank Sibley notes, “Appearance ... simply consists of the visible features (features that appear or show) which a thing actually has” (1959, 907) and here ‘appearance’ concerns the reality, not fanciful impressions.8

Additionally, ‘appearance’ does not always imply a state of uncertainty either, although the term is used in that sense as well. When talking about human appearance we do not normally mean that we cannot be sure how a person really looks (or is) but it appears or seems as if he is elegant; in many cases the way one appears equates to the way one is, and there is nothing more to untangle, not on the level of appearance in any case. What appears, appears. (Which is not to suggest that to comprehend an appearance profoundly would always be a simple task.) Thus, although ‘the question of reality’ does arise in many aesthetic situations8 it need not do so as regards human appearances; appearances are always real as appearances, and in that sense they are, so to speak, immune to error. ‘Appearance’ means how people present themselves to us. A millionaire can look rich or poor, but appearing poor one simply does so independently of what one is in some other respect. Moreover, a person can appear in many ways, but an appearance can appear only in one way, otherwise it turns into another appearance. This then is a different question, into which I do not go here, of whether appearances deviate from some other kind of reality in some ways or not. This is the way the concept is used in this study, and the interesting thing is how one appears, not whether the appearance conceals, or corresponds to, something else or not.

8. Once more, this is not to comment on what ‘reality’ actually is, but only to suggest that appearances can deviate from some kind of reality, although they need not do so.

9. Appearance and the aesthetic are sometimes paired so that all aesthetic matters are claimed to be matters of ‘surface’ appearance only: “What makes the appreciation aesthetic is that it is concerned with a thing’s looking somehow without concern whether it really is like that...” (Urmson 1970, 408). This would mean that with regard to aesthetic matters it is not of interest whether things really are something or only appear to be such; the appearance suffices and “the question of reality does not arise” as Vincent Thomas has put it (in Sibley 1959, 905). This claim does not seem to hold, for there are cases in which we need to know what a thing ‘really’ is before we can form a reasonable opinion about its aesthetic aspects, as Sibley (1959, 909-910) and Foster (1992) show. The appearance-reality problem in aesthetics is examined further by Marshall Cohen (1959) and Kivy (1979b).
2. Aesthetic Dimensions in Human Appearance

People necessarily appear to us in some way when we encounter them. In the process of forming an opinion (a composite image, an impression) of people, we form their appearance so to speak, and in doing so we can also form opinions about how they appear aesthetically. One could say that only in a certain kind of interaction between me and others, do people have aesthetic qualities.¹

This is an analytic division and it probably does not depict the real perceptual situation in which we simply see without clear procedural steps that someone is ‘pretty’, ‘handsome’, or ‘cool’; we do not first form an appearance and then qualify it aesthetically. Both strands can take some time and conceptions can change as time goes on - as happens to Darcy with regard to Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice - but appearances and their aesthetic qualities come about hand in hand.² The question of this study is how we make these aesthetic characterizations within certain cultural restrictions. The central idea is that aesthetic categorization is possible only in a certain kind of cultural tradition.

If one is to encounter the aesthetic in human appearance one has to take notice of its aesthetic qualities or approach appearance in an aesthetic way. To begin with, this can be compared to the idea that one has to use the aesthetic point of view (or have an aesthetic attitude) in order to regard something aesthetically.

Probably the best-known definition² of the aesthetic point of view is Monroe C. Beardsley's: “To adopt the aesthetic point of view with regard to X is to take an interest in whatever aesthetic value X may possess” (1982, 19).

Beardsley's definition emphasizes the role of aesthetic value: we must be interested in that in particular if we are to say that we adopt the aesthetic point of view. According to Beardsley aesthetic value consists of an object's capacity to produce aesthetic gratification (in an aesthetic experience) which, in turn, arises from certain formal and/or regional qualities, i.e., through the intensity and unity of an object (of a complex whole). In Beardsley's own words: “Gratification is aesthetic when it is obtained primarily from attention to the formal unity and/or the regional qualities of a complex whole, and when its magnitude is a function of the degree of formal unity and/or the intensity of regional quality” (1982, 22).³ The same factors, intensity and unity, characterize the experience as well.

3. John Fisher (1983, 88) does not think that it is really a definition but rather “a set of directions for locating aesthetic experiences”, but this distinction does not affect the notions that follow.

4. Roughly the same idea is presented in a number of texts by Beardsley since his Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism (first edition 1958), the most important of them collected in the volume including the article 'The Aesthetic Point of View' from which the quotation above is taken. Beardsley is not alone in his conceptions. In his article 'Aesthetic Experience' Beardsley gives a new set of five 'criteria of the aesthetic character of experience' (1982, 288-289), specification of the older ideas that brings him very close to Dewey (1980, chapter III and passim) and Maslow. (On Dewey's and Maslow's similarities Dennis and Powers 1974.) Virtually the same characteristics of an aesthetic experience have also been advanced by Csíkszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990).
W.E. Kennicott notices that the aesthetic itself has traditionally been defined in three ways: “(1) by reference to a special class of objects; (2) by reference to a special class of properties; (3) by reference to certain (psychological) features of our reactions to or engagements with objects” (1979, 469). Beardsley’s definition unites all three aspects, conjoining the aesthetic with certain kinds of objects that have certain kinds of properties able to produce certain kinds of experiences.

One does not have to go into the problems of Beardsley’s solution in detail⁴ to note that at least one major aspect of the definition - the one that is essential for this study - is not acceptable. It is evident that Beardsley’s idea cannot be correct if it means that someone using or having the aesthetic point of view should be interested in aesthetic value exclusively - no matter how this is defined. There is no reason to assume that when one encounters aesthetic matters it is always a value-laden event, or necessarily linked to a gratifying experience. When we want to know how good an appearance is aesthetically, we may also want to know what kind of thing it is and perhaps even what it is seen from the aesthetic point of view - besides valuing an object we may describe, categorize and interpret it or parts of it.⁵ For example, I may think that someone looks handsome, but at the same time I can see that his body is solid, hair shining grey, skin exceptionally wrinkled, that his tie is of silk and that his suit is an Armani (indicating a certain type of cut). There are different kinds of aesthetic features or dimensions in objects and if one uses the aesthetic point of view one is probably interested in them generally, not merely in some of them. As a matter of fact, Beardsley’s definition does not absolutely deny this, but its emphasis is very clearly on values, which is too restrictive a solution. In this it resembles other, equally problematic, ‘monistic’ conceptions of the aesthetic attitude, which try to define the attitude by pointing to only one essential and constitutive feature of it (see Dziemidok 1986, 142).

Beardsley’s definition can be modified to enable a more general and at the same time more pluralistic interpretation: to adopt the (or an) aesthetic point of view with regard to X is to take an interest in whatever aesthetic dimensions X may possess, not in aesthetic value only. One uses it if one, say, is interested in “how beautiful, soft, or charming one looks, what intense or bright colors he wears, or how lively the texture of his pullover is. But one must also be able to say what aesthetic dimensions actually are. In what must we be interested, or on what should we concentrate? Examples are not enough. If one cannot answer this, one has formulated the circular and not very informative account that the aesthetic point of view takes an interest in aesthetic dimensions and aesthetic dimensions are those that are the object of interest of one who has the aesthetic point of view. This will not do.

5. On the discussion of and problems in Beardsley’s ideas see Fisher (ed., 1983). Moreover, Beardsley can be seen to represent a larger group of thinkers who defend the possibility of finding some distinctive characteristics of an aesthetic attitude, although Beardsley himself did not use this term in his later writings, partly due to George Dickie’s rigorous attacks on it. A good general overview of various conceptions of and problems of the aesthetic attitude is provided by Bohdan Dziemidok (1986).

6. It would be extremely hard to discriminate descriptions, interpretations and evaluations - the tripartition Beardsley (1958, 64) uses himself - from each other in a way that would show that an element or part x in A (in a text by an art critic, for example) would be clearly one, while element y would be as distinctively something else; if a critic compares a painter to Jeff Koons, what does he do? All three, probably. Thus this division is analytic only and describes what aspects a critic may have in his work even if these aspects are intertwined and not clearly separate.
Firstly, the word ‘dimension’ does not refer to physical objects, items, products, and so on. Rather, the word is used in a linguistic sense and pertains to other kinds of ‘target’ of attention or action. Thus, ‘dimension’ here refers to aspects, elements, properties, etc. of objects (to their color, length, etc.), or to mental or cultural entities (to a character in a novel, a value), rather than to physical objects like stones, cars, human beings and so on. Using other terminology, these could be called ‘intentional objects’, even if instead of ‘objects’ one could more loosely speak of ‘issues’, ‘matters’, or simply ‘things’. In any case, the choice of this study is to speak mostly of ‘dimension’ and use other expressions when they function better. However, the question of what makes some dimensions aesthetic, and what kinds of dimension aesthetic ones are, still remain.

Considering the history of aesthetics, the aesthetic dimension seems to be fairly hard to define, real definitions and definitions intended to pinpoint the essence of the aesthetic, at least, having been difficult to find. Fortunately, these are not needed. One does not need to define or describe how aesthetic matters should look, what phenomenal features they ought to have, or to give their necessary and sufficient conditions. Instead, we can describe the aesthetic dimension with the help of tradition and history, comparing this strategy to the way in which Noël Carroll and others, notably Jerrold Levinson, have suggested how to identify works of art. To put the main idea bluntly, the aesthetic dimension comes to be aesthetic through a historical process, and anything that strives to be aesthetic can be that only through its relation to things which have been so before.

In any case, it is not very illuminating to speak about aesthetic dimensions at the general level. Rather, if one wants to describe them with the help of tradition, one is better off doing it through a specific example. In this study the tradition is naturally one of human appearance, and the question is, what kinds of aesthetic dimension can be found in its tradition. What kind of aesthetic tradition is enveloped in the larger tradition of human appearance?

These questions can be taken as empirical ones and could be answered accordingly. One could go and ask people what they take as aesthetic, and even statistics could be invoked. Another answer could be given, for example, by studying appearance-oriented fashion journals or academic studies about appearance and seeing what things in them are aesthetic. The result would most probably include very traditional and even classical formulations, like how ‘beautiful’ or ‘handsome’ someone or something is, or expressions of more recent origin like ‘fresh’, ‘cool’ or ‘geek’. These attributions can be ascribed to persons as wholes or to some parts or features of their appearance, to their clothes, hair-styles, ties, and so on.

A more philosophical question is how a thing must be related to earlier aesthetic matters in order to be one itself. This question of relations can be clarified by comparing the structure of relations of aesthetic issues to that found in the art world. It is possible then to illuminate both the possible relations of new aesthetic issues to previous ones and, even more importantly for the central problem of the study, the possible relations between new manifestations of aesthetics and previous ones.

Noël Carroll claims that the crucial relationships between new works of art and those of the past are repetition, amplification, and repudiation (1988, 145 and passion; see also 1994). Roughly the same types of classification can be seen to illuminate relations both between various aesthetic issues and between different manifestations of aesthetics as well; something can be related to previous aesthetic issues so that it is seen to a) repeat their features (con-

7. Carroll points out that it is possible to construe even more ways of being related to the past, mentioning two further ones, 'synthesis' and 'radical re-interpretation' (1988, 155, note 8), but he does not develop them further.
ervative clothing: subdued colors for business-type suits), b) elaborate and develop them further (slight fashion changes: the length of the skirt), or c) reject them and try to replace them with something else (punk clothing in the late 1970s). The difference between the last two is that of evolution and revolution: the former carries the tradition forward through fairly modest changes, while the latter aims at radical changes or denies the value of the entire earlier tradition.

Repetition is the easiest case. If someone stands in front of the mirror, looks carefully what he sees in it, and states that ‘these slacks really look good with this jacket’, there is not much room to doubt that this person has been concentrating on the aesthetic dimensions of his appearance. He has repeated something that has been done countless times before and which has also been considered aesthetic before - he has acted in the aesthetic tradition.

Carroll states that mere copying cannot make anything a work of art and thus repetition cannot be copying, but a repetition of forms, figures, themes, conventions or effects of past works (ibid., 146). This, however, may be the case in the art world, but not necessarily with regard to aesthetic issues in human appearance, which means that in this area mere copying may be enough. Why this is so will be clarified better in the following chapters in which amplifications and replications are also dealt with more deeply.

For now it is enough to notice that nothing more than a relation to the tradition is needed at this point of the history, for the tradition already exists. It would be a different task altogether to say why certain things originally became associated with the term ‘aesthetic’ and others not, or why some things have become members of this particular tradition in the first place. And it would be a different task again to find out how the aesthetic tradition got started (probably, to a large extent, long before it was called by some specific term), which would perhaps lead one straight to questions pertaining to essential or functional qualities of the aesthetic at a certain point of history. This would mean studying the etymology of the term ‘aesthetic’ and the history of phenomena directly or indirectly related to it. That could lead one, in principle, to ur- or proto-forms of aesthetics, and the historical chain at the level of phenomena would not stop at Baumgarten, even if the etymology of the term does in a certain scholarly sense.

Why does talking about the beauty, gloss or warmth of a color place the color in the aesthetic tradition? This need not be explained in terms of details of individual cases and their history, since this is just how it ‘traditionally’ is in the late 20th century, given that one repeats certain features of the tradition when talking like that. I do not claim, however, that detailed essential descriptions and examples taken from the aesthetic tradition can be illuminating; quite the contrary. I am going to employ and analyze such examples myself in what follows. But at this point it is important to notice that we do not need minute analyses of individual cases for talking about identifying aesthetic objects in general; what we do need is the tradition, some basic examples of things that have been taken as aesthetic before, and especially a general description of how new things must be related to older ones.

8. Of ideas concerning ur- and proto-forms of art see Levinson (1979, 242-244) and Carroll (1988, 152 and 155). One could, for example, end up with the same type of description that Ellen Dissanayake derives for art. For her, art is originally not cultural but a biological necessity because it serves certain basic and universal human needs (1992, 38; 59-60.) But even if it were possible to show that practices that later started to produce things that we now call ‘works of art’ (or more generally, perhaps also ‘aesthetic objects’), have their background and basis in these needs, this would not mean that art lacks a history. Furthermore, this history does not develop simply through repetitions but is molded by elaborations and radical changes as well. The same is true of the entire aesthetic tradition, of which the history of art is only a part.
It has often been remarked that in principle anything can be ‘aestheticized’ or looked at from the aesthetic point of view (Beardsley 1982, 34; Ziff 1984), and this conception is not even very new. Joseph Addison was of the opinion in 1712 that “almost anything about us” can be of some aesthetic interest (Stolnitz 1992, 188). In that sense, there are no aesthetic matters and non-aesthetic matters as such.

One ought to be careful with this notion, however, as it only means that in principle there is nothing that could not be approached by attending to its potential aesthetic dimensions.

But, firstly, it is clear in practice that there are things that are more readily ‘aestheticized’ than some others. The colors of clothes are a typical example of properties that can easily be turned into aesthetic ones; they can be said to be glowing, beautiful, charming, and so on, and these are nothing if not aesthetic attributes. On the other hand, how a person’s skin or a fabric feels or smells is not as typically taken as an aesthetic issue even if it perhaps could be. (It is also debatable whether these factors belong to one’s appearance in the first place.) Typically aesthetic matters may be ones that are visually formal: colors, forms, and their qualities. Nothing can stop one from trying to take some other things as aesthetic as well, but in such ‘strange’ situations one has to justify one’s point of view with a more solid explanation. One should explain why one talks about, say, smell in aesthetic terms.

Secondly, there are things that cannot be aesthetic at all and thus the notion above does not mean that anything could be associated with the aesthetic dimensions of an object. How much something weighs, how expensive something is, or whether something is produced by someone who is 65 years old, are dimensions of objects but not aesthetic ones and I do not know how they could be. Any appearance (any object) can be looked at aesthetically but not everything pertaining to an appearance can be aesthetic.

Thus, the aesthetic tradition includes certain kinds of factors which differ from, say, those important in legal, religious, economic or political traditions. If we pay attend to the beauty or charm of an appearance we characterize what we see aesthetically. If we talk about how criminal someone looks we are closer to the legal tradition and we deal with legal dimensions. Concentrating on the price of clothes someone wears has to do with yet another dimension and tradition in which the object in question can be placed; locating things in different traditions connects them with different concepts and reveals different aspects of them. In human appearances, aesthetic considerations are often the important ones, but it is also quite possible - and sometimes much more rewarding because not everything is interesting aesthetically - to approach appearances from some other point of view and to focus on other aspects of them.

It must be noted that those things which have been aesthetic issues in the course of history form a motley lot, and not all that has been aesthetic in some context can be so in all the others. Jerrold Levinson, whose ideas Noël Carroll develops further, claims that if an object X is a work of art someone should regard X at t “in any way (or ways) in which objects in the extension of ‘art work’ prior to t are or were correctly (or standardly) regarded” (1979, 240). Levinson uses ‘regard’ as “a broad term covering whatever is done in relation to an object so as to experience or interact with it” (ibid., 248). It has been noted that this idea cannot be correct, because the tradition changes and not every accurate way of regarding works of art as art at some point of history is necessarily always accurate at a later point. Carroll objects to Levinson’s idea by pointing out that artworks were often conceived in the past as means of propitiating the gods, and they were ‘correctly regarded’ as such. But it is doubtful whether this kind of ‘regard’ makes anything a work of art in the late 20th century.
(Carroll 1994, 31-35; Stecker 1990, 267-269).*

It must also be noted that stressing the meaning of tradition and history does not mean that one should have the entire history in mind or that the same things in the tradition are as meaningful to everyone. A look backwards into history can sometimes be perfunctory and there is no reason to assume that there could be only one monolithic aesthetic tradition. One need not postulate a Great History of aesthetics or know it through and through to be in touch with some version of the aesthetic tradition.

These notions must be kept in mind in describing aesthetic dimensions and aesthetics in human appearance as well; it has been questioned, for example, whether nudity and certain ways of representing it are aesthetic or ethical issues. Thus, some ways of 'regarding' nudity correctly (making a nude portrait or a photograph concentrating on formal qualities of the body, for example) may have made it aesthetic at some point but the same kind of 'regarding' may turn it into an ethical (or some other) matter later (or earlier, in some other context). The discussion of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs is a case in point, showing that not all kinds of regarding automatically make anything aesthetic, or at least not only or principally aesthetic. Levinson could perhaps argue that if something is pornography it has not de facto been correctly regarded in the aesthetic tradition; but if making a photograph like Mapplethorpe's is not regarding X correctly aesthetically (artistically), what is? And yet it is not enough to make his pictures art or aesthetic for everyone, and they are often seen to be representatives of some other tradition. Whose regard counts?

The problem is still how aestheticization happens, and the short answer is through relating new things to the tradition. The interesting question, of course, is how we know something is in a repetitive, amplifying or repudiating kind of relation to aesthetic things of the past, since in principle anything can be related to anything else in some way. In practice, however, many things are left outside the aesthetic sphere. In other words, what makes us think that certain things are 'relationally' aesthetic?

It is clear that some mere similarity (or difference) between things is not enough to show a relevant relation between them. It is not enough for something just to look similar to something that has been considered aesthetic before. We need to have a reason to think that the things in question are really related to each other and that the one influences the other. In the case of art, according to Carroll, we use historical narratives to show that something is art: we compose a story that places a work in the tradition credibly, or we show how the work in question is related to earlier (and future) works through repetitions, amplifications or repudiations. If we succeed in this we can make other people see the connection as well. The narrative gives us reason to believe in a relation. Carroll defines (or describes) the art-identifying narrative in the following way:

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\begin{align*}
&x \text{ is an identifying narrative only if } x \text{ is (1) an accurate and (2) time-ordered report of a sequence of events and states of affairs concerning (3) a unified subject (generally the production of a disputed work) which (4) has a beginning, a complication, and an end, where (5) the end is explained as the outcome of the beginning and the complication, where (6) the beginning involves the description of an initiating,}
\end{align*}
\]
acknowledged art-historical context, and where (7) the complication involves tracing the adoption of a series of actions and alternatives as appropriate means to an end on the part of a person who has arrived at an intelligible assessment of the art-historical context in such a way that she is resolved to change (or reenact) it in accordance with recognizable and live purposes of the practice (1994, 27).

Irrespective of how accurate Carroll’s idea is as regards art, it points us in an interesting direction as regards identifying aesthetic dimensions and aesthetics itself.

Showing that something is aesthetic or aesthetics by an identifying narrative is something one could probably do in many or perhaps in all cases. One could explain through a narrative why, say, standing in front of a mirror, comparing various ties to each other and eventually saying ‘This one is really gorgeous!’ is action that focuses on the aesthetic dimensions of the ties, action in which a certain kind of aesthetics is used. The narration would point out in what kind of aesthetic-historical context the person in question acts (i.e. would say something of what kinds of thing are taken as aesthetic, aesthetically valuable, etc. in that context, and why) and how his choice (his ‘end’, through certain means) repeats crucial features of the tradition through ‘intelligible assessment’ of the aesthetic-historical context.

Firstly, however, often nothing like that is needed at all: it is not necessarily a matter of dispute whether aesthetic dimensions are dealt with or not, and one does not have to demonstrate it. It is quite evident, a firm point of departure, that in many cases the color and patterns of a tie are aesthetic matters, and thus, if one focuses on them, perhaps even using typical aesthetic concepts, one is probably dealing with aesthetic issues and using aesthetics. Carroll would perhaps say that in such cases we could construct a narrative that shows that the new case is simply a repetition of previous ones and thus the narrative would be very short. The point is, however, that in such cases we do not need a narrative at all.

Secondly, and more importantly, even if one has to identify the aesthetic explicitly, or show that something is an aesthetic matter it does not have to happen narratively. Identification does not have to be as rational or well-explained as in Carroll’s narrative case. It can be based on sheer belief in authority without better understanding, for example. I would say more broadly that identifying (for others, especially) happens rhetorically, possibly using various rhetorical devices like similes and metaphors, and the various aspects of a message, such as its ethos, pathos and logos, all influence its credibility. Rhetorical techniques and other factors affecting what we think and how we see the world around us are numerous, so much so that it is impossible even to give a list of them here, let alone explain their characteristics. In problem cases, in which Carroll is interested, we probably use narratives as well, but they can include whatever rhetorical devices are available, and thus are rhetorical by nature. Rhetoric, here, must thus be understood broadly to mean any

10. On problems in Carroll’s scheme see Stecker (1990) and Davies (1991, 167-169). One should also notice that Carroll is not the only one presenting a historical-narrative solution to the question ‘what is art?’ On other similar models see Davies 1990. Carroll’s construction comes also close to that offered by Walter R. Fisher (1989, xiii and passim), although Fisher talks about ‘narrative logic’ in general and does not deal with it in the context of the art world particularly. Although Carroll seems not to know Fisher’s views, they could help him to explain better how to formulate a good, credible, narrative.

11. Even if only rhetorical devices like tropes and figures were in question, their number is approximately 5000 in some classical treatises, as in Giovanni Baptista Bernardi’s Thesaurus Rhetoricæ from 1559 (see Vickers 1988, 283). One of the most profound modern studies on rhetorical techniques has been written by Chaim Perelman and L.Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971), but it is not possible to go into its treasures here.
method (mostly verbal) of persuading or affecting opinions and conceptions not based on formal reasoning only, and one must not forget the importance of non-verbal messages either (the lay-out of a book, voice of a speaker, and so on.) Wherever there is something else than just formal demonstration, there is rhetoric and it can be narrative in Carroll’s sense of the word without needing to be.  

The following notion tallies with what has been said in that that they both imply that identifying is not reasoning in a formal sense - one cannot and need not prove that something is an aesthetic matter. Instead, following Wayne C.Booth, one could say that it is a form of coduction rather than one of deduction or induction (1988, 70-77). Booth uses the term in the context of valuing art works (pieces of literature particularly) and he writes that this neologism comes from co (“together”) and ducere (“to lead, draw out, bring, bring out”). Coduction will be what we do whenever we say to the world (or prepare ourselves to say): “Of the works of this general kind that I have experienced, comparing my experience with other more or less qualified observers, this one seems to me among the better (or weaker) ones, or the best (or worst). Here are my reasons” ... Coduction can never be “demonstrative,” apodeictic: it will not persuade those who lack the experience required to perform a similar coduction (ibid.72-73).

Mutatis mutandis, Booth’s notions can be seen to pertain to the procedure through which a thing is recognized as aesthetic. It happens in a cultural tradition, comparing one’s own convictions to those of others, but it will never force another to believe that this or that is aesthetic if the other has too different a background and beliefs.

Identifying something as aesthetic or aesthetics can thus happen in many ways. It is important to notice that dealing with aesthetic considerations does not have to happen verbally but can be done visually, or by physical action. One does not have to say that standing in front of a mirror has to do with aesthetic conventions, the act itself probably being enough to make the connection clear. Often an appearance itself is a channel for manifesting aesthetic ideas. In Wittgensteinian terms, identifying aesthetic dimensions happens in a language game but language games exceed the limits of natural, verbal languages.

Aesthetic dimensions must be identified as such before we can say that any kind of dealing with the aesthetic dimensions of anything takes place. But - this is important - the identification does not have to happen through the ‘agent’ him- or herself but through anyone familiar with the aesthetic tradition. In other words, that someone concentrates on aesthetic matters does not always have to be realized by the agent himself and thus, while the aesthetic nature of his action is not dependent on his subjective opinions, it must be identified as such by someone with the help of the tradition. For example, if a person chooses carefully what colors he wants to wear it is culturally reasonable to assume that he pays attention to aesthetic matters (and thus ‘has’ or ‘uses’ some kind of aesthetics), even if he might not think so himself.  

The reason for this is that in our culture certain activities, like dressing concentrating on the colors of the outfit, are very easy to see as belonging to the aesthetic sphere. As a matter of fact, it seems that it would call for explanation if someone claimed that dressing

12. The concept of ‘rhetoric’ has been much discussed during recent decades, and there is no universally accepted conception of it. On the variousness of the concept see Golden and Pilotta (1986), Hauser (1986), or Richter (1990).

13. This can be done cross-culturally as well (applying the western concept of the aesthetic to other cultures), but whether it is acceptable or not is a political question.
has nothing to do with the aesthetic tradition. Even if the agent himself explicitly states that he is not interested in aesthetic matters, his actions may speak against his assertion and make it unbelievable. Just think how credible it is to hear participants in beauty contests to say over and over again that what is really important to them is some kind of ‘internal’, not ‘external’, beauty. In saying so, they probably want to emphasize the importance of their ethical dimensions, but without being very convincing. In our culture, what they do and how they act are enough to identify or classify their doings as aesthetic in other’s eyes. Of course, there is no way we could force someone to adopt an aesthetic point of view on his own doings if he happens to describe them in some other way, but this does not mean that others would be wrong to take an aesthetic stand towards them.

It can be assumed that the one who identifies something as aesthetic (or aesthetics) need not to do so verbally, but if asked to do it he could, more or less minutely, by alluding to the tradition in some way or other. Knowing that a tradition is a tradition - and that it is that particular tradition to which the term ‘aesthetic’ applies - calls for labeling it and that is a verbal ability. But this becomes important only if we want to label the tradition, as I want to do here. Often it is more important and interesting just to remember that there is cluster of cultural practices, values, habits, conventions, etc. that can be seen to belong together, and to which individual acts can be related so that they become parts of the cluster. This cluster can be called ‘aesthetic’, and we have good reason to do so, but the name is naturally not the crucial point. If someone knows the tradition, he can relate relevant issues to it and to its parts and invoke central features of it by acting in a certain way even if the name of the tradition is unknown to him; many are able to dress up elegantly and this happens independently of the name theories may apply to the tradition. Still, their acts can reasonably be seen to take place in an aesthetic tradition.

I do not think, in any case, that in practice one would firstly conduct that X is an aesthetic matter belonging to the aesthetic dimension of human appearance and then start to delineate it more specifically from the aesthetic point of view. Many things happen at the same time or intertwinedly. One ‘forms’ an appearance in the first place, identifies some features of it as aesthetic, and notices that some kind of aesthetics is used when this is done. At the same time these features turn into some kind of thing aesthetically, or are aesthetically particularized, say, as elegant. (They turn into certain kinds of qualities inside the aesthetic sphere; to say that something belongs to the aesthetic dimension is differentiation at another level). But taken analytically, there is the question of how the identification of something as aesthetic (and aesthetics) happens, by connecting the appearance in question or some of its features with an aesthetic tradition, making a connection that can reveal a repetitive, amplifying or repudiating relation to the past, which can happen through historical narration, rhetorically, by coduction, and perhaps in still other ways. On the other hand, there is a slightly different but overlapping problem regarding the ways in which one approaches and assesses potential aesthetic dimensions, and how one deals with them inside the tradition (as it is identified, so to speak) - the problem of how an aesthetics can be manifested within the aesthetic sphere, how one shows one’s aesthetic values and ideas or how one shows a certain kind of relation to the tradition. The latter option is closer to the focus of Part II of this study which

14. To claim this is a standard procedure at least in Finnish beauty contests.

15. This indicates that what is clearly aesthetic to someone and causes no problem is not necessarily quite as unproblematic to someone else. Thus some cases need no further explanation for one person, while for someone else they may need a lengthy ‘narrative’.
can thus be understood as dealing with various verbal and non-verbal rhetorical means of ‘talking’ about one’s aesthetic conceptions and choices.

The idea that objects become aesthetic when regarded as such by placing them in the aesthetic tradition does not suggest radical constructivism or extreme subjectivism. It does suggest a pluralistic account of aesthetics: becoming aesthetic can happen in various interrelated ways in the heterogeneous aesthetic tradition. But it happens in a tradition that is by definition a social and not a subjective construction, one that has some ‘rules’, even if loose. Following Isabel Creed Hungerland (1968, 292 and passim) one can describe aesthetic features as Wittgensteinian aspects which are not subjective (like aches or sensations) but can have fairly extensive cultural stability and about which there can be widely accepted opinions. Think about ‘ideal’ bodies in the Occident, for example; what constitutes their aesthetic features and what is valued by many is fairly easy to say (solidity, tallness, slimness, etc.). Luckily, however, it is possible to have another kind of ideal which is connected with another strand of the broad aesthetic tradition.

Concentrating on aesthetic dimensions does not necessarily make, create or construct these dimensions out of thin air. Rather, it is more plausible to see them as potentialities that can be actualized in an experience in which an aesthetic point of view is used, while outside such an experience they may remain potentialities only. I cannot follow the ontological path further in this study and try to find out what, if any, the status of aesthetic dimensions would be outside such an experience. It is clear, in any case, that they are actual in experiences. Thus one might say that the aesthetic dimension happens rather than is, pretty much in the same way as appearances do, and so it is perhaps more appropriate to ask when it is than what it is: it is when aesthetics takes place. It is when a manifestation of aesthetics distinguishes some features as aesthetic through the various tradition of aesthetics.\textsuperscript{16}

It must be noticed that the word ‘experience’ is used in as neutral a way as possible here, and not in the sense used by John Dewey. One experiences something in some way all the time, but exceptionally rewarding experiences are much rarer. Use of the term ‘experience’ indicates that if someone wants to be in touch with the aesthetic dimensions of an appearance, he cannot do it unless he actualizes them in an experience. In practice, talking about an experience is only a different way of saying that one must approach the thing in question from an aesthetic point of view or have an aesthetic attitude. ‘Attitude’ thus denotes an actual relation between the experiencing subject and the object of the experience, not a readiness to perceive in a certain way, for example (compare Dziemidok 1986, 140).

Moreover, talking about concentrating on aesthetic dimensions does not mean that doing so should be ‘disinterested’ or ‘contemplative’, that someone doing so should have a special kind of distance from the object or from some of its aspects, or that one should be interested in the ‘look’ of a thing only. All of these preconditions of an aesthetic attitude have been called into question many times and in many ways over recent decades. Aesthetic attitudes, experiences, or points of view are sometimes, especially in

\textsuperscript{16} I am inclined, without taking a final stand on his ontological assumptions, to agree with Michael H. Mitias, who writes that “The ontological locus of these qualities is what I call ‘aesthetic situation’, the event in which the aesthetic object comes to life in the aesthetic experience. This is based on the assumption that aesthetic qualities are not given in aesthetic perception as ready-made realities but as potentialities for realization. This realization takes place in the aesthetic experience” (1986, 159-160). Note that preferring ‘happening’ rather than ‘being’ in the Heideggerian and Gadamerian spirit is a well-known and fairly much used option in the philosophy of art as well (see Haapala 1995, for example).
classical theories, understood to be something fairly esoteric, connected with certain kinds of object (works of art especially), or of a certain nature psychologically (Dewey, Beardsley). But the conception of this study is more down-to-earth, coming close to that of Hilde Hein, who suggests that the aesthetic is present practically everywhere if we just take notice of it, and the experience of it need not be anything exceptionally uplifting.

The aesthetic dimension, in a manner of speaking, rides "piggy back" ad infinitum on all our experiences, thoughts, and feelings. We can divert our attention away to consider things refracted otherwise, but the aesthetic is a presence accessible to, if not directly before, consciousness. It haunts the edges of being, sometimes lightly (with apologies to Milan Kundera), sometimes comically, sometimes sweetly or tragically or surreally, sometimes lucidly and sometimes salvifically; but unless we are asleep or anaesthetized, it is there always as a gloss upon experience undergone (1993, 8).

The point to be taken here is that there are aesthetic matters (qualities, issues, dimensions) in human appearance. This is obvious. They are not the same ones for everyone and forever, because there is no single, monolithic aesthetic tradition but rather a set of intertwining traditions. Aesthetic dimensions are also activated, revealed, opened up, unraveled or seen by people who take notice of them or use aesthetics in various ways.

This, however, does not lead to a circular description of aesthetics with the help of aesthetic dimensions and vice versa. Aesthetics can indeed be described as something dealing with the aesthetic dimensions of things, but aesthetic dimensions can be described through the actual tradition, as things crucial to it. Such things are tied up with, for example, certain terminology ('beauty', 'ugliness') applied to certain objects and their features (clothes, faces, bodies, art works; their colors, figures and forms, etc.) and conventions (concentrating on the formal features of objects, doing paintings, making up), which all have a history. The point of this chapter is to show at the general level how we identify some things as aesthetic and as aesthetics and how we know we are dealing with aesthetic matters and not with something else. This large framework will be more fleshed out in Part II.

17. Remember that circularity can, in principle, be broken through a historical analysis as well, although in practice the analysis would naturally be very difficult to formulate - compare this to Levinson's (1979, 242-244) notions about un-art.
3. Outside aesthetics

While aesthetics here is understood much more broadly than in many other contexts, it may seem that virtually anything could be absorbed into its sphere, or even that any appearance could be seen as a manifestation of aesthetics. That cannot be the case, however, and one must know what should be left aside, and why. Anything can be assessed aesthetically but not everything shows how - or even that - someone has dealt or deals with aesthetic questions.

Aesthetic dimensions are completely unavoidable in human appearance in the sense that independently of whether or not someone pays attention to aesthetic matters himself when he puts clothes on - or goes about naked - one inevitably produces some kind of ‘product’ which can be evaluated aesthetically. Moreover, this product may be similar to many other people’s ‘product’ who perhaps have not paid any attention to aesthetic matters either. Such people may even be seen to form an aesthetic group with a certain kind of style even if they are not conscious of it themselves. One example might be the universal ‘mathematician look’ that often seems to consist of somewhat untidy hair, pale skin, metal-framed eye-glasses, a men’s shirt of some subdued color, slightly too short trousers, and more or less worn-out shoes. This group, of course, would be close to the fairly well-known group of so called ‘nerds’. Quite independently of how many such people really exist and how consciously created their style is, in other peoples’ eyes they may form a group that embodies a certain kind of aesthetics that can be individuated and evaluated. ‘Aestheticization’ of their style from outside may be rewarding.

More generally considered, a style or an aesthetics can be ascribed to practically anyone from outside. But it would be odd to claim that all these people would really have an aesthetics. In the mathematics geek case it is improbable - even if it is possible because someone might want to adopt such a style on purpose, just as there undoubtedly are self-aware nerds and slackers. We can thus project an aesthetics on anyone, but cannot really ‘meet’ an aesthetics put forward through an appearance in all cases. Thus, it is reasonable that before we can say that someone’s look is a manifestation of aesthetics we can ‘meet’, we should have good reason to suppose that the person in question really has paid conscious attention to aesthetic matters and knows that he is revealing something of them through his or her look. Concentrating on aesthetic issues should be discernible, as it surely is if we happen to see a person like Karl Lagerfeld or Gianni Versace. Of course, it is simply a fact that we cannot always be sure whether this is the case and we have to settle for suppositions; not everyone who is interesting from the aesthetic point of view is a well-known designer! But if someone, designer or not, has his hair very carefully cut, if he wears matching colors, his shoes are extremely well-polished, and his belt and jewelry match, we have good reason to suppose that he does have an interest in the aesthetic dimensions of his outfit. (Of course, we do not need to assume anything in all cases, but if we are lucky, the person in question explicates his relation to aesthetics and resolves our identification problem.)

It must indeed be admitted that it can be culturally reasonable to postulate an aesthetics for an individual or a group even in cases

1. This is the case seen from within aesthetics but it is not incompatible with the fact that there can be ethical or other restrictions on using the ‘universally valid’ aesthetic point of view; everything has aesthetic aspects but it is not necessarily right to pay attention to them in certain situations.
when there is no reason to believe that the person(s) in question would have put much energy into aesthetic questions himself. But with regard to such cases one should be careful.

Such persons do not make aesthetic choices. The aesthetics postulated does not exist for them and in that sense it is not their doing, and thus their appearance cannot manifest their aesthetics. They are not aware of and interested in the essential factors of the culturally definable aesthetic tradition. Such persons can have reasons to wear certain clothes, but the reasons are other than aesthetic, i.e., political, practical, religious, or whatever. Thus, the only aesthetics manifested in cases where aesthetic dimensions of such appearances is dealt with is the aesthetics of the perceiver.

Hence, ‘non-aesthetic’ appearances can also be ‘forced’ to manifest an aesthetics but only as this is ascribed to them by perceivers. This is quite possible, but in doing so one is not interested in the same thing as when one concentrates on manifestations of aesthetics in the form of ‘appearances themselves’. The alternative of concentrating on ‘appearances themselves’ focuses on the ways people consciously handle aesthetic issues and show something of them to other people through appearances, and it accepts the fact that there are also people who do not pay any attention to aesthetic matters, and moments when they are not dealt with in any way. The ‘forcing’ alternative is directed by the idea that anything can have interesting aesthetic characteristics which can be systematized to form an aesthetics. From my point of view this alternative does not actually have to do with manifestations of aesthetics in appearances; the appearance in question is not the level at which aesthetic issues are dealt with, while ‘talking’ about them or commenting is.

Remember, however, that appearances ‘happen’ in an interaction, so that talking about ‘appearance itself’ must not be understood as an attempt to objectify an appearance or its aesthetics in a simple way, but as a way of emphasizing that there are two sides to the interaction - that of the ‘producer’ of the ‘physical’ look and that of its perceiver (both sides may be united in a single person) - and both sides are essential. Thus, even if an appearance and its aesthetics happen in an interaction, the aesthetics in question can be primarily attached either to the ‘producer’ of the physical clothes-body-etc. combination or to its perceiver. This is a question of emphasizing a certain aspect of the whole.

This can be compared to how the aesthetics of nature is managed. Nature itself does not deal with any kind of aesthetic matter or manifest any aesthetic ideas, but one who talks about nature or comments on it in some other way can do so and ‘project’ his aesthetic conceptions onto it. Another illuminating comparison is that the practice of installing blue lights in public toilets produces an interesting freezing-cold, ghostlike effect, making it useful to approach such places from the aesthetic point of view. One can be pretty certain, however, that the decision to light the toilet this way has nothing to do with aesthetics, but simply that it keeps junkies away, since the blue light prevents heroin addicts from seeing their veins. There is nothing wrong or inadequate in considering such toilets from the aesthetic point of view, and, as I said, it can even be rewarding. But to take them as manifestations of aesthetics is almost as badly mistaken as to take phenomena of nature as such, phenomena that cannot even in principle manifest anyone’s aesthetics.

When talking about appearances and their potential for manifesting aesthetic ideas, values and practices, one can find three types of appearance. First, those which probably look as they do mainly for aesthetic reasons and which thus manifest aesthetics deliberately and intentionally (Lagerfeld). Secondly, those which look as they do mainly for some other reasons and which thus are not manifestations of aesthetics even if aesthetic dimensions can be found in them (the ‘mathematician’). Thirdly, looks which are accidental and thus have no special reason or intention behind them and thus can-
not manifest an aesthetics at all. (When I wake up my hair might
look aesthetically interesting, but it has no reason whatsoever to
look as it does, even if it has a cause.) The two last cases are 'outside
aesthetics' for the agent of action, so to speak, although not neces-
sarily for the perceiver. The first is 'inside aesthetics' both for the
agent and the perceiver. It goes without saying that the tripartition
does not depict appearances as wholes only but functions equally
well if we talk about parts of appearances, since some parts may be
carefully chosen, some others may be accidental. The body of a
body-builder is an intentional manifestation of his aesthetics all the
time even if the look of his hair when he wakes up might me acci-
dental.

In any case, a hypothetical intuition would be that there are only
very few people who do not pay any attention to the aesthetic as-
pects of their appearance whatsoever. Perhaps even many of those
who seem not to be interested in these questions aim at aesthetic
neutralities or mediocrity on purpose. Furthermore, what one says
and what one does are not necessarily compatible, and in that sense
it is not necessarily reliable if someone claims to be uninterested in
aesthetic issues. The seemingly neutral aesthetic uniformity of west-
ern business-men, for example, is hardly a coincidence even if many
of them would probably claim to have no time for aesthetic consid-
erations.

Be that as it may, there certainly are variations in how con-
sciously and actively people deal with aesthetic issues. Dandies and
contemporary top models are at one extreme of this spectrum,
while people who put most of their energy into something else are
near the other end. If there are persons who really do ignore aes-
thetic issues altogether it is appropriate to say that they can neither
have nor manifest any kind of aesthetics. Otherwise, the aesthetics
one has and manifests may be more or less consciously and actively
developed and organized. How seriously and actively should one fo-
cus on aesthetic issues to have some kind of aesthetics in the first
place, then, is not a question that could be answered abstractly;
which instances are related to the aesthetic tradition closely enough
to be aesthetics must be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

All in all, the following distinction can be made. Firstly, there are
cases which are clearly manifestations of aesthetics. Persons who
produce such manifestations very consciously have an aesthetics
and are well aware of the tradition (Lagerfeld again). It could be said
that they have an aesthetic in an 'accusative form' - they have an
aesthetics, a totality. Secondly, there are cases which can be consid-
ered manifestations of aesthetics although their producers are not
probably quite as well aware of the tradition, and the relations to it
might be clearer to other people. Such people have an aesthetics in
a 'partitive form'. (Any normal person with some interest in his ap-
pearance.) Lastly, there are cases which are not manifestations of
aesthetics but of something else (the notorious mathematician).

It must be reiterated that what makes any version of aesthetics
aesthetic is its relation to the aesthetic tradition. However, con-
sciousness about one's own aesthetic solutions need not mean that
one should be well aware of the tradition in itself or know the con-
cept of aesthetics. Rather, in order that one can be said to deal with
aesthetic matters and manifest aesthetics one need only be con-
scious that one deals with certain kinds of things that are actually
important in that tradition, but one does not need to know that
these things are important there or that they are parts of that par-
ticular tradition. Similar interests may be coincidental and not con-
sciously tradition-bound by the someone who deals with such issues.

For example, someone might get very interested in their hair, in
its color, texture and cut, and get a hairstyle similar to that of Grace
Jones in late 1980s; in principle it could happen without the person
ever being aware of the fact that cut, texture and color are impor-
tant when talking about hair and its aesthetics, not to mention that
the person might not know anything about the terminology of the tradition and would not know what has happened in it either. None of this would prevent him or her from being interested in precisely the things that are important there. This means that one can be conscious of aesthetic issues without being aware that they are such, issues of a specific tradition. In this sense, one can produce an aesthetics naïvely, but not without paying attention to matters actually significant in the tradition. Of course, the relation of this aesthetics to the tradition would be evident only to those who know the tradition, and even to them it would necessarily be fortuitous and not really ‘traditional’ in the sense that it would consciously repeat, amplify or repudiate it.

Such extreme cases can only be quasi-traditional and it might seem wrong to take them as ‘real’ manifestations of aesthetics. At least they must be taken as special borderline cases. Moreover, they are highly hypothetical, of course, and in practice it would probably not be simple to be totally ignorant of aesthetic traditions associated with human appearance - once again, it is reasonable to talk about degrees and see that in some cases an awareness of the tradition and its elements is stronger than in others.

But if we talk about being outside the aesthetic sphere, the crucial point is that there are persons who are not (at the moment) consciously interested in issues actually central to the aesthetic tradition, even if they knew it. Although such persons do necessarily produce some kind of appearance, their deeds and appearances are not related to aesthetic tradition, not even in a quasi-traditional way. (Whether or not that is the case, and when, is not always easy to say, of course.) In quasi-traditional cases it is appropriate to ascribe an aesthetics to them from outside, and even the person who has produced the appearance could probably see why it can be taken as a manifestation of aesthetics when the connection is pointed out to him. But there are cases that simply do not fit this tradition very well because their essential aspects connect the appearance with some other tradition or context. For example, soldiers in a battle probably do not have time to think whether they look good aesthetically, but they might be concerned with how to survive in the first place, and that how they actually look shows that. The same is true also of other people in extreme situations. They are, at least for themselves, outside aesthetics.

Furthermore, there are cases that are simply so uninteresting or unrewarding from the aesthetic point of view that there is not much point in applying any kind of aesthetics to them, and thus the aesthetics of the perceiver is likely not to take place either - many average appearances in the street seem to approach this category, intentionally or unintentionally. In such cases we really are outside the aesthetic sphere, both from the point of view of the agent and the perceiver.

Finally, one should bear in mind that some appearance-related cases that are meant to be taken as aesthetic by someone are not easily accepted as such by others and are thus left outside the aesthetic sphere for many. For example, there are ethical reasons why it is hard to assume the Russian underground artist Vladimir Svejgoljts’s point of view when he states that he killed his wife because she did not look beautiful enough at a certain moment and thus did not have the right to live (see Saure 1993, 14). It is perhaps not so uncommon to analyze violence from the aesthetic point of view (see Kupfer 1982, chapter 2) but the situation is a bit different when someone really acts violently for aesthetic reasons. Such cases are, fortunately, exceptions and I will thus not go into them in more detail.

2. Throughout this chapter but especially at this point I am indebted to Yrjö Sepänmaa’s ideas concerning the relations between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic (particularly to those in Sepänmaa 1990) although I have not used his formulations as such.
4. Aesthetic and Other Cultural Characterizations

Human appearance is not a closed, autonomous system, and its aesthetics is affected by things happening in other aesthetic traditions and in traditions and areas outside the aesthetic sphere. Particularly important is the relation between aesthetics of human appearance and the fine arts, and I will go into that question next. I will then briefly map the influence of non-aesthetic cultural qualifiers on the aesthetic sphere.

ART, NON-ART AND HUMAN APPEARANCE

Human appearance is an example of an aesthetically interesting area outside the fine arts. If so, should not one know what is art in order to be able to talk about the aesthetics of non-art? Yes and no.

Yes, since one has to be at least able to identify works of art and an aesthetics which deals with art, and one has to be able to separate these from things that have nothing to do with art. One has to have some idea of what makes a particular object a work of art and why.

No, since one does not need to know how to define art or its boundaries at the general level. There are paradigmatic cases of art and non-art and differences between the two areas can be discovered, even if there are no clear universal characterizations or borders of either. The principle is the same as in the context of aesthetics: we need instruments of identification, not definitions.

In most situations differentiating what is art from what is not is not problematic, although there are perplexing individual cases. It is naturally doubtful that everyone or even a majority of those who bumped into Jenny Holzer's early verbal works on the streets of New York realized they were facing art works. Furthermore, of two objects that look perceptually identical, one may be art while the other is not, and this can be embarrassing as Arthur C. Danto has shown in many of his texts (1981, e.g.). For most people, however, it is fairly easy to tell whether or not most things they encounter are works of art. This does not mean, of course, that different people would agree about all cases.

The ability to tell art from non-art does not depend on a clear and explicit theory or definition of art. One does not have to be able to tell why, exactly, art is art in order to say that a particular object is art. Many, or perhaps even most, people cannot define art in explicit terms even if asked to do so but that does not make them incapable of discriminating art works from non-art objects. In any case, if a person has—as most western people do—any kind of conception of art he has to have some idea about what belongs to that category and what does not, and he could probably say something about the grounds on which he categorizes things if pushed. He can probably name several paradigmatic examples of art and non-art as well.

But what is art and what is not is not the same thing for everyone, and conceptions about art in general and about an individual work's or object's identity and category vary, as the history of art amply shows; we can even think of entire genres like photography, movies or comics. This, together with Danto's indiscernible objects case (ibid.) or Weitz's well-known anti-essentialist arguments (1987), suggests that there is no essence of art in the sense that it would be possible to define, say, some perceivable surface qualities that would always and unquestionably make objects art.1 What is art for some-

1. Although Danto is sometimes seen to be a representative of essentialist theories (Carroll 1993), his essentialism is not dependent on 'perceivable surface qualities' but on a certain kind of historicity.
one depends on his knowledge about culture in general and art in particular: how one has learned to use the word 'art', what kind of works he has encountered before, what he knows about the history of art, what he has heard about art and individual art works, and so on. 'Arthood' - like 'aesthetic' - is a conception or an idea rather than a set of perceivable properties even if this 'idea' is probably tied up with perceivable properties of objects in one way or another. As Jerrold Levinson puts it, "artworkhood is not an intrinsic exhibited property of a thing, but rather a matter of being related in the right way to human activity and thought" (1979, 232). It is naturally possible that some ideas about art are more apt than others and some may even be downright absurd but this does not mean that even the most absurd ideas would not direct the art identifications of those who hold these ideas.²

There is perhaps no way of saying what art is in a way that would be exact, informative, and universal. What can be done, of course, is to describe factors elemental to art (historicity, certain institutions, crucial factors in producing it, perhaps even certain types of experience - characteristics which are not art's exclusively) and indicate paradigmatic examples of both art and non-art. The point is that no universally valid definition of art is even needed if the task is to tell art works from non-art. What is needed is some kind of idea (not necessarily a universally valid idea) of art and non-art, and these ideas do vary.

On the other hand, however, it is evident that not everyone can have his own original idea about art. Not everything can be art in a culture, and there are countless things virtually no-one would think of as that. Where a Big Mac, an ice hockey game, cholera, a light bulb, the Pacific Ocean, Gillette's shaving foam, or a Labrador retriever turns into an art work it forms an exception that requires an explanation and a special (conceptual) context. Yet all of these can be aesthetically interesting.) Ordinary cars, human beings, G-strings, alarm clocks, hairdos, computers, traffic lights, trash cans, earthquakes, musical instruments, assembly lines, smilies, sausages, or country roads are not (typically) art in the contemporary western world either.

What does this mean in and for this study? In what follows I am going to deal with non-art and its aesthetics without even trying to say explicitly and exactly what art is and what it is not, or why. I will give examples of both areas even if I admit that some of the examples could perhaps be put in a different category than I suggest.

But why talk about art and non-art in the first place if the concepts are so complex and vague? The first simple reason is, when one is dealing with an aesthetics of non-art one cannot do without art, because non-art objects and their aesthetics are often related to art works and worlds in a meaningful way even if they are not art. They are like art, or regarded as art, in some important respects, without de facto being considered art. In other words, aesthetic qualities of certain non-art objects emerge from the fact that they are related to art works in a certain way and they would not exist without art, but this does not turn these objects into art.

When one thinks about human appearance particularly, it is quite evident that instances of it are not works of art except in very exceptional cases, such as Orlan's body-art project of having herself operated on by surgeons in order to be a flesh-and-blood interpretation of certain central female figures in the history of art (see Brand 1997). There is no problem in saying that how an ordinary Smith or

². It is true, of course, that if someone's idea of art is so completely absurd that it does not have anything to do with anyone else's idea about it, we have good reason to ask whether he has a conception about art at all or whether he just uses the word but means something entirely different. The same is also true of various conceptions about aesthetics and aesthetic dimensions.
Jones looks in the street normally has nothing to do with art although representations of ‘ordinary’ appearances, like paintings or films, can be art, of course. *Haute couture* fashion, in turn, is often clearly associated with phenomena of the art world. The impact of surrealist art - of Salvador Dali’s works especially - can easily be seen in clothes designed by Elsa Schiaparelli and her followers (Martin 1987, 118-119, 197-215, and *passim*), for example, and a conspicuous link with Tamara De Lempicka’s works is discernible in Lee Jenkins’s fashion photographs (*The Face*, February 1997, 62-69). A more general comparison between art and appearance-related phenomena is explicit in David Novitz’s texts.

Some writers, like Anne Hollander (1993) and her followers (Young 1988), are bold enough to state that how we see our clothes and appearances is conditioned and even dominated by the ways pictorial images, notably works of art, represent human beings and clothes. Although this idea works properly only if ‘visual arts’ is understood more broadly than here, Hollander’s excursion through the history of art and clothing wholly supports the notion that art, even more narrowly conceived, can have an obvious influence on human appearance (and *vice versa*, of course). The line Hollander draws from Rembrandt’s self portrait (1640) to photographs of Richard Wagner (c.1870) and Charles Frederick Worth (c.1880) is very revealing, for example (1993, 354-356). She also shows how ways of representing drapery in pictures had an impact on how it was later used in reality (ibid., 48-49 and chapter one in general).

The other reason for talking about art is as simple as the first one. While aesthetics as a field of knowledge has produced a great deal of material about art and relatively little about human appearance, it would be very odd not to take advantage of it as a point of comparison. At least some things that are illuminating with regard to art are also illuminating, *mutatis mutandis*, with regard to things that are not art, as should be clear from the identification discussion above. In fact, it would be hard, if not downright impossible, to practice any kind of aesthetics by overlooking theories and other considerations about art entirely. In the end, the aesthetics of art in its academic-philosophical form can be seen as the paradigm type of aesthetics, and it is illuminating to contrast other forms of aesthetics to it.

As a matter of fact, when an aesthetic theory about almost anything (that is not art) has so far been created, the procedure has often been based on an ‘aesthetician’s’ more or less systematic ideas about ‘high’ art, art being the reference point through which other kinds of phenomena are viewed, and the dogma is often that non-art phenomena are similar to works of art in many respects (even if there are dissimilarities as well). It is the art link that makes the approach aesthetic and the object of interest significant. This happens more or less with Anderson (1990) and Novitz (1992). However, art is not the only ‘aesthetic system’, individual systems existing, for example, in fashion and in other phenomena of popular culture as writers like Park (1993) show. This is what I wish to show as well.

Thus, to make my point I use the concept of art, but in a fairly narrow way. I shall write about works of art that are paradigmatic.

3. It must be kept in mind that even if someone’s appearance has nothing to do with art, it can and normally does have something to do with aesthetics.

4. At the same time, art works can make ‘ordinary aesthetics’ manifest.

5. In fact Schiaparelli herself considered dress designing an art and herself an artist (Martin 1987, 197), but it is questionable how widely acceptable her view might be.

6. “Western clothing derives its visual authenticity, its claim to importance, its meaning and its appeal to the imagination, through its link with figurative art, which continually both interprets and creates the way it looks” (Hollander 1993, xiv).
examples of their category - professional, self-conscious, declared, culturally well-established art works - and I will relate non-art objects to them. This is not to deny that there are different but well-argued approaches to art, but my approach functions better for the purposes of the present study. Other conceptions of art are not necessarily inconsistent with the essentials of the study either, but they do not help to reveal characteristics of aesthetics of non-art as well as the 'narrow' conception does. Moreover, I will show that to understand certain cases of an aesthetics of non-art, a conscious awareness of art as a cultural phenomenon is needed even if it is by no means necessary for certain other aspects.

Talking about art and non-art here does not principally aim at tracing the differences between them in detail. The main point is illuminating the unique characteristics of aesthetics in non-art, primarily that of human appearance. The purpose is not to draw a clear line of demarcation between the two areas but to suggest that they often differ from each other in some important respects, and that the difference is discernible in the ways aesthetic issues in these areas are dealt with. Works of art are often (even if by no means necessarily) dealt with in different ways than clothes, hairdos, or tattoos typically are, and pointing out the nature of the differences serves to elucidate the aesthetics of the latter group. Still, as the stress is on 'non-art', 'art' is considered here as little as possible.

Finally, there may be other ways of naming the area whose aesthetics I deal with, other than 'non-art' or 'outside the fine arts'. The first of these is 'daily life' or 'the everyday world', contrasted to art. There is charm in this idea: art would be something special and extraordinary, a rupture in everyday life - which does not suggest that art would be the only possible rupture in it. However, everyday life is not always something different from art: for artists and art critics art is a crucial part of it. On top of this, some thinkers like John Dewey - followed by Ellen Dissanayake (1992), Joseph H. Kupfer (1983), and David Novitz (1992) - have sharply denied the possibility and point of drawing a clear line between art and other aspects of life. Thus, the 'everyday' cannot be kept outside art (or art outside everyday life) as categorically as non-art can. Moreover, if the concept of everyday life means the idea that everydayness is something that is ordinary, boring, usual, routine, habitual, well-known, and safe - something that is present every day ad nauseam - it does not match the area of non-art very well. Non-art includes both everydayness and un-everydayness, since it can be very unusual and surprising, which 'everyday life' is not. Furthermore, 'everydayness' matches the concept of the aesthetic poorly. In many cases the aesthetic is something out the ordinary or habitual, without always being art. This means, in a sense, that the aesthetic is often a mode of un-everydayness, both inside and outside art. But in turn, an aesthetics of non-art (and art) can have everyday aspects and thus an such an aesthetics cannot be comprehensively built on the idea of un-everydayness either. All in all non-art is not necessarily everyday-like or non-everyday-like any more than art is.

The second candidate for the name 'non-art' may be 'Lebenswelt' or 'life world', often contrasted to systematic (or to Systems in Habermas' sense) or scientific relations with the world (Husserl). This indicates that Lebenswelt is something un- or pre-systematic, something tacit, unspecialized, or unreflective. Whether 'life world' is a shared and even objective, or an individual-subjective world, and whether the word refers to some area or part of the world or to a certain kind of attitude towards the world in general is a debatable, and the answer depends on who uses the word and how. Be

7. I want to emphasize that I agree with Dewey and his followers in that I do not see the point of drawing an explicit boundary between art and non-art but I still see that these two things are culturally different, at least in their paradigmatic cases.
that as it may, the main ‘unsystematic’ idea transferred to the context of this study could mean that from the aesthetic point of view Art is the System and what is not Art belongs to the aesthetic Lebenswelt. The systematic vs. unsystematic idea may have its illuminating aspects, but it must be noted that, firstly, art is not necessarily the only aesthetic system (referring both to an ‘area’ and to a point of view), and, secondly, someone’s relation to art may be very ‘unsystematic’, so that art can belong to his Lebenswelt in that sense. Non-art is simply not necessarily ‘lebensweltlich’, while art can be.8

The third and last concept approximating non-art is ‘anti-art’, but these two are not identical either. Anti-art necessarily has an active relationship to art, even if this relationship is reactive or negative, revolutionary, or challenges traditional views about art. Anti-art refuses to be art in the same way as art in general is art (or traditionally has been), and a work of anti-art takes a stand with regard to other art-works, confronting their practices and values. Paradoxically, anti-art is form of art in any case, and could not exist without art. Non-art, however, can have an active relationship to art, while its existence does not depend on art and need not be defined through it. Many non-art objects like trees, rocks or mountains could exist without human culture; anti-art objects never could.9

Moreover, anti-art comes close to what Danto calls ‘disturbational art’ (1987, 182), but the latter is perhaps more general and political by nature whereas the former tries to shake the foundations of the art world. Examples of anti-art, or disturbational art - seeing the exact difference is difficult here too - might include Jenny Holzer’s ‘Da wo Frauen sterben bin ich hellwach’ (printed in Süddeutsche Zeitung, Magazine, No. 46, 19.11.1993 partly with wom-

en’s blood), many of Marcel Duchamp’s works at the time of their ‘making’, or Bob Flanagan and Ron Athey’s violent performances. It is clear that non-art does not necessarily have any revolutionary aims either with regard to art or with regard to something else.

For these reasons the term ‘non-art’ is used throughout the study, and the term is implicitly compared to its counterpart, ‘art’, even if the concepts are not explicitly defined.

**OTHER KINDS OF CULTURAL CHARACTERIZATIONS**

It must be remembered that if one talks about the appearance of human beings there is no chance that their aesthetics could be dealt with independently and exclusively, because appearances are necessarily related to other spheres like those of eroticism and economics as well. But unlike some other matters, aesthetic matters are typically very important in human appearance, and it is reasonable to expect that these issues are addressed especially. The point of departure is that although human appearance is not a matter of aesthetics only, it is typically that as well, and the interesting question is how that aspect is related to other cultural fields.

In phenomena essential to human appearance, such as clothing, aesthetic dimensions often tend to get intermingled, especially with fashion. What is noticed in the first place is often defined by what is fashionable at a particular time, and by what deviates from it. Fashion magazines undoubtedly deal with aesthetic matters but almost exclusively with those that are in vogue at the particular time they are published. This notion can lead one astray, however, for it is evident that there are many aesthetically interesting aspects of human appearance that have nothing to do with the prevailing mode of dressing - one only has to think about classical dress styles or uniforms. Secondly, one sometimes encounters the opinion that what is ‘good-looking’ or ‘beautiful’ is only a matter of context-


bound fashion. It goes without saying that this view cannot bear critical examination if one wants to preserve any restricted meaning of the term 'fashion' and not make it identical with 'culture'. Think about classical styles again. Furthermore, it is clear that fashion is expressly an economic phenomenon in which things are made fashionable (by marketing, broadly speaking) because producers understandably want to sell their products. Aesthetics, in turn, is not economics. And still further, fashion and clothing styles more generally often have to do with how people show that they are 'members' of a particular group, or more generally how they use their appearances as signs. Semiotic features of appearance are not necessarily aesthetic, however, but can be political or whatever. All in all, fashion incorporates many aspects other than aesthetic ones, and thus, to begin with, fashion and the aesthetic cannot be equated.

On the other hand, the aesthetics of clothing or of appearance cannot be reduced to fashion or to some of its aspects even if fashion at large affects it. Although fashion is deliberately manipulated with and for money, for example, it maintains its aesthetic aspects as aesthetic. Outward appearance and concentration on it, despite their link with profit-making, are things that form a part of an aesthetic tradition as well. The relationship between aesthetic issues and ethical matters functions in the same way. Neither can nor should be reduced to the other.

What keeps aesthetic matters separate from others, then? The short answer, unsurprisingly after what has been said above, is that they have their own tradition to which they are related, and this tradition is not the same as that of economics, eroticism, politics, or anything else. Each has its own institutions, terminology, watershed, seminal figures, and so forth. If one thinks about what kind of things a corset is related to approaching the question through aesthetics, politics, economics, eroticism, and so forth, the difference between various points of view becomes obvious. The 'conceptual net' is different in each tradition.

This does not mean that there are different properties in clothes that are essential for fashion, aesthetics, politics, and so on. Precisely these things, color, cut, material and the like, can be characterized in various ways and thus associated with different traditions. Something like a pink rubber corset can be taken as aesthetically ugly (or perhaps beautiful for someone else) and morally low at the same time, and the former can even be explained through the latter (the latter can be seen to be the reason for the former). But this still does not mean they are the same thing, and that ugliness is not ugliness because of its relation to an aesthetic tradition. Ugliness means what it does primarily because of the aesthetic, not because of the ethical tradition, even if they are often closely related.

The intermingling of the aesthetic with other cultural qualifiers can be elucidated further with the help of art. It is obvious that works of art are not merely significant aesthetically or artistically. Art works do not typically deal with questions of art exclusively ('are' about art) but, to discuss literary works for a change, also with religious matters (Hesse, Dostoyevsky), sex, eroticism or pornography (Miller, Genet), love (Austen, Hawthorne), violence (Ellis, Selby), social problems (Dickens, Brecht), natural sciences (Musil, T.Mann), history (Tolstoy, Watanb), nature and our relation to it (Sillanpää, Thoreau), and so on. The themes artists handle do not exclude the artfulness of art, of course, but there are other themes,
too. The situation is the same with regard to clothes, fashion and their aesthetic dimensions. A person who concentrates on a fashionable appearance is not only thinking about what his clothes will signify, or about what kind of statement he will make (compare Barthes 1983, Hebdige 1979, Lurie 1983), or protecting himself from the cold, or making money (if he is a designer). These aspects are all parts of the fashion world but they do not take the place of aesthetic matters. Likewise, it would be absurd to think that a book which reveals something interesting about social problems in Great Britain during the period of industrialization could not have artistic merit at the same time. If the book has artistic merit it is because of its relation to the tradition of art, not (so much) because of its connection with Great Britain's industrial history.

So, if a jacket is - or looks - fashionable because of certain properties (cut, material, color, etc.), it looks aesthetically interesting or stunning (or not) because of exactly the same properties. If a book is of a certain kind seen from the historical point of view with regard to its way of dealing with social problems, it is that because of certain features of the book (topic, story, terminology, characters, etc.); but it is of a particular kind aesthetically or artistically because of the very same features. The aesthetic does not exist as its own, independent area, and it cannot be manifested alone. This is true on the productive side as well, since when one makes decisions concerning what material is durable, warm, sexy, economic, or politically correct, the very same decisions are aesthetic ones as well - one cannot decide about aesthetic matters exclusively. Moreover, one cannot change aesthetic aspects of anything only, since any change affects the thing in question in toto; when one changes the color or material of a shirt one does not simply change its aesthetic aspects.

It must also be noticed that things that at first seem not to have anything to do with aesthetic dimensions can influence them directly. For example, it seems that if we like or love someone, we sys-

tematically hold that person to be more beautiful than other people do. This probably explains why spouses are the least reliable persons to evaluate one's physical attractiveness (Patzer 1985, 25-26). Moreover, even political attitudes can influence aesthetic evaluations. In a study by Hatfield and Sprecher it was shown that “when people discovered others shared their political attitudes - be they radical or conservative - they began to see their political allies as 'beautiful people'” (1986, 372). Thus, the halo-effect between aesthetic and other aspects mentioned earlier also functions in this direction and not merely from the aesthetic sphere to something else.

All in all, the aesthetic sphere forms its own area within our culture but is by no means a closed one and immune to influences from other cultural formations and traditions. There are no clear borders between different cultural spheres.
Intermediary Summary

The general framework for manifestations of aesthetics in human appearance is now established and can be summarized by the following simplifying figure, (Figure 1).

Circle A represents me, and circle B represents the waitress at the café in which I am sitting. Between us there are 'clouds' that represent various cultural areas, intermingling traditions. It must be stressed that in reality different traditions overlap and their borders are not at all as clear as this schematic figure may suggest. Moreover, traditions are not monolithic but pluralistic, and not stable but changing. Also, in reality, both I and the waitress are in various traditions at the same time and not outside of them (or the traditions are in us.)

In any case, the figure indicates that I look at the waitress using the concepts, terms, ideas and values of an aesthetic tradition (line 1), which may perhaps be a bit different for me than for someone else. (In reality such lines would typically go through various traditions simultaneously; I would not see aesthetic things exclusively.) She appears beautiful to me, her shoes almost kinky, and I think that her clothes suit her exceptionally well. Thus, I pay attention to her aesthetic dimensions, i.e., I see her appearance in an aesthetic way. Doing that I see how she repeats, or perhaps amplifies certain aesthetic phenomena I have encountered before; she is more beautiful than the woman on TV last night, but she does her hair in a similar way, and that woman's hair was called fabulous. Thus, I am using my aesthetics, making it active or manifest to me. I know that I am thinking about the aesthetic dimension and using an aesthetic point of view, because I know what kind of things have been aesthetic before; I do not have to construct a narrative to demonstrate this to myself. Aesthetics and the appearance of the waitress take place now. At the moment, as a perceiver, I am inside the aesthetic sphere and so is the waitress, as a 'producer' of an aesthetics, for me. I think that in this case this point of view is worth having.

The woman next to me (circle C) looks at the waitress, too. I cannot know what she sees and thinks. If I asked, she could perhaps tell me that she sees what unhealthy shoes the waitress wears. How will they affect her posture, and do her feet hurt? And she is so thin! Does she eat enough? If so, the woman next to me concentrates on some other features of the waitress's appearance, and looks at her.
with the help of another tradition (tradition x1), a tradition that could be called, say, the ‘tradition of health’ (line 2). She is outside the aesthetic sphere as a perceiver. She does not necessarily see, so to speak, different things than I do, but she characterizes what she sees differently. Is she inside or outside of the aesthetic sphere as a ‘producer’? I am not quite sure.

But what about the waitress herself? I cannot be absolutely sure, but I am inclined to think that she associates herself with some kind of aesthetic tradition, more or less consciously (line 3). She shows something of her aesthetic ideas and ideals through her appearance, and thus has an aesthetics that she manifests or uses. Her appearance itself manifests an aesthetics. I believe she wants to be slim, have blond, curly hair and accentuate her big eyes with make-up. She wants to look different from that person at the table next to the window, but perhaps pretty much the same as someone else. I would not be surprised to learn that she knows movies, the art of film, and the fashion world well. I believe she sees her aesthetic dimension even if her aesthetic tradition is not necessarily quite the same as mine - although our versions of aesthetics must overlap. I think that as the ‘producer’ of an aesthetics she is inside the aesthetic sphere. This, of course, does not prevent her from seeing herself through some other traditions as well (line 4), but that would take her (at that moment, for her) outside the aesthetic sphere, or at least she would stress other things.

But I am not satisfied with my sketch yet. I want to know in more detail how we approach the aesthetic dimension in human appearance. To put it in another way, how we activate aesthetic potentialities, how we forge connections with aesthetic traditions if we do not always create them through narratives, for example. What types of approach are there? What kind of ‘rhetoric’ can we use in making repetitions, amplifications and repudiations?
5. Variations in Aesthetics: A Preliminary Overview

Among the ways in which people deal with aesthetic matters in human appearance, such as the beauty of the color and cut of someone's hair, there are countless individual differences and nuances. One person compares a hairstyle to that seen in a movie, another admires its gloss, still another marvels at how full and rich its texture is; one gets himself the same kind of cut, another wants to know how it feels and smells, someone carefully describes how it is related to a certain style from the 1960s. If I ask what people think of the aesthetic dimensions of the curly hair of the waitress at this café I would get very different kinds of answers.

I suggest, however, that there are certain general categories with the help of which individual approaches to aesthetic issues can be classified. In other words, we can isolate certain general types of aesthetics through which aesthetic matters in human appearances can be considered. There are, however, crucial dissimilarities between these types. My aim is to map their important characteristics and show that among these variations, there are some that are more typical in the context of human appearance than others.

I will discuss these variations in three ways.

Firstly, the differences between the types of aesthetics will be highlighted focusing on how verbal and explicitly self-conscious various instances of aesthetics are about themselves as aesthetics. I suggest that as regards this question there are three types of aesthetics that form a continuum from the most explicit to the least explicit (or most tacit) ones, which I will call ‘explicit’, ‘semi-explicit’ and ‘tacit’.

Secondly, I consider how versions of aesthetics are related to ‘principles’ of originality and unoriginality. The question is whether aesthetics itself should be a creative individual composition and promote originality at the level of its objects, too, or is it acceptable if it is a more conventional and less individual cultural creation without a definite subject? The problem can be put otherwise - when an aesthetics is manifested in some way, whose is it? Who or what is its agent or producer? This issue can also be put in the form of a continuum that goes from the most original manifestations of aesthetics to the least original (or most general) ones. This continuum, like all others, can also be seen to have a middle (an intermediate level), but for the sake of clarity I will not deal with it explicitly.

The third problem is the link between each aesthetics-type and the problems of temporality. I claim that the nature of an aesthetics can be seen to vary with regard to how stable or volatile it is and how sensitively it marks temporal transformations among its objects. The first point is of special interest in what follows. Different manifestations of any aesthetics can be placed on a continuum that reaches from the most permanent to the least stable (or most volatile) ones via an implicit middle.

The point of the following chapters is to analyze the typical characteristics of aesthetics in human appearance, and through this, modes of aesthetics, i.e., what different sorts of aesthetics can, cannot, and perhaps must do. What can be done with tacit aesthetics? What cannot be done with a very unoriginal type of aesthetics? If a waitress at a café presents her aesthetics by wearing particular clothes and acting in a certain way, what can she show us, what not, and is there something she must show? How does all that she does differ from the aesthetics of someone who writes an academic study on aesthetic features in human appearance? Thus, the question is how does the aesthetics of human appearance look in its
typical form, and what is such aesthetics able to do?

I shall deal with the restrictions and potential of aesthetics in each chapter. In chapter 9, however, I shall summarize these notions, focusing primarily on the question of modes by analyzing the problem of aesthetic merit and the relations of various sorts of aesthetics with it. The question thus is what different kinds of aesthetics can 'say' of aesthetic merit? Aesthetic merit has been chosen as a fixed point because it can obviously be dealt with at every level of aesthetics but in different ways.

In the large picture, the three continua form the framework or 'space' in which individual cases of aesthetics can be situated. The chapter about aesthetic merit gives an example of how the position of an aesthetics in the framework influences the ability of that particular instance of aesthetics to deal with aesthetic questions. However, aesthetic merit is an example only - even if a very important example, as I wish to show - of aesthetic issues. More generally considered, the position of aesthetics in the framework must be seen to affect its ability to deal with any aesthetic issue.

Before going into these question in more detail some prefatory remarks must be made.

To begin, I maintain that the outline I will present is comprehensive, and that there are no additional forms of aesthetics in human appearance. All individual manifestations of aesthetics can be situated in the general model presented here. In other words, the outline is logically inclusive, not only examining specific parts of the field of the aesthetics of human appearance but the field in toto. This does not mean that it can resolve all the problems, of course. The model does however allow one to outline further important factors in trying to understand the pluralistic nature of this particular branch of aesthetics, but one should notice that these factors can be seen to be subordinate to the major divisions, and I shall handle them accordingly.

It must also be said at the outset that the model is fairly complex considered as a totality. As I start the discussion about versions of aesthetics by analyzing explicit, semi-explicit and tacit aesthetics, I establish a triangular basis so to speak for a more complicated net of variations in aesthetics that grows larger as I go forward via the other questions mentioned above. This means that each of the three versions - explicit, semi-explicit and tacit - can be related to other types of variation in many ways. For example, an explicit version of aesthetics can be temporally more or less stable and more or less original. Thus, every single manifestation of aesthetics may be situated on more than one continuum at the same time.

The 'levels' of aesthetics I am about to analyze do not have rigid boundaries between them but rather should be understood to represent accentuated points on unbroken continua: 'explicit' and 'tacit' are only hypothetical extreme ends of one continuum, and 'semi-explicit' depicts its equally idealized middle. Another solution would have been to describe differences through binary oppositions; instead of speaking about the continuum of explicit and tacit aesthetics one could use bipolar characterizations like explicit-tacit (or 'explicit-implicit', 'open-silent', or 'strong-weak'). This, however, would represent variation relationships as too clearly defined and antagonistic.

The purpose of the continua is to function as tools with which one can roughly relate particular manifestations of aesthetics to others; they are operational by nature. Characterizations remain fairly general and must be complemented with details when taken on a case-by-case basis, and there are some differences among specific examples taken from (or posited in) any 'category' ('explicit', 'tacit', 'stable', etc.). Hence, when talking about manifestations of aesthetics the idea is indeed to point out that a manifestation can be more or less explicit, volatile, individual, and so on, or relatively such-and-such. This means that even within a single case of
aesthetics there may be aspects of both explicitness and tacitness, for example, and absolute or pure forms hardly exist. This should be born in mind throughout the study.

It can already be said that I shall deal more profoundly with some manifestations than with others. In particular, I will spend more time with tacit forms of aesthetics than with explicit ones. Moreover, other continuums are seen, above all, through tacit manifestations of aesthetics. This is simply because as far as I can see the explicit is a less typical model in the context of human appearance than the tacit one. The grounds on which I claim this will be elucidated in more detail later, but some points that seem to support this idea can be mentioned right away.

Firstly, Susan Kaiser's notion (1990, 238-241) that it is simply not typical to talk about clothes, and that clothes and appearances convey messages in other ways than those that can be directly articulated in languages, gives backing to my claim. In fact, Kaiser notes that there are aspects in appearance that cannot be verbalized, and I will return to this idea through the concept of tacitness soon. (Kaiser simply equates these 'nonlinguistic' qualities with aesthetic ones, which is not apt, however.) Secondly, it seems that appearances are often supposed to be taken for granted or implicit and to make them verbally explicit can seem annoying even if it was possible. As Kaiser puts it: "In the everyday world of communication, then, appearance signs are often used to construct social realities, without verbalizing these realities. Who wants to be told: "Oh, I see you are trying to impress me"?" (ibid. 239) Lastly, considering the rather limited number of academic studies concerning the aesthetics of human appearance which I count as typical cases of explicit aesthetics, I claim that the burden of proof is on whoever claims that explicit versions of aesthetics are typical in the context of human appearance. The point is that there are different things that can be done with different kinds of aesthetics and it seems that semi-explicit and tacit versions are often sufficient in the context of human appearance.

Lastly, I emphasize once more that I shall concentrate principally on aspects of aesthetics that are paradigmatic in the context of human appearance, and this is also true of questions other than those bound with the explicitness-tacitness continuum. Thus, all versions and all parts of all continuums are needed to elucidate the general system, but I wish to show that certain levels are more typical than others for this particular area of aesthetics.

1. Accentuating the role of inef fluity in aesthetics, in the context of art especially, is nothing new, of course. It had a considerable role in German Idealism, for example (see Bowie 1990), and traits of it can be found much earlier (Cooper 1996). Kaiser, in any case, connects the idea explicitly with human appearance.
6. Explicitness and Tacitness

How are potential aesthetic dimensions dealt with and made actual in human appearance? How do we characterize certain features of someone’s look as aesthetic? How do we relate such things as clothes, haircuts, muscles, and their combinations to the aesthetic tradition?

I have suggested that there are various kinds of aesthetics which differ from each other in how they deal with the aesthetic dimension. I stated, firstly, that some versions of aesthetics are aesthetics in a more overt or explicit manner, whereas other manifestations locate themselves in the aesthetic sphere more quietly or more implicitly. Visualized, the continuum looks like this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit aesthetics</th>
<th>Semi-explicit aesthetics</th>
<th>Explicit aesthetics</th>
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I begin the analysis of the explicit-tacit continuum by offering a manifestation of aesthetics that I take to be an explicit one *par excellence*, and I explain why it should be taken as such. Secondly, I introduce some other relatively explicit manifestations. Only after that do I come to other forms of aesthetics. This strategy is preferable because explicit versions are probably easier to accept as aesthetics, while tacit forms need to be illuminated by comparing them to these ‘easier’ models.

EXPLICIT AND SEMI-EXPLICIT AESTHETICS

The primary point in differentiating explicit aesthetics from other forms is to highlight the level of verbalization and of overt self-awareness of the aesthetic example in question.

Explicit cases of aesthetics come very close to definitions and descriptions of aesthetics that can be frequently found both outside and inside the literature addressed to experts in the field. In these definitions aesthetics is typically (and briefly) described as the branch of philosophy that deals with questions of beauty, the sublime, the comic, etc. as well as with problems of art and art criticism. Such descriptions can be found in *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, or in almost any standard textbook of the field, like Marcia M. Eaton’s *Basic Issues in Aesthetics* or Anne Sheppard’s *Aesthetics.* From the traditional academic and high art-centered point of view this is what aesthetics is.

What is especially interesting here is the notion that aesthetics is a branch of philosophy. What does this mean for the outline in hand? This is not the place for trying to say what philosophy is, what all of it is, but my aim is much less ambitious. I present an example of aesthetics that is, I take it, undoubtedly philosophical, even if it exemplifies only one type of philosophy, and which deals with aesthetic considerations in human appearance. I will point out some important factors that are typical of it and that differentiate it from other sorts of aesthetics.

My example is David Novitz’s book *The Boundaries of Art*, especially chapter six, ‘Keeping Up Appearances’. I do not try to construe a complete analysis of it, nor do I try to say anything about philosophy in general through it. I do not intend a general theory of philosophy or a universal meta-philosophy, my inquiry serving simply the comparative description of different versions of aesthet-
ics which are not always and necessarily explicit in the way philosophical works typically are. I concentrate on factors that make this particular case 'explicit' and which tend to make other cases so. Philosophical works in aesthetics are typically explicit and I try to say what makes them so - but my stress is on 'explicitness', not on philosophy.¹

Novitz is a philosopher who has a considerable interest in aesthetic matters, shown by his several publications on these questions, notably art. Writing is what philosophers as philosophers do (among other things like teaching). It is by writing, or by using natural languages more generally, i.e., by verbalizing, that one standardly makes ones interest in aesthetic matters explicit. In some cases we cannot be sure whether someone is really paying attention to aesthetic matters at all if he does not tell us. Novitz does.

Novitz does want to see his work as different from what he calls 'traditional' works on aesthetics, meaning chiefly classics of the analytic tradition like those by Beardsley, Sibley and Urson. The main ideas which he wants to convey are that many 'traditionalists' have understood the nature and scope of art too narrowly by restricting their views to works of 'fine' arts only, that there are no clear boundaries between art and ordinary everyday life, and that the 'traditional' practice of doing aesthetics about elitist, high-culture art works (often concentrating primarily on their formal features) is largely responsible for the unhappy separation of art from life.²

Despite the fact that Novitz sees many dissimilarities between his work and that of earlier aestheticians, he undoubtedly locates himself in the same tradition as his predecessors in that all deal with aesthetic issues in ways typical of academic aesthetics. In Carroll's terminology, Novitz's work would probably be an example of an 'amplification' of the aesthetic tradition; it does not just repeat it, but it does not radically repudiate it either. Novitz, like others, refers directly to earlier writings and ideas (mostly by aestheticians of the Anglo-American analytic tradition), uses the basic vocabulary of academic aesthetics, builds up lengthy arguments and does not merely state his opinions,³ aims at generally acceptable arguments and questions fundamental issues that most non-philosophers would probably take as given. His style is far less technical than that of many other philosophers (he does not take advantage of the armour of formal logic, for example), but this is naturally not enough to make him a mere essayist. Novitz has even published his book through a publisher (Temple University Press) that has published works by other well-known aestheticians like Joseph Margolis and John Fisher.

These all are very pragmatic matters but far from insignificant in trying to see what makes Novitz's book a work of explicit aesthetics. It is exactly the combination of the subject matter (art, taken broadly), the manner of dealing with the theme (academic/philosophical, argumentative and questioning), the use of a certain vocabulary typical of this field (Novitz repeatedly writes explicitly about 'aesthetics' and 'philosophy'), and even the knowledge that Novitz is a writer who has often dealt with aesthetic issues before, which leaves little doubt that his book is aesthetics in its most can-

1. I do not say that all philosophy must be 'explicit' in my sense of the word, but it often is. I am not proposing 'openness' as a necessary condition of philosophy. As a matter of fact, a start in another direction, one that can be interpreted as stressing the importance of non-explicit features in philosophy is given by Richard Shusterman in his Practicing Philosophy (1997).


3. What kinds of argument he uses, taken formally, would be a matter for the philosophy of reasoning (or logic) to pinpoint.
didly articulated form. Novitz does not leave it uncertain that he studies aesthetic matters in human appearance. This is also shown clearly in vocabulary that is much like that used in everyday life, Novitz using terms like ‘demure’, ‘graceful’, ‘ugly’, ‘rugged’, ‘good-looking’ and ‘shabby’. He also compares ‘keeping up appearance’ to art, seeing this as a form of art. This means especially that he sees no crucial differences between the skills (tekme) by which works of art and appearances are created, and he states that “People often sculpt and craft their appearance with all the thought and care of an artist” and that “...their acquired skills resemble those of the artist since they require the same sort of imaginative endeavor, risk taking, and perseverance” (1992, 110-111).4

One of Novitz’s points is that there is no pure or independent aesthetic sphere, either in human appearance or elsewhere, and it is easy to agree with him in this respect. Aesthetic issues are intertwined with social, political, sexual, economic, religious and other matters as I showed in Part I of this study. Novitz writes: “My appearance always has social, even political, implications that go far beyond the personal” (ibid. 109). But this does not mean, as I also showed that aesthetic issues do not exist or that they could be reduced to something else. They exist precisely with the help of the cultural (historical) context or frame to which things must be attached in order to be aesthetic. Likewise, what makes Novitz’s own approach so explicitly aesthetic is the fact that he shows, quite outspokenly, his debt to this very tradition, even if he could also add that his aesthetics ‘always has social, even political, implications’. Novitz turns certain issues into aesthetic ones verbally via the academic aesthetic tradition, and he is well aware of this.

If anything is explicitly the aesthetics of human appearance,

Novitz’s book is. The basic case of explicit aesthetics is thus one that verbally declares itself to be such, and hence is explicitly self-aware of its own nature as being aesthetic. Perhaps we can be certain only about these cases, but it would be absurd to claim that nothing else could be aesthetics. If nothing other than self-aware academic formulations are allowed to be it there would be very little aesthetics about human appearance, but, I argue, this is not the case. It is simply that there is not much aesthetics of human appearance at the explicit level.

At any rate, I would not like to restrict even the area of explicit aesthetics quite so rigidly that only explicit verbal declarations in the form of “This is aesthetics!” and direct references to well-known names in the philosophical aesthetics would authorize one to enter the field. As I have said, it is a relative matter how explicit or tacit a manifestation of aesthetics is, and a manifestation can be fairly explicit, even if not quite as explicit as Novitz’s.

For example, although Susan Kaiser classifies her work as social psychology (not aesthetics, not even philosophy broadly speaking), she clearly deals with aesthetic matters as well. She too uses the terminology common to aesthetics, she studies aesthetic objects and presents them through extensive arguments and aims at generality, she frequently focuses on factors that are essential to human appearance regarded aesthetically (clothes, bodies, hair, embellishments and their beauty, their relations with art, and so on) - even though the same things are inevitably essential for other perspectives, such as politics and sexuality as well. The same can be said to be true, to a considerable extent, of Anne Hollander’s Seeing Through Clothes, James Laver’s Costume & Fashion, Alison Lurie’s The Language of Clothes or Arthur Marwick’s Beauty in History - none of which is perhaps aesthetics in the paradigmatic, ‘traditional’ sense of the word.

The crucial point in describing explicit aesthetics as explicit is its
tendency towards verbalization. But explicit aesthetics shares, to some extent, this inclination with semi-explicit manifestations, which are much more common than explicit ones. Semi-explicit aesthetics, in which I count fashion magazines and ‘guides to good behaviour’ also verbalize their ideas and assertions about aesthetic issues. But it is not verbalizing alone and as such that counts. What else counts becomes clearer when explicit models are compared to semi-explicit ones.

If one takes a random copy of a fashion magazine like Arena one can be sure it deals with aesthetic matters in human appearance. It provides its opinions on how men particularly should dress and behave, what fragrances they ought to wear, which designer’s shoes to pick, where and how to have a dinner or a cocktail, etc. in order to look good or to appear handsome.

This is not done in the typical academic way. In Arena and other similar magazines even standard aesthetic terms like ‘aesthetic’, ‘handsome’ or ‘beautiful’ are not necessarily used very frequently (but they are not completely missing either), nor is there any sign of the academic practice of referring systematically to certain theories and thinkers, and there are no well-defended or lengthy arguments for the ideas presented. It is also doubtful that these kind of magazines would aim at general acceptability in the same way as academic studies do. Why should they?

Rather, magazines typically provide examples and statements which the reader can evaluate, accept or dismiss for himself. They report, for example, how celebrities like Madonna or Keith Flint from Prodigy dress, what they like and dislike, and perhaps briefly comment on their habits and opinions. Doing this they associate these people with certain phenomena, through which we see them. They may state, citing Flint himself, that “Flint is a punkin’ instigator” (Chris Heath, Rolling Stone, August 21, 1997, 40) and show what this means by describing his look verbally (“It’s a face with a bolt through the nose...”, ibid., 39), by pictures and by quoting his own comments such as “If I could get a mike and just go, ‘Fuckin’ hell! Fuckin’ hell!’ I would do it.” Such descriptions do not prove anything, however. It is left to the reader to decide what to think about this and why, even if the magazine itself presents the person in question in an ameliorative tone. (The very fact that someone is interviewed in a very well-known magazine like Rolling Stone is enough to suggest that this person is someone important and interesting.) Magazines claim, state and give examples, not argument in any serious sense of the word. Moreover, dealing with aesthetic issues happens to a large extent pictorially, not verbally.

At any rate, fashion magazines, like guides to good behaviour, advertisements, the gossip columns of ordinary magazines and newspapers, do verbalize aesthetic matters, do discuss them, although not quite as clearly, self-consciously and profoundly as academic studies. It is important to realize that the discourse they represent has not specialized in aesthetic questions as the academic world does, although some magazines concentrate on them more fully than others. Terms like ‘cool’ are used in several vague senses, including nebulous aesthetic ones. For example, it would be hard to show that comments like “Paul McGregor is Britain’s coolest footballer, but will it be singing or soccer that takes him to Wembley?” (Amy Raphael, Arena, December 1996, 37) are not aesthetic statements. On the other hand, one would be equally hard put to show that they are only or primarily aesthetic - and it would not be much easier to tell what the sentence means exactly, aesthetically consid-

5. Here, again, it would be possible to analyze different rhetorical techniques magazines use in doing this, but it cannot be done within the scope of this study.

6. Note, however, that there are also magazines like L’Uomo Vogue that consist almost exclusively of pictures, and thus are very close to the tacit area.
ered. ‘Cool’ is undoubtedly a positive attribute, having something to do with McGregor’s look, behavior, attitude and so on, but that is about as exact as it gets.

Moreover, many magazines are not interested in aesthetic issues alone, but typically deal with such things as money, sport and technology at the same time (articles on cars are a good example) in which the aesthetic is diluted by other qualities, which is not the case in specialist discourse. Even ‘pure’ fashion magazines like Vogue deal with fashion at large, not merely with its aesthetic dimensions. One is overtly one step farther from the Kantian ideal of the disinterested and autonomous aesthetic sphere (or the Romantic l’art pour l’art reading of Kant’s ideas’), and the aesthetic is not quite as clearly isolated as in explicit cases, although ‘autonomy’ is also doubtful there.

Another difference between explicit and semi-explicit cases of aesthetics is that semi-explicit ones can be seen to produce verbalization or discourse, whereas explicit ones not only produce it but analyze it. To put it simply: semi-explicit aesthetics can certainly be aware and conscious of the aesthetic practices, values, patterns, styles, and historical backgrounds of the segment of culture it deals with, and it comments on these things by producing texts and visual images of and about them. It considers aesthetic matters and says things about them. (Fashion magazines also undoubtedly make the phenomena they comment on occur, or promote them, being a powerful factor in creating and disseminating styles.)

Explicit aesthetics, by contrast, is largely built on this basis and thus can be seen as a kind of meta-criticism. Thus, the objectives of semi-explicit and explicit aesthetics are different to the extent that


8. This means that this study is partly meta-meta-criticism, being built on (or after) the first-order meta-level.

although they both deal ‘directly’ with aesthetic aspects or qualities of appearance, explicit manifestations are not confined to that, analyzing the discourse itself and its relations with its objects, typically using more or less philosophical (or ‘scholarly’) methods. Novitz is a good example of this. Explicit versions of aesthetics are more overtly self-aware about themselves as aesthetics in explicating aesthetic knowledge. They are more aware of the philosophical tradition, and deal with aesthetic matters more profoundly and thoroughly - if only for practical reasons related to the time available and medium in which the ‘results’ are published. It is exactly at the explicit level that Carroll’s ‘identifying narratives’, deep and well-founded approaches to aesthetic dimensions, have their place.

In brief, as one moves from the explicit to the semi-explicit level, typical ways of dealing with aesthetic issues become less profound, specialized and exact.

Lastly, it is naturally not always easy to decide where to situate a particular example of aesthetics. Guides to good behavior, for example, tend to be closer to semi-explicit models. But what about Quentin Crisp’s Manners from Heaven (if it can be taken as a guide to behaviour in the first place), for example? It is definitely aware of the discourse around and before it, analyzing it wittily. But is it explicit aesthetics when it mixes aesthetic issues with so many others? Perhaps the book can be placed somewhere between the explicit extreme and the semi-explicit middle: as I said, pure forms hardly exist.

TACIT AESTHETICS

As one moves closer to tacit manifestations of aesthetics, towards silent acting, making and doing, the degree of verbalization diminishes. At the same time the question of why these instances should be taken as aesthetic ones at all gets trickier. I claim, however, that it is precisely at the tacit level where the aesthetics of human appear-
ance most often subsists. Furthermore, through analyzing it we can also come to understand more about the other levels.

Writing about aesthetic experience, Aarne Kinnunen (1990) has emphasized that one cannot know whether someone has had an aesthetic experience simply by observing behavior. If we see that someone clearly has a strong emotional experience when watching the movie *Silence of the Lambs* we cannot be sure that the experience is aesthetic, since the person concerned might simply be afraid or disgusted, or might feel that he suddenly understands something essential about the nature of man, and these things do not necessarily have anything to do with the aesthetic. Moreover, emotions themselves, how they feel, what they produce in our bodies, do not differ from each other so much, whether they are aesthetic, religious, or something else.° Hence, according to Kinnunen, what makes an experience aesthetic in the end is how the person himself classifies it through his worldview and ideology, and no one can be forced to take his own experiences as aesthetic if his worldview does not permit. In this sense, only if the person himself labels his experience as aesthetic can we be sure that he has had one - even if abundant use of aesthetic and emotional terms is enough to make it very probable.

This idea could be transferred to analyzing variations in aesthetics: one cannot be understood to use any kind of aesthetics if one does not manifest it by using aesthetic terms and by giving verbally formulated reasons why certain things are aesthetic in one's worldview. No action or behavior would be sufficient to show that the person in question was dealing with aesthetic matters.

9. Kinnunen's analysis does not absolutely deny the point of describing the characteristics of emotions, but he points out that this is no way of finding the difference between aesthetic and some other experiences.

This idea is useful if one is after very clear and explicit cases only, and if one wants to ascribe special status to the opinions of one person only. But, firstly, explicit cases are not all there is and concentrating solely on them ignores many, if not most, instances of dealing with aesthetic issues, especially in the context of human appearance. Secondly, even if someone does not consider his doings aesthetic, there might be good cultural reasons for others to take them as such, as we saw earlier. Indeed, if we could transport an alien from outer space and let it live in Manhattan, and it happened to develop a habit of spending lots of time choosing clothes to wear, standing in front of the mirror, comparing different outfits, and so on, but we could not communicate with it in words, would we have no way of knowing whether it really has any idea of aesthetics? In any case, it would be a good guess (with our cultural background) that it has and that it somehow deals with aesthetic matters in doing what it does. This would be our reasonable way of classifying its behavior even if it might have nothing to do with how the alien sees itself.10

The situation is not quite as strange if we keep to the ordinary world of earthlings. But the question still is what reasons we have for thinking that someone uses some kind of aesthetics at all if he does not drop verbal hints about it? What if someone just wears clothes, or just puts on make-up? How do we know that he is not simply wearing these clothes because he does not happen to have anything else to wear this morning, because they are practical in his

10. For aesthetic experiences this would mean that even if someone does not himself take his experience as aesthetic (does not classify it in that way in his worldview) it may be reasonable to depict it as such. If one listens to Bach and describes the experience as religious, there is no point in claiming that it is not such, but seen from the outside it is sound enough to think that the experience has at least a dash of the aesthetic in it. These two strands are not incompatible.
job, or because his mother or wife has told him to put them on?

We do not know. We cannot know in the sense that we could be absolutely sure. But there are often good reasons to suppose so. There is little doubt that a person who works as a model, a would-be Claudia Schiffer, has lots of interest in aesthetic matters and is very aware of them even though she might never have heard anything about aesthetics or ever said anything about it. The context around her, the fashion world, makes it evident enough; the context ‘says’ it although she does not. And if someone silently tries on three or four cravats before he ends up with one, we cannot of course be absolutely positive about his motives and reasons but it would be strange if they had nothing to do with aesthetics - with how good the cravats and the whole outfit look. Sometimes it happens that other people - the context, so to speak - recognize someone’s aesthetics before the person in question is aware of it, and the person may admit to having one when it is pointed out to him; this is what Quentin Crisp reports (1984, 24-25) happened to him. He realized that “I had indeed become my own creation” only after someone showed him how he had ‘made of himself a work of art’.

In practice it is often a problem to infer that some person or some of his doings relate closely to aesthetic issues and that the person in question does pay conscious attention to them even if he does not affirm it verbally. In many cases it is in fact rather obvious. In Carroll’s terms, some sorts of behavior quite evidently repeat, some amplify, and some repudiate earlier aesthetic practices. We know this because (and only if) we know what kind of behavior has been associated with the tradition before, and we can see how ‘new cases’ are related to these ‘older’ ones. In turn, we know what kinds of case have actually been aesthetic before only if someone has

made us aware of the tradition by examples or by other means that enable us to place certain things in the tradition and to identify the tradition as aesthetic in the first place. Someone must have told us at some point that such-and-such things are aesthetic and that they form a tradition. This tradition, involving certain practices and terminology, need not be called ‘aesthetic’ by everyone, of course. The name is not so important. The point is that there is a cultural cluster that links certain things (objects, terms, practices) together and it is often called ‘aesthetic’ on good grounds.

One only need think about how children learn to use aesthetic terms and do aesthetic things: by examples, repetitive uses of certain words, etc. Perhaps someone tells his child explicitly that people who care about their cravats greatly are dandies or aesthetes. Only after someone has taught a child that certain things are called by certain names, that they belong together with certain other things (form a tradition), and so on, is it possible for him to know that. But as soon as he does know it, the link with the tradition need not be explicated anew every time since he knows immediately that certain things simply are aesthetic. Thus when we talk about identification, the explicit (or at least semi-explicit) level logically precedes the tacit one, but the explicit level need not be activated in actual aesthetic situations. (One can, naturally, do aesthetically interesting things tacitly, even unawares, without identifying them as aesthetic at all.) In this sense one does not need ‘identifying narratives’ in identifying tacit manifestations of aesthetics very often, any more than one does in identifying aesthetic dimensions of objects. This, of course, can easily be compared to how artists deal with aesthetic matters. They do not have to explicate their interest in aesthetic issues verbally either. The aesthetics of artists is in their works, which are rooted in their own context, in the art world and its tradition.

A more interesting question is how tacit ‘aestheticians’ deal with
aesthetic matters. Explicit and semi-explicit aesthetics are writing and talking about aesthetic issues, analyzing them, studying them, and so on, but what do tacit aesthetics do? Furthermore, why are tacit forms used? Beardsley was of the opinion that problems of aesthetics begin after someone has talked about works of art. But what if people act, not talk?

If explicit and semi-explicit versions are manifested through producing and analyzing verbal discourse (and visual material) on aesthetic matters, the difference between these two and tacit ones is that tacit ones, rather than produce or analyze discourse, only provide material for it. Something is done with obvious attention to aesthetic matters - I carefully choose this turtle-neck, not that, wear it with this particular suit and dark tan shoes. I may be attached to dull colors or to certain kinds of material, and I may dress in a style that has a particular historical or social background (even if I was not aware of it myself). I may combine my suit with a facial piercing ring to show that I do not want to obey the rules of standard conservative clothing. I then show what I want to convey, state it by my actions and wearing this outfit and not something else. Someone else may reconstruct (some of) my aesthetic principles and say something about them on the basis of what I do.

This line of thought suggests that there are aesthetic aspects that need not remain tacit even if they are in some cases. These can be articulated verbally. In this sense, they can be dealt with either explicitly, semi-explicitly, or tacitly, and it is only a matter of choosing the manner of approach.

But, firstly, they do not need to be dealt with explicitly. In the context of human appearance it is not normally necessary to explicate aesthetic issues in words, or contextualize them explicitly in the aesthetic tradition. Not is it necessary to declare that "I am doing aesthetics now, and am concentrating on aesthetic questions!" If one's hobby is body building, it is enough to take a look in the mirror if one wants to find out whether one still has too much fat, or whether one's biceps are well developed. One can say many things in that kind of situation and explain one's behaviour and explicate its relevance to aesthetic questions, but nothing like that is needed.

This is very close to what Wittgenstein says of 'aesthetic reactions' which are immediate, direct and 'uncalculated' primitive responses to the aesthetic objects towards which they are directed. 12 Wittgenstein does not mean that they could not be learned or convention-bound (that they should be 'natural'), but his idea indicates that they are logically primitive and thus, in Simo Säätelä's words, "there is no need of further discussion, and no reason need be given other than noting that this is how we act" (1994, 132). Some primitive reactions, like responses to sudden loud sounds or colors, may be natural, rooted in human nature or biology, but this does not mean that all reactions need be so. Thus Säätelä (ibid., 133-134), reiterates Lars Herberg's distinction between the 'logical' and the 'anthropological' senses of the primitive reactions in Wittgenstein, of which only the latter refer to 'natural' ones, which are not the ones Wittgenstein himself was primarily interested in.

Pursuing Wittgenstein's terminology a bit further, being discontent with something aesthetically and expressing this through behaving in a certain way - by grinning in front of a mirror, for example - is perfectly understandable and sound within a certain language game (in a certain context). Grinning grotesquely after a quick look in the mirror needs no further explanation if one knows the language game of the body-building world. Something about the body is wrong. One can explain what, but it is already apparent and understood by the reaction - not enough muscle and body mass, too much fat, for example. Moreover, one does not have to

12. Note that according to Wittgenstein aesthetic objects do not have a causal relation to reactions (1966, 14).
analyze, reflect, reason, form and test hypotheses, in brief, interpret, in reacting to something or in understanding someone else's reaction. Reactions are immediate in this sense.

Although tacit aesthetics is often close to 'aesthetic reactions', the tacit-explicit continuum is not however simply 'reactive-interpretative'. While tacit approaches can be reactive in both Wittgenstein's 'logical' and 'anthropological' senses of the word in that they do not need further explanation, they do not need to be so in these or in other, more commonplace senses. 'Reaction', if we want to keep the term informative, means something that is automatic, immediate and even uncontrollable, something that happens without effort, as when I automatically take my hand away from a hot plate. One can choose whether to use (tacit) aesthetics or not, but it is hard to control reactions or stop them. Thus, tacit aesthetic approaches, as against reactions, can be demanding, take time, require many tries, and consciously strive toward problem-solving. Just think about the situation of buying a suit; one does not necessarily find it in the first boutique, and one can be almost sure of having to try several on before anything suitable is found. In fact, Wittgenstein's own example of aesthetic reactions where one is designing a door (1966, 13) does not sound very reactive but more like a fairly tacit aesthetic activity in another sense. One might be tempted to call this kind of activity 'interpretation', but I do not think that should be done. It is clearer to reserve this term for verbal approaches to genuine problem-solving situations where there is explicit reasoning that involves formulating and testing hypotheses and analyzing the problem at hand. But it is clear that tacit approaches can be more than simple and automatic reactions. 14

Aesthetic reactions in Wittgenstein's sense are easy to understand within a certain language game. But tacit aesthetic actions may be very innovative or such that they are not comprehensible in an easy and immediate way; the solution to the 'problem' faced is not necessarily obvious. It may be that a language game that would make a strange action readily comprehensible could develop around practically anything - even a language game that would enable direct reactions to this action. But what happens while the language game is still being developed? Or when an agent and someone who observes his action do not share the same language game? It may even be that the agent himself is still uncertain what he is doing, and that even he is still making experiments or testing various possibilities. There may thus very well be a 'need for further discussion' in the context of tacit aesthetic action, and it can be so both from the point of view of the 'tacit agent' and the one who observes his tacit action. The context (language game) may suffice to reveal that in this particular case aesthetic dimensions are important but it does not automatically suggest how to approach them or what to think about them. Surrealist experiments with clothing - like making hats looking like chairs, shoes, corsets, vases, pastries, cabbages or colanders - which Richard Martin describes so well (1987), may be a case in point.

Thus there are tacit manifestations of aesthetics that a) can be opened up or explained through an explicit aesthetics if needed, but there is often no need, and b) tacit manifestations that are not ex-


14. Whether explicit aesthetics can be simply reactive is another question. I think that this can be answered very briefly - in its paradigmatic, academic forms it cannot. Even long and profound studies can include reactive parts, but they cannot be reactive through and through, because they call for sustained concentration and try to find various points of view on the question with which they deal.
plained even if an explanation were 'needed' by someone. In these latter cases an explication is sometimes possible, but sometimes, or as regards certain issues, it is not.

Thus, secondly, there are instances of aesthetics that cannot be articulated explicitly and thus must remain to a large extent tacit. 'Cannot' may here refer simply to someone who has not learned to explicate his or her views on aesthetic matters, even if he knows how to deal with them in action. One may be able to dress up elegantly or be able to point out other elegantly-dressed people without being able to say very much about how it happens. This implies, however, that one probably could learn to verbalize and analyze one's aesthetics (or considerable parts of it), and it would not have to remain tacit.

But 'cannot' can be used in a more restricted way. Here we come to the sphere frequently called the 'ineffable'. The term indicates that there is something that is aesthetically essential in human appearance that is not possible to put into words. This problem has many aspects and the most important can be listed, modifying Diana Raffman's notions (1988, 686), as follows: the problem is whether or not a) language can even refer to the ineffable; b) the ineffable can be exhaustively described; c) there could be terms for it; d) there are terms for it; or that e) the terms available can be applied.

In the trivial sense it is of course true that one can refer to the ineffable - I am doing so right now. But how much one can say of it is a different matter. David E.Cooper (1996, 223) brings up the fairly generally accepted fact that "...artistic performances (in music, dance, or whatever) possess features which are perceptually discriminable, but which could only be linguistically differentiated in a language too complex and cumbersome to be manageable by speakers." This means that since one can perceptually distinguish or compare things that are not identifiable in any natural language,

there are things that cannot be exhaustively described and for which there cannot be precise terms. Diana Raffman continues (1996, 320):

For example, although the average listener can discriminate roughly 1400 steps of pitch difference across the audible range, he can (learn to) recognize or identify pitches (by ear) only as instances of the roughly eighty-seven chromatic categories instantiated on the piano keyboard. Similarly, although the average viewer can discriminate roughly ten million different shades of colour, the number of identifications he can make (by eye, as it were) is far smaller. The point is that our mental schemas for pitch and colour (among other things) are evidently much less fine-grained than the pitch and colour differences we can perceive.¹⁵

This means that one can know many things perceptually even if one cannot say exactly what one knows, for the latter is (psychologically) impossible. One can see or hear (perceive) more exact things than one can categorize in words, and thus perceiving these things directly is the right (and only condign) way of dealing with them. In fact, this shows that not only is it impossible to verbalize these kinds of thing, but it is also impossible to conceptualize them as minutely as we can perceive them. Concepts need not be verbal and have names, but even if we talk about non-verbal visual concepts (of certain forms we can identify, for example), the situation does not change. Concepts are something that work, in Raffman's words, as 'mental schemas' with the help of which we identify, categorize and remember things, and it seems that they cannot exist on the nuanced level at which perception is perfectly able to work.

¹⁵. As regards pitch discrimination Raffman refers to her own studies (1988 and 1993), while the expert she uses on problems of colours is C.L.Hardin (1988).
Concepts are always crude instruments compared to senses.

This does not mean that we would or could do entirely without concepts, for one does use them when, say, comparing colors to each other. The point is that perceptual abilities transcend the concepts, so to speak.16 This becomes clearer if we think about what we can remember - I can see now that there are ten perceptually slightly different hues of light grey in front of me, but I can be sure that if I had to pick one of them and identify it from the group of twenty examples of light-grey after a minute, I could not do it (except by chance). Of course, when making the comparison I can call the one I pick out 'light-grey' (use a mental-schema-related term) and even invent an exact name for this particular hue (say, 'light-grey number 5'), but it is only the first mentioned name that can really be used and only such 'units' can have their own mental schemas. 'Light-grey number 5' cannot have its own concept, but such a hue is conceptually necessarily situated within the somewhat larger group of light-greys, even if I perceptually see the difference between this hue and other hues belonging to the same 'conceptual group'. Because of this I could not identify 'light-grey number 5' again with the help of my memory. An exact language could be created but it would be, as Cooper says, too complex and cumbersome to be manageable.

There is no reason to think that this kind of perceptual approach

is not used in the context of human appearance as well. As it is, there are at least some aspects of appearances that necessarily remain tacit in the sense that they cannot be explicated with the same exactitude as they can be perceived. Moreover, this explains why one needs direct contact with an appearance if one wants to have a particular kind of aesthetic knowledge of it (or of anything). A nuanced level of information cannot be achieved through any other medium but via one's own senses and it cannot be translated into any concept-level language without simplifying the message considerably. No one can tell me exactly how someone or something looks, although I can be told that someone is beautiful, dark, slim, has long hair, and so on. Neither can I tell anyone exactly how I look either; I have to show it.17

I said earlier that if we talk about appearances in the first place, it means we talk about something that can be approached only by direct contact with the person in question, since appearance 'happens' through interaction and in no other way. But as this happens - or after it has happened - there are some things that can be explained about the appearance, with the help of concepts, while some other things, nuances, necessarily remain tacit. For example, this is exactly why one cannot know how a jacket or a tie will look on before one has tried it, before one has had direct acquaintance with it, and why it is so hard, even then, to describe exactly how it looks, or to remember afterwards how it looked. Just think of the situation when you had to describe a new jacket to your friend on the phone, even if you wore the jacket. Furthermore, it is often precisely this nuanced-level of information that counts in aesthetic evaluations. Situations when one can only say something like 'this

16. It is also worth remembering, that as concepts do not cover the realm of senses, another aspect of the unbalanced relation between conceptual knowledge and perception is that there seem to be perceptual 'practices' that cannot be affected by concepts. This phenomenon becomes clear through many visual illusions, including so-called 3D-pictures. One may conceptually know that one sees something that is not 'true', as in the case of the Müller-Lyer illusion, yet one cannot help seeing in such a way. In the 3D-pictures, it does not help at all to know conceptually that one should see such and such a figure in the picture if one does not perceive it.

17. This is partly what Kaiser means by unarticulated levels of appearances, and the same idea could make Sibley's notions of why (some) aesthetic concepts are not 'condition governed' more understandable.
should be only a little bit different, perhaps slightly darker, and it would look much better’ are not rare. If one then sees the right color, one knows immediately that this is it even if one cannot describe it very specifically. There is no other method than to look - and to show.

But simply looking at something is not using or having aesthetics, and not all perceptual knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance is always aesthetic. It is evident that using the senses generally cannot be aesthetic if we want to reserve some distinct meaning for the term, even if its etymology might lead one in that direction. It is of course possible to describe aesthetics as a general science of senses, sensitivity and/or perception. In Critique of Pure Reason Kant did indeed understand aesthetics as a general ‘science of the rules of sensibility’ (“Wissenschaft der Regeln der Sinnlichkeit überhaupt”; 1952, 62; 1993, 121). However, this is surely not the standard - or very informative - concept in the late 20th century even if some thinkers, particularly German, like Wolfgang Welsch sometimes use the term pretty much in this sense. In some of his texts Welsch wants to understand aesthetics as aisthetik, as ‘thematizing of all kinds of perceiving’ (“als Thematisierung von Wahrnehmungen aller Art, sinnenhaften ebenso wie geistigen, alltäglichen wie sublimen, lebensweltlichen wie künstlerischen”; 1991a, 9-10) and hence his idea does not tally with the more restricted concept of the aesthetic I propose here.18

In short, I suggest that, before there is any point in talking about aesthetics, looking (touching, listening, etc.) must be relevant to the aesthetic tradition in a way that is credible in the contemporary discussion. One should be aware of aesthetic aspects of the thing perceived (in the 20th century its formal beauty, its harmony, its ugli-

ness, for example) and pay conscious attention to them. They must be foregrounded. This is possible also at the ‘indefinite’ or tacit level - independently of whether or not ineffability is due to psychological restrictions or to the fact that one has not learned to use language in this particular way. If one just wears a pair of jeans because he has got used to doing so and because they are not too expensive, and sees that ‘yes, now I wear jeans’ without paying any attention to whether they are ‘cool’, ‘hip’, ‘shabby’, or something like that, it is not reasonable to say that he uses an aesthetics. It must be remembered here that not even Baumgarten was interested in ‘scientia cognitionis sensitivae’ in the most general sense. According to him, the goal of aesthetics is beauty, or it has to serve the attempt to achieve it (1973, section 14).

Of course, the broader conception espoused by Welsch and others is connected to the aesthetic tradition as well, via Kant back to Aristotle, but, as I suggested earlier, the whole tradition is not necessarily always accurate later. At this point of history, after decades of associating aesthetics with art, beauty and other related phenomena, accentuating the very general ‘aesthetic’ side of the aesthetic is an exception, even if it was more usual earlier. That side should not be omitted, of course, but it is doubtful whether it should be taken as the core of the aesthetic either. In fact, Welsch also makes a difference between ‘aesthetic’ (aisthetisch) and ‘aesthetic’ (aisthetische) in his later writings where he illuminatingly discusses the ‘semantic polyvalence’ of the term. He states that ‘aesthetic’ can be used as meaning the same thing as ‘sensuous’ (sinnenhaft), but that we do not actually call everything that has to do with the sensuous ‘aesthetic’. Rather, we use the word in a more restricted sense referring to ‘cultivated’ levels of sensuousness, in contrast to ‘raw’ sensuousness; in his own words: “‘Ästhetisch’ kann geradezu gleichbedeutend mit ‘sinnenhaft’ gebraucht werden. Gleichwohl nennen wir, genau genommen, nicht jegliches Sinnliche ‘ästhetisch’. Wir

18. See also other German texts, for example the collections of articles Aisthesis. Wahrnehmung heute oder Perspektiven einer anderen Ästhetik or Ethik der Ästhetik.

One must remember that although aesthetic concepts cannot work with the same delicacy as perception, only by conceptualizing what we see (or do) in a certain way can perception be made aesthetic. We do conceptualize things when we see them as part of the aesthetic tradition, we use certain terms and ways of thinking through which we identify things as aesthetic (beautiful, ugly, rowdy), even if not always explicitly or even consciously. The point is, however, that despite how carefully we conceptualize an appearance from the aesthetic point of view, there is always something concepts cannot reveal. Aesthetic concepts are necessarily used to refer to even the most fine-grained things if we want to enter the aesthetic sphere at all, but they refer to aesthetic dimensions fairly crudely in the end. It is the only route through which we can enter the field, but concepts do not tell all we know. Something will always be left at the tacit level.

In any case, tacit aesthetics can be situated either in action or in perception; one can both act tacitly and pay attention to the aesthetic dimension of an appearance in that way, and just perceive someone else's or his own aesthetic aspects. The first alternative can sometimes be problematic as regards its identification as aesthetic, but often it is not. But when it comes to merely silently perceiving, no-one else but the perceiver himself can know whether or not he is experiencing an aesthetic relation to an appearance. (One must notice, too, that while for the perceiver himself his own aesthetics may be very profound, verbal, specialized and exact, and thus explicit in that sense, it is still socially tacit.)

However, acting and perceiving are typically not clearly distinctive spheres but rather two sides of the same thing. It must be remembered here that although tacit aesthetics can be seen to be manifested as a series of acts and in this sense be something 'physi-
cal', it does not mean that it should be only that. Indeed, once again, dealing with aesthetic matters tacitly can involve active thinking, conceptualizing, and so on; but it is not, however, articulated verbally to others and declared to be aesthetics.

In both instances, action and perception, the aesthetic tenor of the situation must be more or less foregrounded and conscious (and thus conceptualized) to someone, even if it is not articulated verbally and can remain hidden to someone else. If I look at something, I may know myself that I do so paying attention to aesthetic factors but if I neither say nor do nor make anything, no-one else can have any idea about it. But as soon as I start to act in a certain context the situation may change. If I go to a night-club wearing carefully chosen clothes, my action and the context together make my aesthetic point of view discernible to others as well. Something like this is often all there is when we talk of human appearance: we only see people passing by in the street or at the airport, we see them wear clothes, exercise, eat, move, sit, make up, and it is from this kind of information that we understand something of their aesthetics. Sometimes we can ask for more or other kinds of information but we do not usually need it, and even if we did we could not assume that people could supply it. They act tacitly, and we perceive the action accordingly. We cannot know whether the people we see always look as they would want to look, or whether they manage to show what they think, but often we have no way of finding it out and we have to count on what we see. There is no discourse that would reveal anything hidden, no talk, no declarations of aesthetic ideas. This is also why meta-criticism in Beardsley's sense of the word hardly exists in regard to many aesthetically interesting phenomena: there is no verbal 'criticism' on which to build a meta-level.
TACIT AESTHETICS, TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND TASTE

Tacit aesthetics is, terminologically, directly related to Michel Polanyi’s ‘tacit knowledge’, but it is not quite the same thing.

In Polanyi’s thinking, the term ‘tacit’ refers roughly to two aspects of knowing. 19

Firstly, there is the process (or capacity) through which we get to know things. It is dependent on subsidiary clues that make it possible to deal with issues of which we are focally aware and on which we concentrate, even if often only as problems. There are always subsidiary (subliminal and/or marginal20) clues through which one attends to something and on which one unconsciously counts. (Thus, subsidiary clues are close to Wittgenstein’s idea about the firm and unquestionable - and unjustifiable - basis of a language game.) When writing about perceptions21 Polanyi states that the “...appearance of a thing at the centre of my attention depends on clues to which I am not directly attending” (1969, 139).

An interaction between focal and subsidiary aspects of awareness creates a coherent whole from parts of the thing observed in the act of apprehension. Polanyi writes “This act of integration ... is the tacit power ... I shall call it tacit knowing” (ibid., 140). This, he claims, is nothing esoteric since it happens, for example, every time we read something: We rely on letters, words and grammatical rules of which we are not focally aware when we make sense of a text and its meaning, of which we are focally aware.

In Polanyi’s terms tacit knowing is directed from the subsidiary (proximal) to the focal (distal). Moreover, the ‘route’ from the first to the second is not regulated by rules that could be explicited. Often we simply do not know very specifically how we have achieved a certain result (got to ‘know’ a certain theory when we invent it, for example), and we cannot know beforehand where and how we will end up. In this sense, there is always “an indeterminate range of anticipations in any knowledge bearing on reality” (ibid., 141). This kind of knowing probably works in the aesthetic sphere as well but there is nothing specifically aesthetic in it as such.22

But secondly, Polanyi’s tacit knowledge is simply knowledge that can be opposed to explicit knowledge, and as such it can be actual, too, not just ‘prospectual’. There is something I know but cannot state explicitly or put into words; Polanyi himself takes skills as examples of this. I cannot explain how I ride a bike or what exactly happens when I do, nor do I need to (ibid. 141-142). An ability to explain, on the other hand, does not entail a skill either, in the

19. Polanyi (1969, 141-145 and passim) points out that there are, in fact, four aspects of tacit knowledge: functional, phenomenal, ontological, and semiotic, but I cannot go into all of these here. The two aspects I discuss are not identifiable with any of these as such.

20. The first cannot be observed directly with the ordinary senses at all (many functions of my own body), the latter are not observed directly in some situation even if they could be (things which remain in the margins of my visual field).

21. It must be kept in mind that for Polanyi there is only a difference of “range and degree” between normal perceptions and innovative scientific discoveries, and that “The logic of perceptual integration may serve therefore as a model for the logic of discovery” (1969, 139).

22. It can be added here that Polanyi underscores the importance of our own sensing and perceiving body as a ‘subsidiary root’ of all knowledge (and thus nears Maurice Merleau-Ponty). He states that “Our body is the only assembly of things known almost exclusively by relying on our awareness of them for attending to something else” (ibid.147). Wolfgang Welsch, as shown above, tends to connect this kind of sense-based ‘informal logic’ of getting to know things with the concept of the aesthetic, calling it ‘aesthetic thinking’. In Welsch’s terms Polanyi’s theories would thus be aesthetics as such.
sense that someone who can explain propositionally how riding a bike happens cannot necessarily ride one himself. It is this skill aspect of Polanyi’s thinking that is more relevant here, because aesthetic knowledge in particular is often seen to take this form, even though such knowledge can be seen to have aspects of the other strand of Polanyi’s tacit knowledge, too (one does not always know how one ends up with a certain aesthetic solution, for example).

What must be emphasized right away is that when I tacitly and skillfully deal with aesthetic matters it need not happen unawares or at some subsidiary (or even subliminal) level - although I can be unaware of it in some cases - but what I do can be quite active and the aesthetic factors may be apparent. Talking about skills does not necessarily refer to unconscious or subsidiary action but to action that is not explicable in a propositional form. In fact, before it is reasonable to say that one uses any kind of aesthetics, aesthetic aspects should be focused on.

In any case, it is noteworthy that even without explicated principles one can act skillfully and consistently. In many of its theories, both classical and modern (especially on the ‘Humean side’ of the discussion), taste is understood as a certain kind of aesthetic skill or ability. As taste is a skill, judgements of taste cannot be based on merely accidental likes and dislikes, for example, but one has to be able to make the right choices regularly without (too many) errors, i.e., systematically. Moreover, if one is skillful at something and knows how to do it (e.g., dress elegantly), one does not have to be able to explain this propositionally, and propositional knowledge is not enough to make one skillful - skills remain to a large extent tacit. A related kind of classical difference between ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing that’ is discussed by Gilbert Ryle (1971), and the distinction is virtually the same as Polanyi’s distinction tacit between explicit knowledge (1969, 144).

But tacit aesthetics must be identified neither with taste, nor with skills in general.

Firstly, it is generally accepted that taste is tied up with direct liking and preference (and that evaluating with taste thus calls for direct acquaintance with the object in question). Moreover, it is a widely-held conception that there are good and bad tastes and that they can be best separated from each other (although not unproblematically) by referring to an undefined group of connoisseurs in the category whose products one is evaluating. Theodor A. Gracyk (1990, 126) summarizes these fairly Humean points when defining the grounds on which we can say that someone has bad taste:

... some person, X, has bad taste only if all four of the following hold: (i) there are connoisseurs for the specific tradition in question; (ii) X systematically prefers works other than those admired by the connoisseurs, even when directed to those features which connoisseurs find most rewarding; (iii) the works preferred by X are preferred on the basis of personal experience of them; and (iv) X has appropriate education about the tradition to understand what connoisseurs look for and value in works of that tradition.

24. Peter Lloyd Jones (1991, 35), e.g., writes that “...the sense of Taste is manifestly intuitive. People clearly do not go around with formally structured taxonomies in their heads.”

25. Knowing that and knowing how are not different in all respects though, since both must be learned and both can be forgotten, for example.
In other words, someone has bad taste only if relevant education does not lead them to a consensus of judgment with connoisseurs of that tradition.  

As a universal definition Gracyk's proposal has problems. Do even 'connoisseurs' of any tradition agree about most rewarding features of its works? In fact, it is hard to define whether or not they do, because it is hard to define a 'tradition' (and its connoisseurs) in Gracyk's sense. How big should it be? How small? One connoisseur cannot surely form his own tradition. As a matter of fact, one could, in principle, always postulate an ad hoc 'tradition' when others find a 'connoisseur' has bad taste in some tradition. For example, if I have bad (or good) taste when it comes to classical music, does it mean that I have bad (or good) taste as regards operettas, arias from Viennese operettas, arias from Viennese operettas seen as camp, and so on, ad infinitum. (We could go through the chain from the opposite direction as well.)

Despite these more or less empirical, and perhaps even resolvable problems, the definition incorporates the essential notion that one cannot use any kind of taste - good or bad - if one does not know the category in question in a relevant way:27 I can like or dislike Japanese tea-cups but I cannot prefer one to another relevantly in that category or tradition, for I do not know it. Taste presupposes systematic knowledge about a relevant category, simple liking does not.

26. Gracyk's ideas are echoed in the contemporary discussion by Peter Lloyd Jones (1991, 24), for example: "Taste is concerned with wider patterns of likes and dislikes. It is concerned with the integration of individual critical judgements into enduring patterns of behaviour which shape individual lifestyles and cultures."

27. Having bad taste and having no taste are sometimes seen to mean the same thing (Margolis 1965, 121), but this conception is not very illuminating.

With tacit aesthetics the situation may very well be different. There is no reason to exclude cases of simple liking without an ability or will to compare things in a category from the area of tacit aesthetics. (Preferring naturally presupposes comparing.) I may like the color of a shirt and classify it aesthetically as 'nice' and wear it without thinking that this particular shirt should be compared to other shirts in some relevant category which can be defined, say, through its designer, era, material, or cut. Of course, I would deal with the shirt as a member of the category of 'aesthetically considered things' but that is, after all, hardly a category in any meaningful sense of the word. In fact, I would be willing to see cases of simple liking as one of the basic modes of aesthetic approach in human appearance. People clearly very often wear clothes they happen to like without pondering it further, but this does not mean that they would not see their clothes as cool, beautiful, or elegant, or that they would not identify them as aesthetic at a simple level.

Furthermore, talk about taste involves the idea that the 'knowledge' (skill) in use should be correct or relevant and suit the category in question, but this does not always happen. I can approach anything whatsoever using almost any kind of aesthetic knowledge even if I know that in principle the version I 'use' cannot be 'correct'. For example, I may have a well-organized, tacit skill of dressing elegantly and I can also see who else is elegant when it comes to, say, business suits. There is no obstacle to my using this skill in some entirely different context, as with regard to more obviously casual clothes, even if I realize that the other context probably has other standards for elegant get-up and that I do not know them. Thus, I cannot use taste there, and I do not necessarily like or dislike something I see there either, but I can still use my aesthetic skill in assessing things.

A tacit aesthetic approach, even a skillful one, unlike taste, is universal. I can always and anywhere evaluate anything paying atten-
tion to those aesthetic dimensions I have learned to take notice of, and this does not have to be (although it can be) pertinent to liking at all. As a matter of fact, an incorrect kind of aesthetic approach may often be the only way one can think of of dealing with things encountered, and such cases have probably become more frequent during recent decades as the volume of information around us has expanded. There are more and more signs and messages all over, and there is no way of understanding very much of them in any categorically relevant manner. Despite this, anything can be assessed focusing on how interesting it is aesthetically by one’s own standards.28 (It must be noted that one can naturally use an explicit aesthetics wherever as well.)

Secondly, tacit aesthetics is not the same thing as taste, but its use is not always skillful in any other way either. Skill, as previously mentioned, presupposes an ability to do something in the right way regularly. But at the tacit level (as well as the explicit), one can naturally make frequent errors and thus act unskillfully and even accidentally. Thus, one can always use some kind of tacit aesthetics - pay consciously attention to aesthetic matters - even though without consistency and skill.

*  

28. It is often reasonable to understand the word ‘aestheticization’ to refer to this phenomenon. Aestheticization should thus not be equated with the ‘semioticization’ or ‘imagization’ of the world, since aesthetic approaches often have to dismiss and transcend the ‘correct’ semiotic (sign and convention bound) meanings. On this, more in Naukkalainen (1995.)

While sitting at the café I have drawn this continuum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit aesthetics</th>
<th>Semi-explicit aesthetics</th>
<th>Explicit aesthetics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now, where should I place the different kinds of aesthetics that may pertain to the people here at the café?

If David Novitz visited this place and wrote an article about the aesthetic features of people here, his work would undoubtedly belong to the explicit end of the continuum. If a journalist came here and wrote a story, perhaps with some pictures, we would move closer to the semi-explicit level. Perhaps even that could be counted as semi-level aesthetics if I started to discuss with the woman at the next table what I see here now.

The majority of aesthetic considerations however happen at the tacit level. There is no reason to think that many, let alone most, of those who come to this café would not pay attention to aesthetic matters and thus use some sort of aesthetics. But in most cases it is not verbalized.

This tacit level can be split into sub-levels.

Firstly, what these people wear, how they walk, how they behave, I have a reason to believe, shows what they think, like and even prefer aesthetically. They do not say it (to me, now) but I may suppose that is the case because they clearly care how they look, which is itself often a sign of concentrating particularly on aesthetic matters. This is the tacit aesthetics of the agent. In addition, there can be tacit aesthetics of the perceiver. This is what I experience now when I look at other people and pay attention to their aesthetic features but do not say anything about it.

Secondly, some of these people seem to be more conscious of
their own (and other’s) aesthetics and the aesthetic dimensions of appearances than some others, being more aware of that they use an aesthetic point of view. Their interest in aesthetic matters is also more evident to others. For some, their own aesthetics is foregrounded and active for themselves (the waitress and the gentleman with the bow-tie); for some others, it may be dominated by other matters and it is thus more evident for other people (the nerd who just walked in). In other words, in some cases (the nerd) aesthetics takes place only through the perceiver, even if it is attached to or projected onto an agent. 29 (In some cases, of course, taking an aesthetic point of view is more rewarding than in some others.)

Thirdly, some aesthetic features or issues may be comprehended fairly easily (by the agent and the perceiver) ‘reactively’, whereas others may call for active pondering. I know immediately that the color the tattooed guy wears suits him well, and he might have also seen that immediately. On the other hand, he may have looked for the perfect style for a long time. But I would like to know what, if anything, his tattoos signify. I do not know that language game well enough to have an idea. In any case, I think tattooing is a language game or context that accentuates the importance of aesthetic issues (tattooing is a way of decorating oneself, after all), even if not them only.

Fourthly, some of that what is not explicated could be explicated (in words) but there seems not to be a need for this most of the time. The waitress and the tattooed guy could say what they think about their outfit but I do not expect it. Some other issues cannot be explicated at all: the waitress could talk about her look for hours but the lecture could not cover everything we see in detail; I would always see more.

29. Note that even if an aesthetics is ‘projected’ on someone, his aesthetic features perhaps are not. I do not take a stand on this question, however.

And lastly, some things these people do are done with skill, even tastefully, whereas some others probably are done from simple liking or through inappropriate aesthetic knowledge. The tattooed guy might have good taste (in Gracyk’s sense of the word) in tattoos, but the woman who stares at his arms may use some totally irrelevant - but still aesthetic - standards in assessing what she sees. Or perhaps she simply does not like tattoos.

If we combine this list of divisions with Figure 1 presented at the end of Part I (p.72) we see that lines 1 and 3 of the figure, which represent people’s relations to the aesthetic tradition or sphere, can be drawn at three levels, i.e., explicit, semi-explicit and tacit. All these levels, especially the tacit one, incorporate variations.

It must also be remembered that when we talk about these levels, we cannot assume that there would be ‘pure’ cases of them in aesthetic practice. Levels are conceptual abstractions. Any actual case of using aesthetics is only more or less explicit, semi-explicit or tacit. This means, above all, that although we might characterize a case as explicit or semi-explicit, it necessarily incorporates features of tacitness. No aesthetics is completely explicit, everything can never be told. This is an additional reason why it is so important to understand the tacit level; it is not only because many, if not most, cases in the aesthetics of human appearance are primarily tacit as such, but because primarily non-tacit cases also have tacit aspects.

Answering the question of what aesthetics is in the context of human appearance leads then in several directions. There is no aesthetics of human appearance in the singular, but many of them - albeit the tacit version is the most typical. This is the case when we approach the question through one perspective, or with the help of one operational continuum. When we add other continuums - and that must be done - the plurality becomes even more evident.

Before going further, however, it must be noted that it is naturally nothing new to point out that aesthetic issues are approached
in many ways or at different levels. I now outline one fairly old example that resembles my approach to some extent without being identical with it.\textsuperscript{30}

In 1930s, Władysław Tatarkiewicz developed a three-strand model that describes different kinds aesthetic attitudes and experiences. It could probably be applied, mutatis mutandis, to the aesthetics of human appearance as well. First, there is the attitude that is interested in simple elements of objects that are sensually ‘directly given’ (its ‘look’ and formal qualities, for example), and at this level it is not even important whether the object of contemplation exists in reality. Moreover, this attitude, which Tatarkiewicz calls ‘aesthetic’, is not intellectually or emotionally very involving, allowing distance from the object assessed. Two other attitudes (and forms or experience) are called ‘literary’ and ‘poetic’. These differ from the aesthetic one precisely in that that they are emotionally (poetic) and intellectually (literary) more involving or absorbing, pertain to the ‘real’ existence of the object, and they do not keep to the sensual (‘formal’) level but strive at associations and thoughts, emotions and reflections, that is, at ‘deep’ experiences. The difference between the literary and poetic, to put it simply, lies in literary attitudes and experiences being typically associated with other kinds of works of art than poetic ones.

Bohdan Dziemidok, who introduces Tatarkiewicz’s model in English,\textsuperscript{31} calls it pluralistic, and compared to some others it certainly

\textsuperscript{30} There are many other ways of dividing the aesthetic sphere, of course, like that offered by Allen Carlson (1976). He focuses on nature’s ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ variations of being aesthetically pleasing. The first term refers to a situation when nature pleases in virtue of its physical and formal surface properties, whereas the latter applies to situations when it is assessed in terms of the deeper, commonly held ‘life-values’ it expresses. While this division also applies to the ideas I have presented, it is not identical with them.

\textsuperscript{31} Tatarkiewicz’s model, originally in Polish, was introduced by Dziemidok (1986, 151-153). I do not go into its problems in detail here.
7. Originality and Unoriginality

As I keep pondering how what I see around me at this café should be described from the point of view of aesthetics, it becomes evident fairly quickly that one basic ideal of the traditional fine-arts-centered aesthetics is not respected very deeply here, in that the status of originality is not as central as in the art world. Although the elderly gentleman obviously pays attention to aesthetic dimensions in clothes, he really does not look very individual or original. Neither does the tattooed guy. Both look fairly conservative in their own way. Sometimes one does see very original people here, of course, but only sometimes. This reveals one important aspect of aesthetics in human appearance in general.

This notion can be illuminated through the following continuum:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Unoriginal aesthetics} & \text{Original aesthetics} \\
\end{array}
\]

The point of the present chapter is to draft a continuum from originality to unoriginality. This continuum indicates that a single manifestation of aesthetics can be more or less original (unique, creative, personal, etc.) or unoriginal (conservative, customary, conventional, average, etc.). The degree of originality as such does not say anything about whether or not something is aesthetics.

I claim that, unlike in the art world or aesthetics dominated by
its ideals, it is exactly the unoriginal end of the continuum that should be emphasized in the context of human appearance. If the aesthetics of human appearance is not forgotten altogether, philosophers who take notice of it tend to transport ideals of the art world into it. David Novitz, as we saw, states that “People often sculpt and craft their appearance with all the thought and care of an artist...” and that “... their acquired skills resemble those of the artist since they require the same sort of imaginative endeavour, risk taking, and perseverance” (1992, 110-111). This is misguided, however. Something like that is possible, but it does not happen often.

UNDERSCORING UNORIGINALITY

It is a fact that uniqueness - a form of originality - is highly appreciated in the aesthetics of the fine arts. Some writers like John Hoaglund even claim that “In our Western tradition ... no work that is not aesthetically unique in some important way is considered a masterpiece; to be considered good an art work must have some claim to aesthetic uniqueness” (Hoaglund 1976, 49). Uniqueness is normally held to be close to creativity and originality, if not seen as the same thing, and unique works are often taken to be necessarily new or historically the first of their kind in some relevant way. In general, uniqueness calls for a germane difference in proportion to other works in the category in question. (One should not be too original, however, in order to be still understandable and not simply insane.) Moreover, uniqueness presupposes authenticity which means that a copy or a forgery cannot be unique, and copies are seen to lack artistic merit if not necessarily all aesthetic.

These and similar ideas are put forward by such contemporary writers as Harold Osborne (1979), Jerrold Levinson (1980), P.N. Humble (1983), and John Hospers (1985), but the overall ideal is not new and it is crystallized in the Romantic concept of genius. This Romantic idea also emphasizes that unique works of genius cannot be explained or foreseen by any kind of rule. It goes without saying, however, that what is aspired to is not necessarily achieved, and in this sense the ideal of uniqueness often remains just that - an ideal.

Although its status is perhaps strongest in the high arts, there is no doubt that uniqueness is appreciated at a more general, non-aesthetic level as well. Creative scientific theories, original industrial design, personal lifestyles and innovative political ideas are all savored because they do not keep to what is commonplace and given. This ideal, connected closely to the ideal of freedom, can be seen to have been at the heart of the Western conception of man since Romanticism, although traces of it can be found in Renaissance thinking (see Wallgren 1995). Human beings are not only free to create new and original innovations but in order to be a human being to the full one really should do that. Whether innovations can really be originated by a single ‘romantic’, ‘Cartesian’, or some other type of subject (if such entities exist) or whether they are necessarily products of non-subjective moments, structures, or discourses is a question that cannot be dealt with here. Thus, I talk principally about ideals.

On the other hand, it is clear that if one looks outside the con-

1. This does not mean that uniqueness is the only factor that has bearing on artistic or aesthetic value.

2. Authenticity is not a sufficient condition for uniqueness because not all authentic works are unique; I could paint an oil on canvas and it would necessarily be an authentic work of mine but it would not have anything to do with uniqueness.

3. For this field of problems from the point of view of aesthetics especially, see Bowie (1993).
temporary Western art world, aesthetic uniqueness is not always anticipated quite as eagerly.

First, it is not necessarily expected in non-western (Oriental, tribal) or in non-contemporary western (pre-Romantic) art worlds - if we simply suppose that such art worlds, or something that can be compared to our art world(s) in a meaningful way, exist. What kind of position uniqueness may have in such contexts and how this uniqueness is comparable to our conception of it are questions that are not easy to resolve. The point is, however, that there seems to be no reason to suppose that uniqueness in the sense of radical newness and originality is a central part of all artistic traditions. On the contrary, the importance of conforming with tradition and the model of past masters should be emphasized.

Secondly, aesthetic uniqueness is not always required outside the art world; for example, we can appreciate a sunset or a landscape aesthetically without thinking that it should be unique or original. In fact, we would probably be very upset if a sunset were markedly different from sunsets we have seen before. This is not to say that we would not appreciate exceptionally great sunsets and see the difference between them and merely average one, but we still do not expect sunsets as a category to develop, and even exceptional sunsets are fairly similar to each other, whereas unique works of art are necessarily different from each other.

This ambivalence concerning the ideal and the 'true' level of uniqueness that characterizes the whole aesthetic sphere can be found in the aesthetics of human appearance as well. Basically, there are two problems. Should uniqueness be a feature of aesthetics itself, and should uniqueness be a feature of aesthetic dimensions of objects dealt with by different sorts of aesthetics? It is the first point, above all, that is of interest here, although the second tends to become involved with it. The question then is how originality, individuality, or uniqueness as well as commonness or unoriginality are related to various manifestations of aesthetics in human appearance? Whether we approach the question through point 1 or 2, it is certain at least that the role of unoriginality should not be underestimated.

I therefore claim that although the ideal of individuality is not absent from the aesthetics of human appearance, its status is by no means crucial. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, it is true that the ideal of novelty is strongly stressed, especially in the domain of fashion, whose authorities are also authorities in aesthetic questions. Since fashion is always new and continuously dying by definition, it must be different from the past in some respects although it borrows elements from it. Fashion is fashion by virtue of its deviation from what was fashion yesterday. The idea that only the latest innovations are interesting is heavily emphasized in fashion magazines especially, i.e., at the semi-explicit level of human aesthetics.²

But fashion has its reverse side: if something is in fashion it is popular and thus accepted and used by many, preferably by masses

4. Harold Osborne (1979, 228), for example, assumes that such art worlds do exist. But what kind of art worlds non-western cultures actually have (if any) and when artworlds in the Occident came about, are questions that are difficult to answer.
of people. Thus, even if it is new it is not actually original or individual and unique in this sense, and thus originality and fashionableness seem to be contradictory. Therefore, as fashions exist, it means there are lots of people who follow them, and this indicates that these people cannot be individual. Wearing Nike sneakers in the 1990s is not exactly original! Moreover, one should notice that the concept of fashion need not be seen as deriving from novelty-seeking, European American or Japanese haute couture fashion, but as originating in more pervasive and non-individual 'everyday fashion' or 'street fashion' as well.  

This is why, in order to be interesting, original and individual, according to some, one should create an individual style or a manner of being (an aesthetics), and not follow fashion. Simply following a fashion or a general custom shows only that one imitates an aesthetics constructed by someone else, since one is unable to create one for oneself. Unlike fashion, a style should be personal and does not have to be continually created anew - indeed must not. It should be something by which other people can identify you as you, both now and after ten years. Hilarious - but at the same time half-serious - promoters of such ideals are Quentin Crisp and Donald Carroll in their camp Doing it with Style? Consciously or unconsciously, Crisp and Carroll have the same scornful attitude toward fashion as Kant had; it may be better to be a fashionable clown than unfashionable one, but even that is not very admirable when compared to true style or use of taste (see Kant 1991a, section 68).

6. The distinction between 'high fashion' and 'everyday fashion' has been put forward by Crail (1994).

7. 'Style' and 'aesthetics' can be used interchangeably, and from the point of view of this study this is what Crisp and Carroll do.

The term 'style' can be used in an evaluative sense, where it means something like 'aesthetically good', and in that case may refer to something original. But it is evident that when we talk about styles, we often do not mean anything unique. On the contrary, clothing styles and other styles associated with human appearances are often the styles of groups. Probably the most distinctive ones are found among youth and sub-cultures, but group styles are not restricted to them. Ted Polhemus, for example, has found 20 different groups common in the Western world in the late 20th century - 'punks', 'hippies', 'preppies', 'minimalists', 'executives', 'woolies', and so on (1988, chapter 25). It is noteworthy that he explicitly states that "It would appear, therefore, that Western 'society', like some enormous protozoa [sic], is in the process of subdividing into hundreds of different social groups, each with its own ideology, its own aesthetics and its own costume" (ibid., 133, boldface O.N.). Polhemus's grouping is not based on systematic, explicitly introduced research, but is simply stated. This does not lessen its illuminating force as an example, however, because such groups need not be shown to be empirically 'true' in order to work as reference groups that direct people's thinking and aesthetic choices. Being credible suffices. Many, although not all, individuals can easily be classified with the help of such labels.

For the sake of clarity one can talk about such groups as if they were fixed corpses with clear boundaries, which is naturally not the case in reality. In practice even fairly distinctive aesthetics that can be labelled abstractly do not always exist very purely but can be mixed together and be manifested in 'weaker' forms. Furthermore, styles develop and thus even a paradigm case of punk aesthetics from the late 1990s does not look quite the same as one from late 1970s or 1980s. This, however, does not undermine the illuminat-
ing force of general labels either. The situation is no worse than with any other general categories.

But although fashionability and style (in most cases) can be considered contradictory to originality, it does not mean that a fashionable person or a person who wears a group ‘uniform’ could not be conscious of aesthetic matters and use aesthetics in that sense.

The cardinal question is whose aesthetics we are talking of. Why should aesthetics be attributable to a particular subject before it could be considered aesthetics proper? Even if that should be done, what kind of subject should we find? Must it be an individual or can it be a group? And how general and unspecific can the origin of an aesthetics be? It is quite possible that one can have and use aesthetics even if one has not invented it personally, and if one follows a certain style (or aesthetics) one can be aware of it and of its traits independently of its origin.

Above all, it must be understood that individuality is not necessarily the ideal aimed at. (Not to mention reality.) In many cases it is evident that people do not want to appear different from others. It has been shown that even people who are very interested in clothes and are careful about how they look, often simply want to conform and be accepted by others. Why this is so, is a psychological question into which I will not go here. The point is that whatever the reason for conformity, this inevitably leads to unoriginality

9. I repeat that I consider these questions as primarily having to do with ideals.

10. For further studies of this see Kaiser (1990, 472-473). It is interesting, however, that ‘moderate level of attractiveness’, which can be understood to be a close-to-average, non-individual and conformist look, has not been much studied. Its influence on social life, as on persuasive communication (in advertising, for example), is actually little known, even if there is evidence that is against the everyday life intuition that moderate appearance is more persuasive and thus more effective than exceptionally attractive appearance. For pro and con arguments see Patzer (1985, 28-38).

and lack of uniqueness, usually in the form of fashionability or conservatism. The statement by one of Kaiser’s male interviewees illuminates this attitude and its consequences:

I would never dress to stand out like a sore thumb. I would dress so that if there were any differences at all, they’d be very subtle and only someone that can maybe appreciate the things that I can get would notice those subtleties and so if I ... was aware that somebody noticed the way I was dressing, I know it would ... feel good (1990, 168).

On the other hand, there are writers who suggest that if one has a clear aesthetic interest in clothes it springs from individualistic values and tendencies (Kaiser 1990, 473-478). Although this once again indicates the inclination to bind the aesthetic and extraordinaryness closely together, it would be strange to claim that ‘unoriginal’ people do not have and use aesthetics. In fact, they have conformist and conservative aesthetics. It is obvious that most people never transcend the boundaries of very commonplace or even collective styles for several reasons (including economic, religious, political, sexual, etc.). But the fact that someone copies his outfit from a fashion magazine or from his neighbor does not mean that this person has no aesthetics; it only means that he does not have his own aesthetics. This is no stranger than to notice that people who speak or ‘have’ French do not all ‘have’ their own French, but all use the same language (with slight variations) that is something other than English.

Furthermore, in the art world the origin of certain aesthetic solutions or aesthetics as a whole can often be pretty uncontroversially stated, and it is not necessarily hard to see what kind of works are unique in their tradition, or the first of their kind. There, it is possible to show what was original at a given point of history, who invented something original - and it is taken as important that this can be done. That Arnold Schönberg created a new aesthetics for
music, and early cubists like Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque did so for painting, just as Isadora Duncan set a new direction for dance, can be taken as given. (This does not mean that they had no predecessors in any sense.)

The same kind of origin can sometimes be found in human appearance as well - designers like Mary Quant can be taken to have established completely new styles - but such specific and familiar turning points are rarer than in the context of the fine arts. It is true that Vivienne Westwood is a designer who strongly influenced early punk aesthetics and especially its commercialization, but it would be wrong to say that she invented it. Likewise, it would be impossible to pin down who created the very distinctive rasta aesthetics, or who is the originator of the rave clothing of the 1980s and 1990s. If we move on to more conservative clothing, to the average man's suits, it is probably possible to show the approximate point of time before which such clothes did not exist, but that is the limit of the exactitude with which their origins can be stated. Moreover, even if it is possible to show that a certain, now traditional style has been created by a certain designer at a certain time (Armani's cut from 1970s), it would not mean that people who follow that aesthetics would be conscious of or interested in it.

If we do not think about appearances in terms of clothes but through bodies, faces, hair, limbs, eyes, through their gestures and postures, and through conceptions about them, the question of origin soon becomes completely incomprehensible. It is probably true that the ideal of extremely skinny female bodies can be traced back to the 1960s and to its icons like Twiggy, and excessively over-exercised muscles became a craze with Arnold Schwarzenegger and his

11. The men's suit has remained essentially the same since about the 1850s or somewhat earlier, but it achieved its 'present' form gradually and not unanticipated. See Boucher (1967), Harvey (1995), or Laver (1996).

like during the 1970s and 80s, but these examples are indeed extremes of much older ideals and tendencies that cannot be traced back to anyone or anything in any meaningful way. Heavy-built and muscular men were an aesthetic ideal well before Schwarzenegger and light and fragile-looking females were not invented by Twiggy and her agents. The only reasonable way to talk about these aesthetic ideals is to accept that they simply exist without any identifiable origin and that they continue to exist culturally or collectively without any need for remarkable or rapid changes. Their only creator is 'culture' or even Zeitgeist - perhaps 'gender' or 'class' - if such labels mean anything specific enough in this context. Such aesthetic ideals were never individual or original, never created by anyone, but that is not considered important either.

It thus seems evident that there are aesthetic ideals, practices and styles - that is, aesthetics - that are not attributable to any specific person but that have cultural existence in clothes, bodies, hair, advertisements, and so on. There are also individuals who 'represent' these forms of aesthetics, consciously or unconsciously, individuals to which they can be ascribed in the sense that such persons seem to embody certain styles better than others. But this does not mean that the aesthetics in question is their own unique creation, or that they would be its only representatives - think about Marlon Brando with a biker leather jacket, Brian Setzer and a kiss-curl, or Helmut Kohl and his conservative-authoritarian look.

Such culturally general aesthetics can be manifested as fleeting fashions, or as more permanent styles, and can be more or less

12. It is illuminating to compare our own body preferences to those of other cultures. A short but illuminating list of some preferred female traits appears in Polhemus (1988, 10). Needless to say, the traits in question are not only aesthetic but perhaps more erotic ones, but these two are impossible to keep completely separate in human appearance.
dominant in a given culture. Their unifying factor is that their origin is not attributable to anyone and they need not be unique or uncommon. Why, then, should they be regarded as manifestations of aesthetics? The simple reason is that they embody identifiable aesthetic preferences, practices and ideas.

The fact that common aesthetics seem to be routine in human appearance does not mean that very unique cases might not exist. In fact, in areas like popular music or the film industry (and politics), unique looks are often among the most important things that differentiate one artist or actor from another. It would be very hard (and needless) to show that the fame of Marilyn, Elvis, Boy George or Richard Gere was based on their distinctive looks only, but one would be equally hard put to show that it had no bearing at all on their careers. The same is true among ‘ordinary’ people: personal appearance exists and affects people markedly, positively or negatively. But true originality is still an exception.

A harder question is what an original, innovative, personal, unique or individual aesthetics in human appearance is? In the end, every distinctive look surely does not manifest an individual aesthetics - Miss Universe looks distinctive, but does not show an individual aesthetic. What then marks an individual way of dealing with aesthetic matters? Or perhaps even creates new aesthetic issues? I do not think that these questions can be answered at the general and philosophical level in any interesting way. Some outlines can naturally be given - unique aesthetics must be different from others (but not in some random way if it is to be understandable), it must not repeat what others have, and so on, but such remarks are merely saying the same thing in other words, not declaring what makes things unique and different. The situation does not change much if one does not try to find uniqueness at the object level but turns toward experiences and ponders what makes them unique.

Originality becomes comprehensible only on a case-by-case basis, so that one must show what, if anything, makes David Bowie, Winston Churchill, Libereace or Andy Warhol look original and have a personal aesthetics. This solution, of course, does not make it easy to pin down uniqueness either, but at least discussion has some kind of tangible anchor. For example, Warhol’s aesthetics (of human appearance) can be tied down to his special silvery wig, to the bored and cynical stare and sloppy carriage that seem to continue the I’ve-seen-everything-and-I-accept-everything-and-nothing’s/everything’s-very-special -theme central to in many of his works. His interest in banality, commonplace objects and multiplying lead paradoxically to an individual and distinctive aesthetics in his own appearance. His ideals and practices clearly deviate from those of everyone. The purpose of this study, however, is not to analyze individual cases in detail, or to emphasize the importance of originality.

UNILATERAL TACITNESS

All that has been said in this chapter thus far principally concerns tacit aesthetics, especially silent aesthetic deeds or ‘products’, i.e., appearances as manifestations of aesthetics.

One should notice that ‘productive’ (as against ‘observing’ or ‘perceiving’) tacit aesthetics is unilateral in a particular way when it comes to originality and commonness. This means that as an appearance itself manifests (ex-presses, brings up, puts forward, introduces) aesthetic values, ideas and practices, it necessarily shows its own relation to individuality and ordinariness. It does not have any other way of dealing with these things. Because of this, only if an appearance itself is individual can it manifest individual aesthetics. Therefore, aesthetics itself (conceptions of aesthetic issues), its ‘objects’ (aesthetic issues) and its ways of ‘speaking’ about these issues necessarily merge.
For example, when I see a man who wears a black suit, blue shirt, black shoes, black socks, and a burgundy tie, I have reason to believe that if he has any interest in aesthetic issues, his interest must be of a fairly conservative and commonplace kind. That is what he shows, and the only way I can know anything of his aesthetics is through what is manifested. If nothing but conservative aesthetic features are visible, how could one imagine that ideas or conceptions about these features could be something else? I may be wrong about the man and his aesthetics, of course, and if I talked with him, he may tell me that in fact he has not chosen the suit himself, and he would actually like to wear pvc trousers and a leather jacket. But that would not alter the fact that if I have no chance to talk with him I have to count on what I see, and so I would not be wrong about his appearance and its aesthetics. Its features tell me of conservative preferences.

This does not mean that there could not be various notions of an appearance and its aesthetics. It is also quite evident that the context in which an appearance is perceived greatly influences these conceptions - a man in black would not look conservative but ridiculous if spotted on a beach. But the point is that any conception, in any context, depends on the information available. Firstly, if I see that an attire consists of black shoes and a suit, it cannot negate itself by 'saying' 'This attire does not consist of black shoes and a suit.' (More generally, whatever I see is what I see, and what I see I cannot see as self-negation.) Secondly, what kind of meaning these things might have is a different question. But I have a good reason, given my cultural background, to see them as conservative, not radical (in most situations), and surely not original. In the case of a standard black suit I have no reason to suppose that there may be, say, irony invoked either (if it is not shown clearly enough through some detail like a ridiculous tie). The man in black might think what he likes, but it remains hidden if he does not show it. Note that I do not take a stand on whether or not something seen must be 'objectively true'. It is perhaps possible that when I see a pair of black shoes and a suit and take them as conservative, someone else takes them as something else. But still, I see what I see and cannot be mistaken about it (appearance is always 'true' as an appearance), and in my experience attire cannot but confirm this. This means that tacit aesthetics is affirmative; here, it attests its own ordinariness.

It must be reiterated that this does not mean that appearances might not have many meanings, or be 'double-coded'. A black suit might imply funerals, the business world, or the Blues Brothers, depending on the context in which various options can be seen to suggest an original or commonplace aesthetics. (The Blues Brothers option would be more individual at a funeral than the standard funeral one.) Sometimes minor details (in a certain context) are enough to make the whole get-up ironic (an army uniform with pink laces in the boots). But the point is that although an appearance may be seen to have many, even contradictory meanings, it is still unilateral in the sense that it has only one 'channel' through which to reveal its aesthetics. Whatever the image created is, even when heterogeneous, there is no other level that could analyze, comment on or deny it. The most important point here is that if any kind of individuality is sought, it must be shown, and when it is shown it is already present; originality cannot be promoted through commonplace features, neither can unoriginality be maintained through original features (irony through serious features, seriousness through comical features, etc.).

The situation is different at the explicit and semi-explicit level. As these types of aesthetics about appearances include a verbal part, they are not, in terms of the medium, similar to their non-verbal 'object'. A tacit aesthetics shows itself and its issues at the same time and through the same medium - what shows and what is shown,
‘how’ and ‘what’, are the same thing, whereas verbal explicit and semi-explicit manifestations do not reveal themselves but a (primarily) visual ‘object’ that exists on another level. Note that in that case too, the appearance itself can be taken as a tacit aesthetics and when an explicit aesthetics is formulated from it, tacit aesthetics is an ‘object’ of the explicit one. Explicit aesthetics is then meta-aesthetics.

But remember that appearances (and their aesthetics) happen rather than simply or fixedly exist, and thus are not objects in the standard sense of the word. Rather, one ought to think that when we concentrate on a silent appearance itself and keep to its non-verbal ways of dealing with aesthetic issues, the ‘happening’ is unilateral. In our experience we see what the appearance has to say about aesthetic issues. But when there is explicit, analyzing discourse about it, the ‘happening’ may have more levels to it. An appearance and its aesthetics take place in a more or less active ‘aesthetic moment’ when we encounter a person (sometimes ourselves); we see what he has to offer and what kind of aesthetics he suggests by his appearance. But at the same time (or afterwards), we can proffer our own aesthetic preferences and ideas, our own aesthetics, at the explicit level, or learn how someone else has interpreted the appearance in question. This other side of the ‘happening’ can present another aesthetics that comments, analyzes, speculates or even negates what the silent side brings up. These two sides are not necessarily congruent.

Thus, it is possible that an ‘object’ is commonplace, but some explicit aesthetics, such as an article that analyzes it, is original. If an aesthetician writes about the man in a black suit, he has an ‘object’ that is aesthetically conservative and ordinary. But the way the aesthetician deals with it may differ from how aestheticians normally deal with such things.

A unique academic study might be written on most shared features of the looks of groups as well; Dick Hebdige’s Subculture. The Meaning of Style, even if not traditionally understood aesthetics at all but sociology (or socio-semiotics), may be such a study. Hebdige’s book does not handle human appearance philosophically in any standard sense of the word but is interested in youth culture styles as a socio-semiotic phenomenon. It must be noted that quite independently of whether or not it is an original achievement as a sociological study it deviates from the commonplace solutions of philosophical aesthetics and is thus original from that point of view. The elements that make (or at least made) it unique with regard to other academic studies dealing with aesthetic issues include its writing style and vocabulary (this beginning with its chapter headings: ‘Holiday in the sun: Mister Rotten makes the grade’), its theme, its strong emphasis on contemporality, and even its cover. The book is naturally aesthetics in the first place only if aesthetics is taken broadly to refer to all kinds of texts and other entities that deal with aesthetic matters, as this book does.

Moreover, although an appearance itself may be ordinary, the ‘explicit aesthetician’ does not have to play by its rules and just describe what is shown at the tacit level. At the explicit and semi-explicit level one can easily deny the point and value of certain solutions and suggest more individual alternatives, for example. It is even possible to say of oneself: ‘Look, I have such-and-such an appearance, but this is not what I would want to show, and something different would be better, more original.’ Thus, the importance or

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13. Then, too, we understand what we see through our cultural background and are not ‘innocent’, but the message we see to be constructed by the appearance itself, is unable to analyze or negate itself.

14. Remember that tacit aesthetics as silent perceiving does not have to be congruent with ‘physical’ appearance - with the ‘productive side’ - either.
individuality might be emphasized at the explicit level even if it is not done at the tacit one. Understandably, just this is often done for pragmatic reasons. When a study or an article is written, it takes time, and many are not interested in spending it on completely commonplace and trivial matters. Something different is usually wanted.

On the other hand, even if someone deals with an uncommon aesthetic phenomenon it is possible to write a conventional study or an article on it, and one can even demand individuality of its objects but fail to be individual itself. As a matter of fact, the whole issue of the aesthetics of human appearance is fairly unconventional within academic, analytic aesthetics but when David Novitz writes about it, the manner cannot be said to deviate much from normal analytic aesthetics procedures. Conventionality is undoubtedly the kismet of most studies, be their theme conventional or not. If one wants to keep the concept of individuality or originality meaningful one should assume that it is only the minority of aesthetics (or anything else) that can be individual or original, and the rest is bound to be fairly conventional in all respects.\(^{15}\)

Moreover, it must be noticed that explicit cases of aesthetics, in their paradigmatic, academic form especially, typically concentrate on issues that can be generalized, or explain individual cases with the help of general theoretical models. They do so even while theo-

rizing about uniqueness. Thus, the uniqueness and deep individuality of appearances seems to be more respected and truly savored on other levels, where appearances are more often approached as individual cases. In looking as he did, Liberace simply presented his own, extravagant aesthetics and made no generalizations about it.

It must be emphasized, however, that at the explicit level individuality can also be shown in seeing different things as more worth aesthetic attention than others. For example, one customary legacy in talking about aesthetics of human appearance is to focus on visually formal elements like shapes, colors, lines, edges, sizes, silhouettes, contrast, part-whole structures as well as figure-ground relations and questions closely related to them. As Marilyn Revell DeLong's work (1987) very illuminatingly does, for example. But it would be more original to turn one's attention primarily to tactile and olfactory matters, which undoubtedly do affect one's appearance, and try to see them as aesthetic issues. Patrick Süskind's novel Das Parfum entertains the possibility of this solution. Emily Brady's suggestion of turning away from formal beauty towards the expressive features of the human face is another try in a more unconventional direction (Brady, forthcoming). In this sense, when one thinks of the whole field of aesthetics, Novitz's contribution is also undoubtedly closer to the individual than the common end of the continuum.

At any rate, it is evident that there are various ways of dealing with individuality and unoriginality at different levels of aesthetics. Tacit versions are necessarily more unilateral than cases involving a semi-explicit or explicit level. Furthermore, a certain kind of unilaterality is a general feature of tacit aesthetics, and therefore has bearing on the capacity of tacit aesthetics to deal with aesthetic issues at large. This is noteworthy precisely because tacit cases are the typical ones in the context of human appearance; thus, a typical case of aesthetics of human appearance is unilateral, and this has

\(^{15}\) It is naturally true that if tacit aesthetics cannot nullify or analyze itself, explicit or semi-explicit aesthetics cannot deny itself either. If tacit aesthetics is what it shows, explicit aesthetics is what it says and shows, nothing else. If it is for originality, it cannot be against originality at the same time. Neither can it be individual itself without bringing up individual ideas. (Commenting on what it is calls for a meta-aesthetics.) The difference is, however, that an explicit case can deny, analyze and comment on a 'physical' appearance, while a non-verbal appearance itself cannot do so (it can only be itself).
certain consequences to do with the larger question of modes of aesthetics, which I shall return to in more detail later.

Thus far, I have introduced two continuums which can be united to form the following figure:

Original aesthetics

Unoriginal aesthetics

Tacit aesthetics

Semi-explicit aesthetics

Explicit aesthetics

The cases of aesthetics I encounter here at the café can be situated in the figure. Right now there are only tacit manifestations present. All of them seem fairly commonplace. Thus, I can position the waitress, the gentleman, and the tattooed guy in the figure somewhere near A (tacit and unoriginal). The waitress is beautiful but not in any special, individual way. Her way of utilizing aesthetic dimensions of herself does not suggest an original approach to them, and she probably shares the same ideals with countless others. There must be cases that are closer to B (tacit and original), but they are, necessarily, not as many, and I cannot see one now.

Someone could write a magazine article about people here and show individual ideas and fresh insights in doing so (C), and he could perhaps also demand that tacit cases should be closer to B than they are now. That would not respect the typical lines of typical human aesthetics, i.e., commonplace aesthetics taking place on the tacit level. (Different levels do not always co-operate in this sense.) Novitz's book is somewhere near D.

I return once again to Noël Carroll's ideas on repetition, amplification, or repudiation of previous works in the tradition. In the art world repetitions may be too uninteresting to deserve much attention, but it is not obvious that if Carroll's scheme is applied to manifestations of aesthetics in human appearance, the typical solution there too should be to emphasize amplifications and repudiations and ignore repetitions. Actually, it seems that it is precisely repetitions or even duplicates that should be noticed.

Lastly, different aesthetics are not fixed on one spot of the continuum in the sense that if one manifestation is original now it must be that in the future as well. What is original in a certain context may be very common later. Roughly the same idea has already been noticed by Kant (1991b, section 46) who insists that even if what a genius does is not subject to any explicit and explicable law, her work may become 'law' in the future. As a matter of fact, in
some cases when an innovation is interesting enough it tends to catch on very quickly. This can mean that it will be old hat sooner or later, but not necessarily, for good innovations do not always lose their value even if they are no longer new, as all classics show.

A couple of examples of this, at different levels are, firstly, innovative new sneakers and other sport apparel, tacitly representing new and to begin with even original aesthetic ideas which are introduced, spread all over the world and abandoned rapidly. Secondly, at the explicit level, aesthetics influenced by the analytic tradition - a fresh approach in the 1950s - has continuously been in fairly good shape, but there also are fresher approaches, like feminist ones, and analytic aesthetics has not been anything original for a long time.

Furthermore, clothes such as extremely pointed shoes known as *crackawes or poultains* that were commonplace in the 15th century would look very strange, even original, in the late 20th century, while nothing guarantees that the analytic or feminist fashion of writing explicit aesthetics would continue as a commonplace legacy from now on very long.

These notions, which touch on the theme of temporality take us to the next chapter.

16. It is probable, however, that if anything is too original, to the extent that it is completely strange, it does not have much chance of being generally accepted.

17. This notion does not suggest that 'analytic aesthetics' or 'contemporary feminist thinking' are homogenous areas that have fixed boundaries and characteristics, without considerable inner tensions. It can be held, however, that labels do refer to areas that can be described at least negatively; there are, after all clear cases which are not analytic aesthetics or feminist thinking.

18. There have been signs of the crisis of the analytic tradition for some time already, of course. Approaches suggested by various feminist, phenomenological, post-structuralist and pragmatist thinkers can often be seen as reactions against the analytic mode of thinking.

8. Volatility and Stability

I am still at the café. The tattooed guy has gone, and it seems that the gentleman is leaving soon. A bunch of new people has come; unsurprisingly, they introduce nothing very individual, but this does not decrease the charm of some of them. The same waitress is still working but another shift will replace her later. I wonder what kind of aesthetics it will have?

Thinking about all these changes in the setting, all arrivals and departures, a new question starts to bother me. What will happen to the tattooed guy and his aesthetics when I no longer see him? I guess he still manifests it, and I may see that if I met him again in an hour. But what happens in ten hours when he may be naked in his bed? Will the same aesthetics still be evident? And when he gets older, and if he happens to change his style? How would his present aesthetics be manifested then, if at all? Does the waitress have another aesthetics for her days off? For the gym? I would not be surprised if she had.

Any aesthetics is dependent on its manifestation because one cannot know anything about it if it is not manifested in one way or another. But how durable or long-lived are such manifestations, and how do different cases of dealing with aesthetic issues emerge, persist, and disappear at different speeds? How do aesthetic variants take place as temporal entities, i.e., how they happen at various rates?

Thus far we have seen that there are two characteristic features of the aesthetics of human appearance: its manifestations are typically tacit and unoriginal. The third emblematic feature is volatility.
The central structural idea of this chapter can again be presented as a continuum:

Volatile aesthetics

Stable aesthetics

There are manifestations of aesthetics that are very stable, others that are extremely volatile - and many which are somewhere in between. Discussion of aesthetics in human appearance should above all pay attention to the volatile end of the continuum.

Before going into detailed analysis of the grounds for this concept, it must be noticed that the operational concept of time used here is very simple, implying a typically western, linear conception. This means that time is something that ‘goes on’ eternally at a standard speed and can be measured by the clock. It is quite evident that this ‘objective’ time does not always tally with one’s personal experience of it, or with the much more complex description of time in physics, for example. The simple description, however, is sufficient for introducing certain central differences between variants in aesthetics with regard to time.¹

VOLATILITY IN FLUX

As we have seen, aesthetic issues in human appearance are not usually dealt with by writing a book of or by constructing a theory about them but by dressing, or by wearing clothes. An aesthetics becomes manifest when I try something on or wear a suit. But since I may take the outfit off in an hour, the factors through which an aesthetics is attainable vanish. I may also forget about aesthetic matters once and for all, and begin to concentrate on something else.

This kind of volatility is closely related to the tacitness of human aesthetics, and can mean two things.

Firstly, it has been emphasized several times that appearance itself and its aesthetics occur when a person is encountered by the one who appears or by someone else. If we still keep to the examples provided by the café a little longer, the aesthetics of the waitress tacitly manifested by her, takes place and is activated through my experience. (Perhaps also through her own experience and that of some others.) This experience itself is inevitably of temporal nature. The moment when aesthetic features are noticed in the first place takes a certain span of time, and moments during which aesthetic issues are actively and primarily dealt with are often brief.

An example: I wake up, take a shower, shave, and dress myself. I choose the clothes I want to wear today - pick a shirt, jeans, socks, a belt, a jacket, shoes, and dress myself. I look at myself briefly in the mirror - do the colors match? Do I look bearable in general? Then I leave to catch a bus. I have used aesthetics, paid attention to aesthetic matters in a very typical way. But I do not do so all day; as soon as I rush out in order not to miss the bus, the aesthetic moment has gone and something else has taken its place. I have not documented what happened, nor have I studied or explicated my possible aesthetic principles, and nothing but my getup, which I do not notice for most of the day, is left as a trace of the moment. When I have undressed myself not even that trace remains. In these situations, in a sense, an aesthetics is present and active only as long as I pay attention to aesthetic issues. Someone else can naturally use his aesthetics to assess me and my aesthetics although I do not do it myself, but it is probable that he does not do it for a very

¹. The concept of time is discussed further in several ways in Gale (1968) and Le Poidevin and MacBeath (1993). Both include classic articles as well as texts of contemporary origin. Still another kind of approach is provided by the phenomenological tradition which links the notion of time with our very being (see Heidegger 1953 or Merleau-Ponty 1992).
long time either, but is soon pulled into other spheres, too.

There may be more permanent aesthetic principles or a style behind these acts, of course, but when someone pays attention to how his hair looks today it often happens very quickly and the fleeting moment normally pops up in the middle of the stream of everyday events. (It can happen repeatedly during the day, naturally.) This differentiates the aesthetics of human appearance from many instances of the aesthetics of art which have been developed over extensive periods of time and in a manner that has guaranteed that aesthetic matters have been the primary object of interest - take any standard textbook on aesthetics as an example. Aesthetic issues in human appearance typically have to take their place among many other objects of interest, whereas in the art world aesthetic issues have traditionally been predominant and privileged.  

Moreover, as has been seen, in human appearance clear boundaries between the aesthetic and other matters - the erotic, for example - hardly exist (the difference that can be made is analytic, not phenomenal), and aesthetic objects are not always, if ever, dealt with independently. This does not mean that they would not be dealt with at all, but only that they are intertwined with other issues like building up and showing one's identity. This does not alter the fact, however, that there are periods or moments when aesthetic issues are dealt with, even if only as ill-defined elements of a larger totality, and periods when they are not.

The second thing volatility means is that the experience, however, must have a ground, something that makes it possible, and this ground or framework is also of temporal nature. It is the tempora-

rality of the framework that is of primary interest here, not that of my experience. I call this framework the 'manifestation'.

Put simply, I see that the waitress wears particular clothes today, has her hair done in a certain way and so on. I experience that, I see how she appears. In my experience I see that her appearance manifests certain kinds of aesthetic ideas. I may concentrate on something else for a while and thus not experience her aesthetics at all. But I could experience it, since the manifestation is there. It does, however, vanish at some point, too.

Strictly speaking, the manifestation is not something possessed by the waitress only, and it does not equal her as an object (for me or for herself). She does not manifest 'her' aesthetics alone, even if a certain aesthetics is associated with her and one can talk of her aesthetics. Rather, the manifestation is a larger framework that makes the experience of a particular aesthetics possible. From my point of view, a manifestation is not an object but a relation between me and the one who appears (even if that is myself), or a combination of all of us and the context around us. This framework instantiates my experience of an aesthetics. For example, just the present state of the combination of this café, me and the waitress (and everything pertaining to these) form a framework which manifests an aesthetics of the waitress. If something was markedly different, this particular aesthetics would not be manifested - if she wore different clothes, if we were in a different surroundings, or if I understood her ideas in a very different way (say, because of a different cultural background). This framework ex-presses (presses out) this aesthetics, manifests it, makes it discernible, experienceable.

To be precise, I do not claim that, if I took no notice of the wait-

2. It must be emphasized that this is not to say that they would have been predominant in all cases or that other kind of matters would have had no importance in the art world. The comparison does not mean that aesthetic matters in human appearance could not ever be predominant and in focus for a long time either. Once again, I am talking about paradigmatic cases.

3. There may be several kinds of experience in a given framework, not merely aesthetic ones, i.e., something else than aesthetics like notions about gender taking place within it.
ress and her aesthetics, it would not be manifested at all, or that if I understood it differently, it would automatically be different. I do not wish to subjectivize it radically. Without me it can be manifested to someone else, and even the same aesthetics may be manifested to someone else as would be manifested to me if I were present. It is perhaps possible that the waitress, me and this context form the same kind of framework as the waitress, someone else and a somewhat different context would form, so that somewhat different frameworks would then manifest the same aesthetics. For example, my friend and I could perhaps agree that the waitress presents an aesthetics that accentuates her sporty and fashionable features, even if I had seen her at the café and my friend had seen her in the street. Perhaps. The point is, however, that I cannot know how an aesthetics is manifested without my own experience, without myself being a part of the manifesting framework. How different exactly a framework or its parts (me, the waitress, or the surroundings) should be to manifest another aesthetics must be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

For the sake of simplicity, however, I will talk of the aesthetics of the waitress and of her ways of manifesting an aesthetics, and I shall follow the same principle with other cases in what follows. I will say that she manifests an aesthetics in that framework by her appearance or by her body, clothes, hair, etc. Moreover, I will say that there are features of her appearance which manifest her aesthetics, because I associate the aesthetics in question with these features. Thus, I privilege one part - certain features - of the whole framework and deal with the question of manifestation focusing on them. This is justified because to make an aesthetics different or disappear, it is enough if these features change or disappear, for whatever reason. For example, if the waitress has another kind of clothes and hair, it changes the entire framework although I and the environment remain the same. Such features are seen as the central route through which we can come to know anything about the aesthetics a person has, facilitating knowledge of it. The point of this chapter is to concentrate on the question of how this route is of a temporal nature. When certain features are gone, one cannot recapture the aesthetics in question any longer.

Note that I do not say anything absolute about whether or not these features are ‘objectively’ there or not, or whether they are ontologically dependent on a particular framework, nor do I take a stand on the objectivity or subjectivity of the framework. I may share it with other people, I may not; it may be ‘true’, it may not. (Hence, this pertains to any given aesthetics as well.) This is a question I cannot resolve here. Be the solution as it may, it does not affect the following notions about temporality.

It is true that even brief aesthetic moments can and normally do leave ‘traces’ that persist for some time, features that reveal aesthetic ideas.

This means, firstly, that although a person who has originally made an aesthetics manifest does not pay attention to it any longer, it is still manifest to others who bother to take notice of it. My aesthetics, arranged in the morning, is discernible the whole day through although I do not notice it myself. In order to manifest an aesthetics one need not pay active attention to aesthetic issues all the time without interruption, even if classic extremists in aesthetics or dandies insist on this. The framework and certain features are still there. In this respect even the difference between fairly stable books and fleeting outfits is only one of degree, since both can be

4. Charles Baudelaire urged that "Le dandy doit aspirer à être sublime sans interruption; il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir." ('The dandy must aspire to be sublime without interruption; he must live and sleep in front of the mirror.' Quoted in Gnëg 1988, 12. Translation O.N.)
seen as traces of shorter or longer moments during which aesthetic matters are actively dealt with, and they remain manifest even if the reflecting activity of their creator is not present any longer. One can take dresses, tattoos and even books as documents or signs of active aesthetic moments gone by.

Thus an aesthetics can be manifested either as or in an actual activity in which aesthetic issues are dealt with (for example, at the moment when I stand in front of the mirror and try to figure out what to wear) or as or in a ‘trace’ of that activity (in the outfit I finally choose or in an explicit verbal description of it). There are different kinds of manifestations through which aesthetics can be experienced, but all of them can be placed on the continuum that maps how long or short a time the manifestation is present.

One must also notice that traces can leave traces of themselves, ‘second-order traces’. This means that even if the ‘first-order’ manifestation has gone there may be documents or comments on it left. These documents can be pictures or verbal descriptions of a tacit appearance or comments on a study, for example. In a way, aesthetics is manifested through these second-order traces as well. Something of the aesthetics in question can be known with their help, but only in a weak or incomplete form. If a real flesh-and-blood appearance produces aesthetic ideas physically so that movements, scent and perhaps voice are also important factors in it, an arrested two-dimensional picture is only a remote relative of it. A picture cannot reveal everything the ‘first-order’ aesthetics manifested as an appearance. Likewise, if an extensive academic aesthetics is compared with a comment on it, the difference is marked; in that case, too, the ‘first-order trace’ is more comprehensive than the ‘second-order trace’. Again, this is a question of relative weakness or incompleteness and of relative first and second-orderedness of manifestations - what indeed would a complete and absolutely ‘first-order’ case of aesthetics be?

Traces of moments of active and conscious use of aesthetics sometimes persist very long even at the tacit level. There are plenty of pictures of dress from ancient Egypt, for instance, and in age they outdo Plato’s texts which can be taken as explicit cases of aesthetics. Permanency is, of course, fairly typical of pictorial works of art and it is true that they are often the means by which we know about human aesthetics of the past. (I assume that, broadly speaking, many pictures from ancient Egypt can be seen as such.) But one must remember that art works still are exceptions compared to the usual manifestations of human aesthetics; very few have had portraits painted of them and actually even standard non-art photographs are much rarer than real clothes or make-up which typically do not live long.

5. Remember, too, that aesthetics as a verbal study cannot attain everything a physical appearance can, and so these two types of aesthetics are necessarily different cases. But they can both be ‘first-order’ constructions made by concentrating directly on the aesthetic dimensions of appearance. Sometimes it is naturally hard to say whether a verbal construction (a study) or a picture is a case of ‘first-order’ aesthetics or a ‘second-order’ (meta) comment on an aesthetics put forward principally at the tacit level. (An appearance can also be a comment on another appearance.) But whichever it is, there may also be second-order comments on it. One can form a chain of instances.

Note, as well, that this study at hand is not so much a case of human aesthetics as an analysis of such cases, a cluster of ‘second-order traces’ of active aesthetic moments; it analyzes and comments on aesthetics that occur as appearances, magazine articles and academic studies which all can be seen as ‘first-order’ traces of ‘aesthetic moments’. A study like this could never make aesthetics as an appearance present; even if pictures are present, they are necessarily only referents to true appearances without many of their aspects. Thus, the most typical cases of human appearances are necessarily not ‘really’ present here, but are only referred to.

One must notice that often nothing whatsoever is left manifest of an aesthetics before long, not even a trace of it. There are plenty of ways of dealing with aesthetic matters, of activating aesthetic dimensions, that thrive and wither quickly, and these are typical in the context of human appearance. People do not usually document their outfits, make-up, hair-styles or ways of walking. An extreme example might be a one-off experiment, such as reported by Susan Kaiser. A male interviewee states that

*Sometimes I just dress because I feel like I just want to be loud and obnoxious ... Once I wore this shiny green shirt to work ... I knew it was pretty loud, and I've never really worn it again, but this was a one-time thing and I knew what I was doing* (1990, 166).

In this example one also finds a more stable principle behind the ‘one-off’ instance: sometimes, every now and then, the person in question wants to be offensive. As he points out, he is aware of what he is doing and clearly considers the aesthetic garishness of his outfit. The pith of this example from the point of view of this chapter, however, lies in the expression ‘sometimes’: an ‘aesthetics of obnoxiousness’ is used and manifested only sometimes and for short periods at a time. The interviewee takes account of aesthetic matters in his appearance and regulates them from this point of view only rarely. Moreover, he has done it with that particular shirt only once. The only trace left of the aesthetics used is the interview, which does not reveal anything very specific about it. As usual, there is not even a picture to look at.

Even more extreme examples are quite possible. Sometimes one might want to be obnoxious (or something else) only once. One tries it but finds it too disturbing. The clothes, the make-up, the way of behaving may not appear again, and the people who experienced them forget about the whole thing. Soon, nothing is left of it.

A further question is, of course, when one can say that something is really a one-off manifestation of some particular aesthetics, and that something that resembles it later is not a repetition of it. How do we know that a manifestation (and an aesthetics) is truly gone? This has to do with the question of how we identify an aesthetics as that particular aesthetics.

In the preceding chapter it became obvious that not everyone has his own aesthetics but many share the same aesthetic ideas and values, and thus manifest it on various occasions. This is clear when we think of ‘group styles’. Moreover, an individual can manifest the same aesthetics repeatedly even if he does not do so all the time. For example, it may be that I dress myself in practically the same way almost every day and thus my aesthetics exists as a permanent style even if I never explicated it theoretically or verbally and although I noticed the whole thing only every second day for a short moment or two. It would exist although I might sometimes employ some other style. This kind of aesthetics would not be fleeting but abiding, so to speak, even if often ‘dormant’.

It would be absurd to think that one’s aesthetics evaporates immediately if one does not pay conscious attention to it, or to aesthetic qualities through it; one does not lose the ability to skate as soon as when one unties one’s skates either. It is not reasonable to think that every time one deals with aesthetic dimensions of one’s own or someone else’s appearance, one makes up a new version of aesthetics. Quite the contrary, it is more natural to assume that one often uses the same aesthetics - the same ideas, points of view, values and skills. It is indeed possible that aesthetics that is not actively used and manifest can exist as latent principles, styles, or skills that can be individual or shared by many. The difference between unrepeatable experiments and more stable styles is evidently that the former is manifested (and perhaps exists) momentarily, accidentally, randomly, and for short periods whereas the latter prevail for a longer time and repeatedly.
On the other hand, it does not feel right to say that a person can have only one aesthetics that he may employ. Erving Goffman’s classical studies (see 1987 [1959] especially) have shown that human beings taking several roles in social interaction is one of the basic conceptions in social sciences. People do not behave in the same way at office, with friends and at home. Different roles often also call for different looks or aesthetics. This does not mean that all social roles need their own aesthetics or that one could not have even more versions of aesthetics than social roles. The point is to emphasize that one basic feature of the social nature of human being provides a good ground for having several aesthetics as well. Some may have more of them than others - think of Elton John - but it is quite normal to have many, in succession and/or side by side. For example, one can quite consciously test how a very different kind of hairdo would feel but not adopt it permanently. Or one may have different hair for summer and winter, for work and play, for days and nights. Or one’s style of combing one’s hair may change little by little, and at some point it is plain to see that the whole style of the person is no longer the same. One may even start to think of the whole aesthetics of hair in other terms; while one has previously paid attention to how hair looks, one can start to take olfactory or tactile aspects as the primary aesthetic ones (after reading Patrick Siskind’s Das Parfum or Joris-Karl Huysmans’s À rebours).

It is not possible to say generally when an aesthetics must be seen to have turned into another, or where the limit between one aesthetics and another is. Where is the difference between a version and something that is already something else and has its own identity? There is no universal answer to this question. But as it is fairly unproblematic in many or perhaps even in most cases to identify something as a manifestation of aesthetics in the first place, rather than of politics or religion, it is not much more problematic to see which cases belong together as manifestations of the same aesthetics, and which not. It is not hard to point out which outfits present punk, which business, and which hipster aesthetics, to name three well-known categories. It is not difficult to understand either that Queen Elizabeth II has long kept to the same aesthetics, whereas Madonna tries to introduce a new look several times a year. Moreover, if one presents a conservative look at work and follows a more relaxed code in one’s spare time, everyone sees the difference.

But even if so, the bottom line is that some manifestations (even second-order traces) of any aesthetics of anyone, of the Queen or Madonna or Michelangelo or Plato or me, are more volatile than others. And it is the nature of the aesthetics of human appearances that its typical manifestations are fairly volatile, despite more permanent aesthetic principles underlying them. Manifestations (cases) tend to be short-lived, be they one-off experiments or repeated displays of more permanent arrays of aesthetic ideas. People wear clothes and discard them, make up and wash the make-up off, dye their hair and cut it, diet and gain weight, adopt a new fashion and forget it in two months, wear uniforms to work and casual clothes at night. Moreover, we often meet people in a hurry or in the street and have no chance of observing their aesthetics for long. Whatever is manifested is not manifested for us very long, and we cannot know whether or not there is anything more stable behind what we see right now. Manifestations through which aesthetic ideas are attainable quite literally come and go. Where there is no manifestation, if no-one shows it, aesthetics is out of reach.

As a matter of fact, if one takes notice of all the continuous

7. It is no great difficulty for the central idea of the present chapter if some inappropriate cases are together as manifestations of the same aesthetics when they should be kept separate, or vice versa. Making inappropriate connections cannot be the rule, in any case, where thinking with the help of categories has any point, as I assume it inevitably has.
changes that take place in tacit appearances, the difficulties one faces when trying to think when one has to speak of this aesthetics rather than that, and the fact that people typically move in and out the aesthetic sphere all the time in everyday life, perhaps the most accurate way of describing the volatility-stability continuum is to stress the concept of flux. Aesthetics does not necessarily change radically from moment to moment and people do not always jump from one style to another. But people do change, slide from one look to another, and start to manifest a different aesthetics little by little. What happened to the members of the Beatles during their career and what is still happening to those who are alive is very illuminating. The crucial point is, in any case, that there is typically no stability, but a flow or flux of gradually-changing aesthetics and of its manifestations. And often, unlike the case of the Beatles whose every move is documented, the previous phases of the flux in the everyday life are gone for ever, very soon. All that has been said thus far, once again, principally concerns tacit aesthetics. The semi-explicit level, however, follows similar lines.

As seen before, semi-explicit cases in the form of fashion magazines emphasize and value a rapid cycle of change in appearance. They introduce the latest fashion and are primarily interested in that. Thus they semi-explicitly underscore the importance of change at the tacit level of appearance: people’s looks should change and present new aesthetics fairly often. Whether or not a new fashion is a new aesthetics must be pondered anew each time.

8. This does not mean that everything changes and nothing remains the same. We could not even recognize our friends or relatives after some time if that were the case; but we know that we can, on the basis of their characteristic ‘gestalt’ or aria, even after a very long time. (‘Aria’ is a term used by E.H. Gombrich 1982, 109.)

Sometimes it may be, if it is innovative and different enough, like the combination of the revolutionary short skirt and ‘no curves’ ideal for women in the mid 20s. Of course, there are also cases like ‘success look’ guides that are openly conservative and aim at teaching people how to dress themselves appropriately and elegantly both now and in the future, by following a certain style that is not dependent on the whims of fashion or other rapid temporal changes (see Falke 1990 or Thourlby 1990).

A more important point, however, is that semi-explicit manifestations do not typically live long themselves. This is true independently of how strongly they promote quick jettisoning of certain manifestations at the tacit level (in appearances themselves). Magazines are meant to be read once or twice and thrown away, and do not even try to be ‘valid’ next year. Their terminology also often sounds dated quite quickly. Just like tacit manifestation, they aﬀirm volatility by being volatile themselves, not only by speaking of it, by really manifesting certain aesthetics only for a short time. It is naturally possible to find old issues of magazines and see how they manifest certain aesthetic ideas, but the normal way of using such magazines is to keep to the latest ones. It is noteworthy that Guy Bourdin, one of the most celebrated fashion photographers in the 70s whose pictures are nowadays often taken as works of art, is said to be strictly against making exhibitions or books on his works. To him, the real context of such pictures was in ephemeral magazines.

9. The short skirt really was revolutionary; according to James Lever (1996, 232) “In Utah a Bill was brought in, providing fine and imprisonment for those who wore on the streets ‘skirts higher than three inches above ankle’…”

10. Remember that as regards originality and unoriginality, fashion magazines tend to affirm the latter by actually dealing with commonly acceptable fashion, even if they explicitly try to promote originality in terms of novelty. Thus, their ‘being’ and ‘talking’ do not converge in that respect.
in his case normally in the French Vouge.\textsuperscript{11}

An important thing to notice about typical cases of semi-explicit aesthetics is that because one manifestation is rapidly replaced by its successor, many magazines coming out weekly or monthly, this guarantees their ability to react to rapid changes and quickly disappearing tacit forms of aesthetics in their surroundings. They are thus able to follow the ‘true’ nature of the aesthetics of human appearance and respect its tempo fairly well. As appearances themselves come and go, so do semi-explicit ‘comments’ about them. (Of course, they are not only comments, but also direct tacit appearances, and so the interplay between the levels is two-way.)

Explicit aesthetics functions differently. If a paradigm case is an academic study or a philosophical article, it is typically fairly stable itself and accentuates stable elements in its ‘object’.

If we take it that stability is permanence in the sense that a manifestation of aesthetics is present and displayed over a considerable period of time, the link between explicitness and stability is easy to see from one perspective. Since a paradigmatic example is typically presented as a book or an article in an academic journal, the medium itself guarantees the stability up to a certain point. Explicit manifestations of ideas concerning aesthetic issues are well documented and they are available to be reviewed and used whenever needed. Plato’s remarks on beauty, relevant in the context of human appearance as well, have been manifest and current for well over two thousand years. Moreover, thorough-going studies take a long

time to write and finish, and their ideas are normally meant to be ‘valid’ for an extended period of time.

A book like Novitz’s The Boundaries of Art is planned, outlined and written, with all the practical difficulties inherent in that kind of project. All this normally takes years. Furthermore, this manifestation of Novitz’s aesthetics exists and is obviously present as long as the book is.\textsuperscript{12} An answer to the question of when this manifestation would be said to have disappeared altogether is that it is gone when there are no copies of the book left and no-one remembers what was in it. In a typical case none of this happens very quickly, quite unlike the tacit level.

It is true that even when produced as a book, an aesthetics is not necessarily very actively used all the time. If no-one reads the book for decades its aesthetic ideas can be said to be dormant. If no-one really uses its ideas in dealing with aesthetic matters in his surroundings, but approaches them as historical extravagances, it is not reasonable to say that the aesthetics in question is particularly actively present; the way of dealing with aesthetic objects represented by the book is not taken as accurate. Tolstoy is a good example of this in the philosophy of art; in human appearance the classics of physiognomy easily come in mind. But in any case, the book is there, at least as a trace or shadow of an aesthetics that could, in principle, be activated or developed further.

At any rate, aspiring to stability soon alienates explicit aesthetics from other levels. As studies both come about slowly and tend to deal with generalizable and enduring issues, they cannot keep pace with other manifestations even if they wanted to. It is clear that typical tacit and semi-explicit cases of aesthetics can react more rap-

\textsuperscript{11} This is a bit different with conservative ‘how-to-behave’ guides that wish to remain accurate for a long time, but even they manage to become strange or comical surprisingly quickly. But at least, as books, they are viable for longer than the average magazine. Thus semi-explicit aesthetics can also be long-lived, as in some tacit cases, but it is not typically the case. This becomes obvious if one compares the number of magazines published to the number of more permanent guides.

\textsuperscript{12} It must be remembered that there may be other manifestations of the same aesthetics, of course; other books, for example, and in this sense the aesthetics itself does not necessarily die with an individual manifestation of it.
ldly to things around them than explicit ones. It is a problem typical of academic studies that if a scholar tries to write on a very topical issue, it has lost its appeal before the study is finished. Thus, even if an explicit aesthetics is interested in changes, it is not quite clear what kind of detailed factors it can take account of in practice. Many features noticed at the ephemeral, tacit level of aesthetics move too swiftly to be noticed at the profound, explicit level.

On top of this, there are differences between how concerned with changes and volatility explicit cases are in the first place. To illuminate this, one can use the traditional meta-level distinction between ‘Kantian’ and ‘Hegelian’ types of aesthetics. Put bluntly, the first are said to be analytic, abstracting and ‘unhistorical’ inquiries that deal with unchanging and hence universal features of aesthetic issues. A case in point is Kant’s own analysis of taste, and Richard Shusterman sees a tendency towards ahistoricity as one of the dominant traits of the whole tradition of analytic aesthetics and analytic philosophy in general (Shusterman 1989, 11). ‘Hegelians’, however, concentrate on changes and processes taking place in time and in certain social surroundings, sometimes so much so that the phenomenon in question (notably art) is seen to develop towards a certain goal via various phases; aesthetic objects are ‘dated’ or contextualized in history and social milieus. The best-known contemporary Hegelian in aesthetics is undoubtedly Arthur C. Danto. In general academic (meta)discussion, many contemporary reactions against the analytic tradition - deconstructionism, Marxism, feminism and pragmatism - have been seen as ‘new’ pro-Hegelian turns in the traditional historicity (contextuality) vs. ahistoricity (‘abstractism’, ‘autonomism’ or ‘vacuumism’) quarrel (see Wolterstorff 1987). A difference between modern and postmodern world-views can be seen to subsist here as well, indicating the Hegelian nature of the latter.13

But even if there are differences between attitudes towards tem-

porality, it is clear that both Kantian and Hegelian types of doing aesthetics are clumsy compared to non-academic manifestations simply because they are academic studies. They cannot afford to be whimsical as regards their ideas, any more than they can be ‘physically’ (as objects, as books) available only for a short time. Whatever they say about aesthetics, the idea is, basically, that the aesthetics presented is manifested and thus accessible ever after. Books and journals are collected and stored and they are meant to last, both ‘physically’ and with regard to their ideas.

Paradigmatic cases of explicit aesthetics slow down the everyday life rhythm of appearing and disappearing, coming and going, of human aesthetics, or even try to stop it. They do so by concentrating on abstract basic factors of appearances, notably formal and structural features like color, figures, part-whole relations, etc. (DeLong 1987). (These factors are inevitably dealt with at other levels as well, but there the attention is more on what kind of colors,

13. Note that ‘Hegelians’ are interested in how to contextualize things in the course of time (history) and social surroundings - how they can be seen to develop as reactions against something else that existed before, or how they can be linked to their political environment, for instance. I deal however with the question of how instances of aesthetics happen in various rates. It must be kept in mind, however, echoing Carroll and Levinson, that every aesthetics must be linked to its past (tradition) in order to be aesthetics. Historicity is a prerequisite of aesthetics, and its historical context can also be explicated in the case of any aesthetics. That is not my task here, however.

One should also notice that not all writing about history is necessarily very ‘Hegelian’ by nature. For example, Arthur Marwick, who maps the history of human beauty from c.1500 to the present, claims that beauty has remained virtually the same through the centuries and that it is practically the same in different cultures as well. Marwick’s task is to show this (according to him) ‘universal’ phenomenon has been considered in different contexts. The thing he sees that has changed is the attitude towards human beauty - which does not mean to him that the ‘object’ itself has changed (1988, chapters 1 and 2).
cuts, etc. there are at the moment and how they change, not on the fact that such things exist and form the fundamental basis of appearances.) They do this by analyzing cases which enable lasting generalizations (Marwick 1988) and by affirming stability by being stable themselves in terms of their medium.

One must notice, of course, that the tendency to paralyze the pulse of human aesthetics is not exclusively one of explicit, academic studies. They share this proclivity with museums, for example. Elizabeth Wilson (1987, 1) correctly remarks that it feels ‘eerie’ to see clothes in museums and that they seem inanimate there, being isolated from their normal context of being worn. Wilson’s beautiful opening passage would be worth quoting in whole, but I confine myself to two sentences: “There is something eerie about a museum of costume ... For clothes are so much part of our living, moving selves that, frozen on display in the mausoleums of culture, they hint at something only half understood, sinister, threatening: the atrophy of the body, and the evanescence of life” (ibid.).

Museum costumes are arrested temporarily. If one thinks of their aesthetics it means that it is forced to stay permanently manifest in a time vacuum in a way that is alien to the normal life of clothes. The museal context also tends to guide the spectator to privilege aesthetic issues and emphasizes them continuously; their aesthetic aspects are taken up and kept present by the museum framing them. One could say that normally everyday life tends to swallow up aesthetic ruptures by making everything familiar and well-known, but museums try paradoxically to keep the everyday at bay every day, and force the aesthetic aspects of clothes to shine all the time. Moreover, an aesthetics is not allowed to change, to flow, to wither, or to be replaced by something else. Aesthetics of clothes (or appearances) are manifested in a warped, too stable manner that tends to move clothes close to the realm of art.

Fashion magazines, advertisements and cat-walk shows do almost the same thing by de- and recontextualizing clothes and other items central to appearance as they isolate them from their everyday use. Compared to museums, however, their tendency to build up a vacuum is less fatal since they do not normally endure very long themselves; they, too, tend to privilege and underscore aesthetic issues, draw attention to them in a way not typical of everyday life, stretching and boosting the moments of aesthetic attention. But as they are easily outdated and vanish themselves, their rhythm is closer to the typical.
Interlude: The Aesthetic Space

The continuum analyzed above can be combined with the two continuums presented earlier. The figure thus constructed is ‘three-dimensional’, representing a ‘space’ in which various instances of the human aesthetic can be situated:

Original aesthetics

In the last chapter I positioned the cases of aesthetics I see at the café in the figure so that the importance of tacitness and unoriginality was underscored. That still holds. Now I have to see where those tacit and unoriginal cases should be situated on the stability-volatility continuum.

After what has been said above, it seems that typical cases are close to the volatile end. This means that as the waitress, the tattooed guy and the gentleman represent fairly typical cases they stand on the fore stage of the space, on the ‘floor’, near the left front corner, even if not necessarily quite at the same spot. The biker look of the tattooed one seems fairly stable, in fact, and it is probably manifested often and for pretty long periods, even if it is not manifest to me any longer and although it may be put aside at work or somewhere else, and would not be discernible then. The same is true of the gentleman’s look. I cannot be sure, but it seems that the waitress is more interested in getting enjoyment out of changes. Thus she stands in front of the two men.

All of these cases are volatile compared to what Novitz would produce if he visited here and decided to analyze what he sees, hears and smells (experiences) philosophically, or compared to the pictures taken to a museum if these people were photographed. We would then talk of stable manifestations (or traces), things that should be placed on the back of the stage, Novitz’s book near the right wall, the photographs near the left. If we were lucky, they could be close to the ‘ceiling’. An article in Vogue, in turn, would probably stand at the front, on the ‘floor’, near the middle.

When I situate these different examples in the space I get something like this, where A is the waitress, B is the tattooed guy, C is the gentleman, D is Novitz, E is a museum photograph and F is an article in Vogue.
Tact cases are typically more volatile than explicit cases, although that is not a universal rule. As regards the relation between tempora-lity and originality/unoriginality there seems to be no necessity for either originality or generality to be connected directly either with volatility or stability; both very individual and very general ways of dealing with aesthetic matters can exist in both 'areas'. Generally-accepted fashions can vanish fairly quickly like individual experiments, but some very general trends persist very stubbornly (men's suits, writing analytic aesthetics), exactly as some more indi-

vidual styles do. It is probable, however, that if aesthetics is too original it does not have much chance of being generally accepted, and it is most likely bound to vanish more rapidly than versions of aesthetics that are widely disseminated and repeatedly manifested on different occasions.

A general framework into which different versions of human aesthetics can be positioned is now ready. The spot close to which most typical cases are situated is the left front corner of the picture. For particular cases, any other position is possible although not as probable, but it is not necessary to go into every logical possibility here.

But the question of what different cases of aesthetics, particularly typical ones, are able to do, needs to be analyzed further. Something of this has been said in the preceding chapters, but neither sufficiently nor systematically. It is time to move on to this question.
9. Modes of Aesthetics and Aesthetic Merit

I take a look at people around me. I situate them and myself in the aesthetic 'space' I have drawn, and the spot for tacit, volatile and unoriginal cases of aesthetics gets crowded. But what can such typical cases of human aesthetics reveal about aesthetic issues? What can I infer from the waitress looking as she does? What can she tell me of her aesthetics by her appearance? And how does it differ from what Novitz can tell me by writing a study?

It is usually accepted that an outfit or an appearance can function as a sign in various ways. Many scholars and other writers like Roland Barthes (1983), Dick Hebdige (1979), Alison Lurie (1983), Ted Polhemus (1988), Lee Wright (1992) and John Harvey (1995) have pointed out that appearances, clothes in particular, form their own kind of language or sign system. The language analogy suggests that human appearances are messages that can be read when one knows the language, its vocabulary and its syntax and semantic rules and practices. When we meet other people we can 'read' their looks and see what they tell us about themselves, their political values, the social group to which they belong, their sexual identity, their religion, their taste in music, etc. Moreover, we learn what kind of items belong together, what is usually worn by men and women, what clothes are western, what Asian, how disco make-up differs from funeral make-up, and so on. This is undoubtedly true: appearances are and contain signs people decipher. In short, the semiotic approach can be seen as a modern version of physiognomy.

Without going into general problems of semiotics in the sense of systematizing how different types of signs and/or sign systems function in human appearance - a field of problems way too vast to even scratch the surface of here - it is plain to see that appearances do also refer to things that belong to the aesthetic sphere. There may be direct and indirect references (symbolic, iconic, denoting, connoting, exemplifying, etc.) to works of art, or to a certain aesthetically interesting style of some particular person or group, for example. In a simple case a dress can look like one in Dali's painting (Schiaparelli). Such links can be manifested tacitly (by an appearance), even if getting the message, naturally, requires the active participation of the perceiver as well.

2. This area could be approached as a special case of general visual semiotics, on which there are plenty of studies; on this field see Sonesson 1989 and Vihma 1995.

3. Actually, it may be that appearances are more often seen to carry other messages than aesthetic ones but I am not interested in such cases here. Note, also, that appearances or clothes need not be taken as any kind of sign, but can be seen as non-signifying entities that simply exist and to which meaning must be attached from 'outside', which is something different from how genuine languages and their signs necessarily function (Barthes 1983, 64-65). The opposite conception is that everything around us should be seen as some sort of sign that must be interpreted. (For this kind of 'hermeneutic universalism' see Shusterman 1992, 120-128.) Which one of these conceptions holds, if either, cannot be examined here. It is clear, however, that appearances can signify and refer even if they do not do so in every case.
However, it seems that there are issues about which tacit approaches are able to ‘speak’ better than others. Moreover, they can ‘speak’ better about them than explicit cases can, and some issues fall almost completely out of range of the explicit level. On the other hand, it seems that there are aesthetically interesting things to which typical tacit manifestations of human aesthetics cannot refer, or of which they cannot ‘speak’. Hence, there are aesthetic issues that can be dealt with at every level of aesthetics (although differently), and issues that are typical only of some levels. Here, mapping such modalities - what can and cannot as well as must be done by different sorts of aesthetics - serves to delineate typical cases of human aesthetics and its abilities. It is also a picture that shows what kind of aesthetics is commonly thought sufficient in this context: what tacit cases are able to offer, one can assume, is normally enough.

Since modes of aesthetics are too large a problem to be discussed fully in one part of a single study, I shall deal with the problem principally through one example: what can typical cases of aesthetics of the human appearance ‘say’ of aesthetic merit? How do they deal with it? Other questions related to modes are considered as means of illuminating this question, and are illuminated with its help. Thus aesthetic merit functions as a reference point to which other issues can be related, and the question of merit has been chosen because of its central position in aesthetics. Applying the general framework of modes systematically to other aesthetic questions is left to the reader.

Furthermore, even the problem of merit is too large to be considered exhaustively here, and so the following sketch is necessarily a rough picture of the relations between merit and modes. Its point is to draw attention to the fact that every type of aesthetics has its advantages and limitations, and that one has to choose one’s level of aesthetics according to what one wishes to do or achieve with it.

Detailed analyses must again be done on a case-by-case basis.

I shall firstly analyze the concept of aesthetic merit in general and only then go into the problem of how it is related to different sorts of aesthetics in human appearance in particular. Lastly, I compare shortly the potential of typical human aesthetics in dealing with aesthetic merit to its potential in dealing with some other questions.

Remember that a single manifestation can have both tacit and explicit, individual and non-individual as well as volatile and stable aspects. For example, I can both tacitly show and explicitly write my ideas, side by side. Thus, I refer to aspects or levels of cases and to their modes rather than to entire cases, although for the sake of simplicity I talk of ‘cases’ or ‘manifestations’. I do this also because certain aspects of entire cases typically dominate.

**VARIATIONS IN AESTHETIC MERIT**

‘Aesthetic merit’ here must be understood to refer to a wide range of different value-related matters, containing both positive and negative variations. I use the term ‘aesthetic merit’ instead of the more traditional ‘aesthetic value’ because I want to emphasize the breadth and complexity of the concept.

In academic aesthetics, especially in the analytic tradition, ‘merit-neutrality’ (value-neutrality) has been a persevering ideal. Scholars have thought fit to be a-normative, and have avoided overtly taking a stand on what is good, bad, right or wrong, and on that what artists or critics should do.¹ One typical, Wittgensteinian legacy has concentrated on analyzing and describing the use of concepts, or language more generally, instead of formulating normative theories; a paradigm of the trend is the influential collection of papers

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¹. A summary of such views is given by Shusterman (1989, 9-10).
Aesthetics and Language published in 1954. Since then the principally language-oriented tendency has naturally been joined by other approaches, such as the ‘historical’ theories of Danto and Levinson, but it has not led to the loss of the ideal of value-neutrality, an ideal not always achieved.5

This does not mean, however, that aestheticians would not have been interested in merit or values as objects of study. On the contrary, volumes have been devoted to what aesthetic merit or value is, how it is assessed, how value judgements can be established (if they can), and other related problems. The typical general solution to the question of what aesthetic merit is, is to take it, like values in general, as something positive or as something that is wanted and appreciated,6 independently of whether what is wanted (and why) is characterized through properties of the objects assessed, subjective experiences or emotions, combinations of these, or through something else. Generally considered, conceptions of aesthetic merit, like other values, are seen to be used in justifying actions and opinions and in making them comprehensible, although not necessarily acceptable.

5. It is evident that if analytics have not made value judgements overtly they have made them in other ways; the practice of using certain kinds of art work (notably those of the 20th century avantgarde) as examples and omitting others (popular culture’s) shows clearly what aestheticians have considered worth attention in the first place, for example. Thus the ideal does not match the reality very precisely. One should notice, too, that even explicitly normative studies or works that promote certain aesthetic values have not vanished altogether: see Kupfer (1983), or Sartwell (1995).

6. At this point it is routinely thought that ‘wanting’ and ‘value’ cannot be identified with simple personal and subjective ‘liking’, since one may like things which one understands are not worth wanting or valuable (at a more general level). Furthermore, one may see that something is valuable and good even if one does not like it personally.

In many classical theories, such as those of Thomas Aquinas or Lord Shaftesbury, aesthetic merit has been virtually equated with ‘beauty’, understood narrowly as something ideal, harmonious, perfect, pleasurable, and close to moral virtues, goodness and truth. Since the 18th century, however, other forms of merit, notably the sublime, have been seen as important.7 Little by little, these other forms, especially as combined with problems of art, attached so much attention that beauty, narrowly understood, was overridden by them. Aesthetics as a branch of knowledge became interested in art and the aesthetic at large, and the importance even of the term ‘beautiful’ was questioned. One of the best-known symptoms of this is Wittgenstein’s comment that: “It is remarkable that in real life, when aesthetic judgements are made, aesthetic adjectives as, ‘beautiful’, ‘fine’, etc., play hardly any role at all” (Wittgenstein 1966, 3). It is highly questionable whether Wittgenstein’s comment is apt as regards ‘real life’ outside philosophical discussion, but it is certain that within it ‘beautiful’ has not been among the most popular terms and problems of beauty among the most popular problems during recent times.8

Even the idea that aesthetic merit, or beauty in a very broad sense, contains its traditional opposite, ‘ugliness’, is not new. Mikel

7. The historical process of breaking up ‘beauty’ or its decline since the 18th century has been mapped by Stohr (1992). Note that the growing interest in the ‘faculty of taste’ in the 18th century can be partly explained by the dissemination of beauty. As scholars noticed the extreme difficulty of defining beauty’s objective characteristics, and as new forms of the aesthetic like the sublime and picturesque needed their own definitions, it became evident that it might be easier to study a faculty in which all the different aesthetic qualities are assessed.

8. This statement (and the more general attitude behind it) has been so influential that philosophical writers who dare to use the term and deal with problems of beauty seem to need to defend their action. See Mothersill (1984, 3).
Dufrenne (1973, ix) notes that this has been the case since Romanticism, and for example Karl Rosenkranz’s *Ästhetik des Häßlichen*, which came out in 1853, was a clear indication of this attitude, ugliness being seen as worth serious attention even if not admired or accepted as an ideal. In this ‘modern’ line of thinking the ‘true’ opposite of beauty, valuable in the aesthetic sense, is not ugliness but the aesthetically insignificant, unremarkable, uninteresting, or mediocre. The point is that ugly, horrible, unseemly, grotesque or repulsive things tend to be aesthetically important, interesting or fascinating, whereas many other things are completely lacklustre and too commonplace to attract any attention. In other words, even negatively fascinating things can be seen to have aesthetic merit.

The structure of this characterization of aesthetic merit can be summarized and simplified as follows:

1. **EXTREMELY ‘UGLY’** (and its variations)
   - Positive aesthetic merit ‘0’
   - Negative aesthetic merit ‘100’

2. **MEDIocre** (and its variations)
   - Both negative and positive aesthetic merit ‘0’

3. **EXTREMELY ‘BEAUTIFUL’** (and its variations)
   - Positive aesthetic merit ‘100’
   - Negative aesthetic merit ‘0’

Both ‘ugly’, ‘mediocre’ and ‘beautiful’ must be understood here very broadly, each including many variations. ‘Beautiful’, for instance, can include ‘graceful’, ‘handsome’, ‘harmonious’, ‘powerful’, and so on. ‘100’ refers to a hypothetical absolute of ugliness or beauty, ‘0’ to the equally hypothetical total lack of them. Every point is an idealized stage on a continuum and each delineates an extreme around which individual cases can be grouped or towards which single instances can be directed; absolute beauty or ugliness hardly exists empirically.9

In the most restricted classical thinking it is only point 3 that is worth aesthetic attention. Point 1 started to gain increasing notice through 19th century, and even before that not simply pleasurable but painful, frightful but still fascinating phenomena typified as ‘sublime’ had been considered valuable.10 Thus, in a sense things coming under points 1 and 3 have as much aesthetic merit although in different ways, whereas point 2 consists of things that are insignificant, uninteresting, worthless, or boring.

It is clear that what is ugly, beautiful, or without aesthetic interest varies both at the object level and with regard to how these things are experienced. What is beautiful to me is not necessarily beautiful to you, and even if it was you may not feel the same about it. It might be a generally accepted conception that a bulldog is not exactly beautiful in the narrow sense of the word, but it does not mean that everyone would take it as particularly ugly either (‘beautiful’ in the broad sense of the word, i.e., as having aesthetic merit). Furthermore, for those who do take it as ugly it is not necessarily fascinatingly horrible but may simply be pitiful to look at. A classic dandy may seem completely dull and colorless to someone who cannot appreciate subtle distinctions. Moreover, points 1, 2 and 3 of the chart cannot be seen as clearly demarcated or isolated, and there

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9. Here again, I am especially indebted to Yrjö Sepänmaa’s ideas as presented in Sepänmaa 1990 even if I have not used them as such.

10. The sublime can be understood to be a certain kind of complex combination of positive and negative elements; an analysis of the concept is not possible here. A good overview on some seminal classic (Burke, Kant) and contemporary (Lyotard) formulations of the sublime and a suggestion as to how could they be developed further is offered by Crowther (1993).
hybrid forms may exist: for example, it is not easy to place camp phenomena like Liberace or the television version of Batman simply at either extreme, or in the middle.

One should notice, too, that the line from extreme beauty to extreme ugliness must not be seen as one including variations of 'classic' or formal beauty and ugliness only. If one thinks of the many ways a work of art may have aesthetic merit this becomes clear. They can be lively, dynamic, entertaining, dull, captivating, serious, skilfully made, true to life, joyful, or cruel. The same is true of anything assessed aesthetically. Aesthetic merit can be of emotional, formal, cognitive or of some other type; its limits are not fixed.

Aesthetic merit is, again, a tradition-bound concept. It refers to what can be taken as aesthetically noteworthy, remarkable, or interesting when situated in the aesthetic tradition. Many conceptions equate this with different versions of aesthetic extraordinariness (formal or not) so that what is interesting, be it ugly, beautiful, sublime, or something else, deviates from the commonplace and is valuable in that respect. Simple repetition of tradition's commonest features does not easily attract attention. The experience is not necessarily pleasurable as in the case of narrowly understood beauty, or painful while edifying as in the case of sublime, but it can be simply annoying, repulsive or disturbing as when sheer ugliness is encountered, but the unifying factor between various cases is that something aesthetically uncommon is experienced.

The most typical solution, of course, has been to emphasize the positive end of the continuum, so that negative cases can be justified by giving them a status as points of comparison that can reveal the beauty of beautiful cases, or as necessary parts of a larger, complex whole that is harmonious or positive in some other way. Karl Rosenkranz, for example, considers beauty much more important and fundamental than ugliness even if he sees the importance of ugliness as well. For him, the beautiful is 'the divine and original idea', an absolute, whereas the ugly is its negation and it has only a secondary status and is something relative. He writes (1990, 14-15) that "Das Schöne ist die göttliche, ursprüngliche Idee, und das Hässliche, seine Negation, hat eben als solche ein erst sekundäres Dasein ... Das Schöne is also, wie das Gute, ein Absolutes, und das Hässliche, wie das Böse, ein nur Relatives." Negative aesthetic factors have not typically been considered as having merit in themselves, but that is perhaps not impossible either. But of course, if anything, be it negative, painful, horrible, shocking, or hurtful, is seen as worth experiencing there must be something positive in it. Still, there are differences between whether the negative is seen to be subject to uplifting and edifying principles ('Through getting to know this I can see what is good and I can learn to endure trying moments') or to a positive whole ('Quasimodo is so unbearably ugly but without him the whole book would not be as great as it is now'), or whether one is interested in it just because one wishes to know what and of what kind it is.

The field has become more complicated lately, however, for even the mediocre, dull, or commonplace, traditionally insignificant factors have paradoxically been considered as worth attention and thus having aesthetic merit in some contexts. Thomas Leddy (1995) writes of 'everyday surface aesthetic qualities' of neatness, messiness, cleanliness and dirtiness, which are "frequently found in everyday life" and which "are not primarily the qualities by which we praise works of art" (ibid. 259). Leddy claims that even if there should be11 "there is virtually no discussion of this class of proper-

11. Leddy's principal aim is to show that 'everyday surface aesthetic qualities' really are aesthetic qualities: "I only wish to stress that the similarities between what I have called everyday surface aesthetic qualities and the qualities that have traditionally been called aesthetic are remarkable and should not be neglected in the future" (1995, 267).
ties in the aesthetic literature" (ibid.). That is undoubtedly at least partly due to the fact that they are too ordinary from the point of view of traditional aesthetics; they are nothing very special or arresting, but entirely everyday-like. But now, it seems that practically anything can be considered as having aesthetic interest without being extraordinary in any way; the normal can be regarded as interesting precisely because of its normalcy.

In some respects this can be compared to certain tendencies in the art world. It has been quite normal to produce both very beautiful and very shocking and offensive works for a long time - neither elements are absent from the tragedies of Antiquity - and in this sense even Danto's 'disturbational' art is probably nothing new. Likewise, there is a long tradition of theorizing about extraordinary and powerful aesthetic experiences; Plato was worried about the corrupting influence of spellbinding art works. But works that are boring and dull on purpose, thus reflecting dull and boring tendencies in our culture, are a newer phenomenon that probably started with movies such as Andy Warhol's Empire State Building and Sleep. Note that Warhol himself emphasizes that while he does indeed like boring things, this does not mean that they would not bore him (Warhol and Hackett 1985, 64-65). He appreciates them and thinks that they are valuable, but they are still boring, dull and insignificant. And their merit, paradoxically, is the merit of having no merit. Purposeful dullness or ennui cannot be equated with monotonous or minimalistic works, of course, which can be very striking, hypnotizing, and powerful (Anish Kapoor; Lucio Fontana; techno music). Strictly speaking, since what is normal or commonplace typically goes unnoticed whereas dullness is an egregious nuisance, extreme dullness cannot be identified with normalcy either. Thus, in this sense, it is something uncommon and special again, something of which Leddy does not write.12

It is evident that aesthetic merit in human appearance, too, is pluralistic. Beauty, attractiveness, and other positive and pleasurable aesthetic features are probably the most generally accepted and admired ones, but there is a place for other kinds of aesthetically significant looks - negative ones - as well. Historically, the interest taken in them has again been fairly normal since Romanticism. Elizabeth Wilson (1987, 127-133) associates the early, 19th century 'aesthetics of ugliness' with urbanization and its tendency towards unnaturalness and artificial exaggeration: "Beauty was found in 'ugliness'; the link between beauty and 'the natural' was severed. What was 'unnatural', exaggerated, even deformed could, according to these new, industrial canons of taste, become 'beautiful'." To make her point Wilson (ibid.) cites a text by Mary Eliza Haweis from the year 1878 in which it is stated that

Morris, Burne-Jones and others have made certain types of face and figure once literally hated actually the fashion. Red hair - once to say a woman had red hair was social assassination - is the rage. A pallid face with a protruding lip is highly esteemed. Green eyes, a squat, square eyebrows, whitey-brown complexions are not left out in the cold. In fact the pink cheeked dolls are nowhere; they are said to have 'no character'... Now is the time for plain women.

Wilson notes that the type of women described can be found in the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings, notably Rossetti's.

Interest in still uglier human appearances from about the same era is clearly shown in novels and short stories by writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Victor Hugo, Robert Louis Stevenson and Mary Shelley. The scope of 'beauty' (aesthetic merit), whatever the reason, had clearly changed. It must be noted in any case that interest in strange-looking people and human anomalies is by no means a product of the 19th century but it is clearly present and docu-

12. These points have come up in discussions with Yrjänä Levento.
mented in medical texts from the 16th century and even ancient Babylonian clay tablets deal with such phenomena (Finkelstein 1991, 54-55). It is possible, though, that the aesthetic interest in them grew considerably greater and became commonplace in the course of the 19th century, and it seems that what was considered to be aesthetically fascinating in some way was not quite as simple after that. These hypotheses however would need studies of their own. What is clear is that the interest in very different kinds of looks has not faded even now.

There might be forms of aesthetic merit that are foreign to human appearance - humans are rarely described as sublime, for example - but despite this there is still lots of space for variation. In contemporary fashion magazines it is not only narrowly considered beautiful models and clothes that are exhibited (although this element forms the major part of such magazines) but offensive, obnoxious or ugly ones are often given space as well. The cover-girl of The Face, February 1997, actress and model Chloe Sevigny, is described as follows:

Even as a small thing, Chloe Sevigny had some idea that it was bad to look like everybody else ... Chloe used to make her own clothes. Then she wore all black. Then everyone else wore all black, so now she wears, well, disgusting, frankly, and wears it more beautifully than anyone else (Patterson 1997, 48-49).

Furthermore, tattoos and piercing rings, even facial rings, are fairly common in the street, and neither fall within the scope of 'beauty' narrowly considered.

On the other hand, it seems that neutrality or mediocrity is very often taken as the aesthetic ideal in appearance, which means that looking too stunning is as undesirable as looking horrifying: no extremes are in favor, and many do not want to stand out in a group, not aesthetically at any rate.¹³ Unlike the 'Andy Warhol boredom',

this tendency is hardly new either. In fact, one would be tempted to say that this is the most prevalent ideal, for it is hard to believe that the uniformity of group styles in the streets comes about by accident. This kind of neutrality can sometimes be a sign of toning the whole sphere of aesthetics down while privileging other kinds of values like religious or practical ones, or a step outside the aesthetic sphere. This seems to hold in American Amish societies, for example.¹⁴

It should be remembered, in any case, that normal and neutral in this sense are not the same thing as extreme dullness. But even this grey and mundane everyday type, when it is the ideal, does not go without notice, and contrary to its truest nature it is lifted into the centre of consciousness or foregrounded. This means that when it really is the ideal, one has to pay attention to how and when it is achieved, and consciously aim at it. Of course, it can fall back into the background of one's mind right away when its presence is ascertained.¹⁵

13. Reasons for this obviously vary. One reason is that a look that is 'too good-looking' has been claimed to be not very practical in business and organizational contexts because it can lessen one's competence and seriousness in others' eyes (Kaiser 1990, 366-367). One has to remember, however, that the actual influence of moderate or unstriking appearance has not been studied very much (Patzer 1985, 28-37).

14. On Amish societies, clothing and design see (Kaiser 1990, 396-397). It should be kept in mind, however, that even the Amish cannot avoid the aesthetic altogether and they necessarily produce some kind of aesthetic products (including appearances) if they produce anything at all. Everything can be assessed aesthetically. In fact, Amish products - appearances and others - are often highly appreciated by the non-Amish for exactly these reasons. (The same is true of Shakers and their products.) Thus, ironically, they have created a certain kind of aesthetics that is distinctive in others' eyes by trying to belittle the whole aesthetic sphere.
MODES OF DEALING WITH MERIT

All three phases of the chart presented above are thus active in human appearance, in many versions. Looks can have aesthetic merit in a number of positive and negative ways, and this is a rather unproblematic point of departure. Another question is how merit is related to different types of aesthetics: how are variants of merit dealt with and what can be ‘said’ of them?

Typical cases of human aesthetics have certain advantages and drawbacks with regard to this task compared to less typical cases. These advantages and disadvantages are closely linked to tactility, unoriginality and volatility, features presented in the previous chapters. Thus, the following remarks collect together and specify notions made earlier. I start with advantages.

Tactile cases of human aesthetics necessarily deal with things by making them visually (and auditorily, tactilly, etc.) present - I now focus especially on tactile cases understood as ‘physical’ appearances, not as something that goes on silently but perhaps verbally in the mind of the perceiver, although these two aspects cannot be clearly separated from each other. If I build up a certain kind of aesthetics and want to make others see what I have, I have to show it by my appearance, by ‘looking like’ my aesthetics. This is true when it comes to aesthetic merit as well.

I can write and talk of my ideas and values and make my aesthetic more explicit. Compared to this, however, showing is more exact in one respect. As we saw above, nuanced information cannot be conceptualized, but at the tactile level I can deal with information about nuances and show exactly what I appreciate.14 I can produce exactly the hue of color I want, or exactly the cut I need. I can show that precisely this is good, valuable or fine. If I only speak of what I appreciate, I necessarily work more crudely. Similarly, other people at this café could also tell me what they want to wear and how they want to look but it is much easier to show it.

Secondly, as I can reveal my aesthetics by simply wearing something, this guarantees that this manner of presenting ideas about merit is able to react to its surroundings immediately. I can change my appearance radically within minutes by simply changing clothes if I want to adopt another style. A change from a standard suit to jeans, biker boots and a leather jacket is sufficient to produce another aesthetic altogether. Of course, I cannot change my body as rapidly and it necessarily shows something of my preferences too (think of anorectics and body-builders), but within the limitations of the body I can move from one aesthetics to another very quickly. Everyone at the café can do the same thing if they want. Note that if the change is radical it can even make it difficult for others to recognize the person again; I cannot know whether I would recognize the waitress somewhere else and in other clothes.

Moreover, I can communicate my values to others extremely effectively and rapidly. A few seconds is enough for others to see what colors I prefer, in what kind of group I want to belong, and what I generally consider good-looking. I can reveal this to masses of people by simply walking down the street. Similarly, I got a pretty good idea about the aesthetics of the waitress as soon as I saw her. If one

15. It must be remembered that neutrality as an aesthetic ideal is a different matter than having no interest in aesthetic matters at all, even if these attitudes can ‘produce’ similar, uninteresting appearances. In the ‘normalcy as the ideal’ case, the one who perceives the aesthetics the ‘idealist’ espouses, meets, so to speak, an aesthetics another person has and manifests. In the case where someone who ‘produces’ an appearance does not notice the aesthetic dimensions of his outfit himself, someone who perceives the appearance cannot encounter an aesthetics but only ‘project’ his own aesthetics onto it.

16. This is the principle, but it is naturally not always the case in practice for economic and other reasons.
compares this to the process of writing and reading a study, it is quite obvious which alternative wins when it comes to speed.

But there are also disadvantages in typical ways of realizing human aesthetics.

Firstly, even if showing is an exact way of communicating nuanced aesthetic information in a certain sense, it is not a very exact way of communicating many other things. We cannot always know if someone such as Liberace, wants to present his own appearance as beautiful, cute, funny, handsome, offensive, or as something else, nor can we always know exactly what other people think of it, and in the end we are not always sure what should we think of it ourselves. We do not necessarily know whether what we see is positive, negative or mediocre. There is probably no other choice than to take that as given, since while 'tacit aestheticians' can show that they are (probably) interested in aesthetic merit, what kind of merit is actually realized is more obscure; it can vary as seen from different points of view. Tacit messages can be interesting and intelligent but not very definite, only suggesting or hinting; as John Harvey (1995, 12) puts it, "... they [clothes] work through an aggregate of cues and clues, rather than by agreed clear signs."

Moreover, it may sometimes seem that someone is not interested in aesthetic merit at all or perhaps only in its most mediocre forms - which is, again, a version of unoriginality. It may then be that preferences are dealt with and shown in such a way that they are not easy to notice. A male interviewee of Kaiser's can again be cited here:

I would never dress to stand out like a sore thumb. I would dress so that if there were any differences at all, they'd be very subtle and only someone that can maybe appreciate the things that I can get would notice those subtleties...

(1990, 168).

This principle, of course, comes close to the classic dandy's motto, formulated originally by Balzac, that "the severest mortification of a gentleman could incur was to attract observation in the street by his outward appearance" (Gnúg 1988, 28). In the end, one is attached to a certain kind of merit by one's outer appearance, but not to the extent that it would be plainly seen by everyone.

There are many fairly clear cases. The popularity of plastic surgery indicates commonly accepted aesthetic values that are antiethetical to looking old and wrinkled, and nothing further need be said. Similarly, in many cases it is evident that a person we meet appreciates (or deprecates) his own look, which may be an instance of some commonly appreciated style - think of photo models again. But even if we see that, we cannot know much about reasons for choices, possible alternatives, the historical background, or things that have influenced the choice. We do not get to know much about why this particular look has merit. It is obvious that the explicit and semi-explicit level wins in this respect. People who operate these can analyze, specify, and comment on the aesthetics in question, can compare it with other possible solutions and be much more profound. They do not simply present one alternative, but can open it up in detail. 17

Secondly, because of the particular kind of unilaterality, it is very difficult if not impossible to show tacitly what does not have merit in one's aesthetics. So, if 'positive showing' can be unclear, 'negative showing' is even more so. Tacit aesthetics is unilateral in a special way: whatever one wants to tell of one's aesthetics through an app-

17. Of course, referring to merit is not always absolutely clear at the explicit and semi-explicit levels either. The interest in merit in more explicit versions of aesthetics is typically shown by using certain kind of terminology like 'beautiful', 'cool', 'handsome', etc. The problem is, however, that the terminology is not always quite as revealing, especially in semi-explicit manifestations, and practically any term can be used in an evaluative sense. Moreover, terms and their uses change. At the tacit level, however, uncertainty is even more pervasive.
pearance one has to show it and actualize in the appearance; thus, the basic point of departure is affirmation. (What is actually affirmed, of course, must be considered contextually, case by case.) One affirms what one shows, and what is ‘denied’ is just not present. For example, if one does not want to look like a business man one does not wear a business suit. But if one wears jeans and a t-shirt it does not specifically reveal that one does not want to look like a business man. It shows equally that one does not want to wear shorts, leather jacket, the traditional costume of the Lapps, or anything else. Thus, what exactly is not wanted is always an open question. Basically, if everything other than what is present is taken as negated, the whole concept of negation loses its point.

Certainly, one can question or parody appearance-related things simply by wearing clothes in a certain way. Usually, this happens by combining sartorial items in an unusual manner. For example, if one wears a standard business suit, but has, say, pink shoes, one obviously questions the seriousness of business-type clothing, as if to say “It is possible to combine clothes in this way, and keeping to the average code is not necessary and not even interesting, and I prefer to be funny.” But even in this case, the appearance cannot deny itself: it cannot deny the message it sends. If however one adds a verbal level to it, it is easily done. One can verbally say “As it happens, I have no other shoes, but I hate how I look now.” One can also try to do it by looking embarrassed, but it is much less certain that the message will be understood as intended than when it is explained verbally. In the tacit area it seems evident that it is much easier to affirm than to question forms of merit. What is not shown is simply not present, neither negated nor questioned.

Thirdly, affirmative unilaterality means that only what is shown and present can be communicated, since one can promote only forms of merit one really shows. For example, by not looking idiosyncratic in a standard jeans and t-shirt outfit I cannot reveal any-

thing of my possible individual preferences simply because I look too unexceptional. However, I can reveal individuality by verbalizing my ideas, even if I still have the same attire.

One should remember that affirmative unilaterality need not mean that tacit messages were always simple and had only one meaning. They can be ambiguous and multi-layered. Harvey (1995) has analyzed only one aspect of human appearance, the color black in men’s clothing, and found various meanings for it (mourning, social power, sin, etc.), which may be present simultaneously. But this does not change the principle of affirmation, since even if a message is complex, it is that particular nexus that is realized and no competing alternatives are activated. The color black has many meanings but it does not have the meanings that, say, red has, and cannot allude to them, not even negatively by denying them. Verbal language, however would allow that possibility.

It must be noted that all this is also true, in a way, of explicit cases of aesthetics, which cannot tell anything other than they really tell either. If an explicit case emphasizes conservative values it certainly does not emphasize their opposite. However, the simple but crucial difference between tacit and explicit cases is that whereas tacit cases per se as wholes are inevitably unilateral, when one talks or writes of such cases (tacit wholes) one can comment on them and distance oneself from them, and one does not have to conform with them. The explicit level can introduce another kind of aesthetics, other aesthetic ideas, to a situation. If an appearance shows conservative values, one can deny their merit with words. Without this verbal ‘second’ level, only what is shown is promoted.

So far, I have said something of what different sorts of aesthetics can and cannot do with regard to aesthetic merit. Lastly, I will briefly say something of the third mode. Is there something of which an aesthetics inevitably must speak?

Firstly, there seems to be no reason to think that aesthetic mat-
ters must concern merit solely. The status of aesthetic merit is obvi-
ously essential to aesthetics. It is just as obvious, however, that it is
not the only important matter; another issues can be dealt with as
well.

Remember that even Beardsley, who is of the opinion that if one
has an aesthetic point of view one is interested in whether or not an
object has aesthetic value, notices other factors in the field. An aes-
thetic interest is not necessarily directed to values exclusively but to
aesthetic matters in general. Beardsley’s own activity as a scholar
shows this very well. In his Aesthetics. Problems in the Philosophy of
Criticism he writes about other questions such as meaning and rep-
resentation, and he explicitly takes up the frequently-used triparti-
tion of critical activity into describing, interpreting and evaluating
works of art (1981, 64).18

More recently Alan H. Goldman has used the same division. He is
also of the opinion that there are certain ‘base’ or non-evaluative
properties of works of art and to talk about them as such is not
evaluating (even if, according to Goldman, evaluations must relate
to base properties.19 He claims that “To say that a painting’s com-
position is balanced may be to evaluate it positively; to say that it is
symmetrical is not evaluative” (1995, 25). Of course, any term, in-
cluding ‘symmetrical’, can be used evaluatively by contextualizing it
suitably, and it is debatable whether there are such ‘base properties’
in a Goldmanian, objective sense of the word. But his theory also
strongly suggests that dealing with aesthetic issues is not only
evaluative but involves other aspects as well.

One can leave the setting that approaches the question through
the typical tripartition of criticism behind and look at the situation
from other angles, but the basic fact does not change. For example,
if one writes a study on an aesthetics of human appearance there is
no reason why one could not focus on questions concerning the
ontology of aesthetic objects, which does not necessarily have to do
with values. Following Goldman it can be said that while one may
focus on formal, expressive, representational, sensuous, or historical
properties of works of art, if one does so one is not necessarily
evaluating the work (ibid., 46). Moreover, the historically develop-
ing nature of the field means that there is no way of knowing what
kinds of issue will be dealt with in aesthetics in the future. The aes-
thetic sphere is simply wide enough to allow great variety in its in-
quires.

It must be noticed, however, that it is another question whether
dealing with aesthetic matters is still always and inevitably a matter
of merit, at least implicitly, even if it is not restricted to it.

It might be held that if an appearance and its aesthetics are no-
ticed and considered worth attention in the first place, this shows
that they are taken as having merit or are noteworthy to some de-
gree. Aesthetics would then always be interested in aesthetic merit:

18. This is not the place to point out in detail how interpretation and descrip-
tion could be differentiated from each other, since the problem deserves its own
studies. (On these see Barnes 1988, chapter 8 and passim.) I simply take it that
the former is a more demanding activity which calls for more reasoning and
better explanation, whereas the results of the latter are typically fairly simple
and easy to accept. Interpretation is not needed in the context of self-evident
and obvious cases. The point to be taken here is that neither way of talking
about art works necessarily takes a stand on how good or bad a work is. Re-
member, however, that the difference between evaluative and non-evaluative
activities, however, is analytic and not always empirically detectable.

19. "Ultimately a critic or viewer should defend evaluations by indicating
nonevaluative properties of the works being judged" (Goldman 1995, 25).
There are also "...certain base properties that can be described without evalua-
tion..." (ibid. 93).
different sorts of aesthetics deal with it in different ways but it is always dealt with, along with other matters. Granted, the sheer interest in appearance can be seen as a sign of appreciating it or considering it significant. But this is using the term so broadly that it tends to lose its meaning. Rather, considering something significant shows that it is worth special attention, or that there is something extraordinarily interesting in it. (Sometimes this means that an appearance is sufficiently normal or mediocre.) Not everything on which one focuses is either good or bad, 'beautiful', 'ugly' or interestingly 'mediocre' to the perceiver. To pay attention to how fascinating, good or bad something is different than to ponder what it is, how it relates to its predecessors, what it shows of someone's background or of his aesthetic 'education', how the thing in question exists, or what style it represents.

The difference between valuable things and things that are noticed in other ways is one of vague degree, however, and whether something is seen as having merit in this sense depends heavily on the context. If dress is noticed in L’uomo Vogue (verbally or visually) it is reasonable to take it as a sign of merit, whereas if it is mentioned in a normal everyday chat or just worn it is much less sure. At any rate, it seems that merit as such is nothing 'compulsory' in aesthetics, at least in an accentuated sense, because one can focus primarily on other kinds of issues.

It is true, however, that merit might be the first and only thing that comes in mind especially with cases of tacit aesthetics, and so it is easily seen as a 'must'. But this may be so because we are used to thinking so. We are used to thinking that wearing something indicates liking and preferring it (seeing merit in it), but not necessarily anything else. Why?

All the questions mentioned several times above, the ontology and historical background of aesthetic issues, the nature of aesthetic experience, questions of representation, etc., can be dealt with in detail in explicit cases of aesthetics, and they are all aesthetically interesting matters. But it seems that in tacit aesthetics it is harder to explain anything about such questions. It is naturally possible that while someone wears a suit and notes aesthetic aspects of it such as its color, cut and style, one can silently ponder their ontological status or define them in some way or another. (In this sense, the perceiver's tacit aesthetics can be as complex and profound as explicit aesthetics, but it does not have any social meaning because it is not communicated.) But if he does not express his ideas verbally, nothing of them can be seen in the suit itself; nothing of them can be communicated mutely, not even that these questions are pondered. If I just see someone wearing a suit I have no reason to think that it is any kind of comment on how a suit or even a good-looking suit should be defined or ontologically disposed. On the other hand, however, I have good cultural reasons to suppose that it reveals something of what kind of suit is worth wearing from the point of view of its wearer; in other words, that it shows something of its own aesthetic merit.

The fact that it is impossible to tacitly say anything of ontology, definitions, or of many other questions is perhaps not absolute, however. It is evident that if we think of monochromatic works of art which can be visually quite as simple as plain pieces of cloth, we tend to see them as many-layered messages that can comment on the history of art, define art, or say something else that is conceptually intriguing (even if not in any clear and unambiguous way) - think of Malevits or Yves Klein. Why could a suit not do that? Perhaps it can, but we are simply not used to it, since we are not used to taking appearances in everyday life as dense in meaning, as we

20. What makes these questions aesthetic is their connection to the aesthetic tradition: not all ontological problems are aesthetic, but those concerning works of art, beauty, fictional or form qua elements typically are.
do works of art in their typical context. When we see a monochromatic work it is normal to start to wonder what it can mean, what its message is (although it may try to deny such), and so on, but this is not habitual when we encounter an average suit. Thus, the 'impossibility' is perhaps more dependent on tradition-bound practices of approaching appearances than on appearances themselves as physical objects.

It may be that because we are used to seeing tacit forms of human aesthetics as fairly restricted in their communicative capacity, one might think that the things that culturally are within its scope are things of which it must speak. It is obvious to me that the waitress at the café appreciates her own appearance aesthetically and wants to show it. Still, one does not have to focus purely on aesthetic merit but can concentrate on formal issues, for example. That should be as easy as paying attention to values.21 (This, of course, if I think her appearance speaks of aesthetic issues at all.) Hence, what tacit aesthetics can, cannot and must reveal of the aesthetic dimension in general and aesthetic merit in particular is largely dependent on what we expect of it. Modes are inclinations rather than absolutes. This, of course, does not negate the fact the modes of typical human aesthetics are what they are for us; their 'background' does not affect how they actually function.

All in all, one has to know what one wants to do with and reveal of aesthetic dimensions of human appearance when one chooses the level at which one deals with them. A tacit grip is enough when one is buying a pair of jeans, but one needs much more if one wants to explain what kind of dress style was favored by the ancient Cretans and why. But as profound explicit cases of aesthetics are as rare as they are, it must mean that what can be done by tacit, volatile and unoriginal means normally suffices, and, in fact, is even preferred. What I see around me at the café does not suggest anything else, and I have no reason to take this environment as an exception.

Human aesthetics is typically short-lived, imprecise in many ways, unable to analyze and specify its relation to the tradition or to comment on many crucial aesthetic questions, and often uncreative. But it is also swift in its movement, exact with nuances and extends beyond words easily. In short, it is just the form of aesthetic one needs in everyday life, and is able to deal with aesthetic issues in ways academic aesthetics never is.

21. Indeed, formal issues form another area that seems an obvious ‘compulsory’ object of tacit interest. It is true that there cannot be an appearance without some kind of color, volume and form, and these are easy to approach formally and aesthetically (see Delong 1987 again). Moreover, if an appearance is a means to communicate aesthetic ideas, it can do that by what the physical body and things directly attached to it provide. But it is another question whether or not one concentrates on these physical factors as formal issues as such or wants to achieve something else through them. Formal or physical elements are necessarily present, perhaps ever more inevitably than issues of merit, but one does not have to focus principally on them either. Thus, appearances do not necessarily 'speak' of them even if they necessarily 'speak' with their help.
I started this study by asking what aesthetics in human appearance is and how it is related to people one meets in everyday life. In other words, I asked what kinds of manifestation aesthetics has in this context. From the outset, ‘aesthetics’ was understood broadly, referring to ‘dealing with aesthetic dimensions in human appearance’. At a more general level, the question was, what characterizes aesthetics outside the fine arts?

The answer was condensed into the following three-dimensional ‘space’ with the help of which various instances of aesthetics were compared with each other, and which accentuates the pluralistic nature of the field.

**Original aesthetics**

The purpose of the figure is to point out that there is no single, monolithic body of aesthetics but many types of it, and to make the main variations and the principal characteristics of various aesthetics visible. It suggests that any individual case of aesthetics can be characterized by focusing on how explicit or tacit, original or unoriginal, and volatile or stable it is.

The connection between different sorts of aesthetics and the aesthetic tradition has been emphasized throughout the study. Independently of what kind of aesthetics is in question, it is aesthetics only if it can be seen to be related to the tradition - if it repeats, amplifies or repudiates features of earlier cases of the tradition credibly. It was also stressed that the aesthetic tradition is not a closed, autonomous system but is closely related to and influenced by other cultural spheres.

It was emphasized that as the history of aesthetics is largely art oriented, it is illuminating to compare and contrast other sorts of aesthetics to this central strand of the tradition, and especially to its academic instances, i.e., to paradigmatic cases of aesthetics. In this comparison the three continuums that form the three ‘edges’ of the ‘space’ are justified, because traditional aesthetic paradigms can easily be situated on them and the continuums reveal their essential features. Through relating other versions of aesthetics to paradigms and to their core characteristics, the differences and deviations of other forms of aesthetics from academic-philosophical practices then become clear. At the same time, this reveals the essential characteristics of these other sorts of aesthetics.

A typical case of the aesthetics of human appearance is situated near the left front corner of the ‘space’, or can be seen to be relatively (not absolutely) tacit, unoriginal and volatile. Thus it is not verbalized and overtly specified as aesthetics, tends to be commonplace or shared by many, and is not manifested for long. Typical human aesthetics is in a continuous flux, and documenting it - by pic-
tures, for example - normally both stops this flow and omits many elements (movement, scents, etc.) of the whole that affect the aesthetics in question in its everyday life context. The difference from academic aesthetics and its ideals is striking.

This, in turn, indicates that a typical case has certain advantages and limitations as regards its capacity to deal with aesthetic dimensions in human appearance, which are different from the advantages and limitations of other, more traditional kinds of aesthetics. A typical case of human aesthetics is ephemeral, effective in conveying its message, and capable of reaching the ineffable nuance level of information, but at the same time, unlike academic aesthetics, unable to specify and analyze its own message and nature accurately and profoundly. This, as such, however, does not reveal how skillful or simply reactive it is, because this varies within the sphere of typical cases.

But if typical cases of human aesthetics are of a certain kind, what does it reveal of aesthetics outside the fine arts in general? As such, nothing. One cannot imagine that the aesthetics of non-art is automatically tacit, volatile and unoriginal. The contribution of this study to a larger discussion about the aesthetics of everyday life or non-art comes from another level. It is the general framework that can be applied to analyzing non-art aesthetics as a whole, and the typical characteristics of human aesthetics cannot be transferred to other contexts just like that. The three-dimensional framework or space is the tool which can help one to explicate the kind of aesthetics in the context of, say, advertising, cars or politics, and how it differs from academic-philosophical aesthetic paradigms.

This framework can be used in analyzing both a) typical features of aesthetics of a certain area like advertising and b) single cases of such areas (without making generalizations). One can ask, for example, whether the aesthetics of advertising is typically tacit? Is it tacit in the particular case of a Benson and Hedges advertisement? If yes, in what way? Is it stable or volatile? What is its relation to originality and unoriginality? What is the ideal form of aesthetics in advertising and what is really achieved? What can, cannot and must be done with the aesthetics manifested in this case? These questions are relevant and can always be examined when one has a reason to believe that there is tradition-bound aesthetics present in the first place (in fact, in the context of art as well). One can assume that typical characteristics of the aesthetics of human appearance are shared by many other spheres of non-art, but this must be examined and demonstrated in other studies.

Answers given to questions raised by the three continuums of the aesthetics ‘space’ outline the nature of the aesthetics in question and help one to situate it in the large, pluralistic aesthetic sphere. The general level as such does not, naturally, reveal everything that is interesting and important in each case of aesthetics, but it can be complemented and specified with details as has been done in this study with regard to human appearance. What other, more specific questions are important in each area of non-art must be considered individually. Relevant questions and details, however, are much easier to find when one has a clear indication of where to look for them and tools to do it with.

In the introduction I also said that forming a picture of variations in aesthetics can help one to understand and organize the discussion about aestheticization and the role of aesthetics in the contemporary western world.

‘Aestheticization’ refers to the notion that more and more things get absorbed into the aesthetic sphere, and that aesthetics matters are becoming increasingly important in our daily life. This suggests that it is aesthetic ideas, skills and conceptions - in short, aesthetics - that are used as means of navigating in the world. Criteria for choosing and doing things are above all aesthetic, not religious, political, economic or anything else.
The phenomena with which this idea is often seen to be associated form a heterogeneous field which includes strands like selfish hedonism tied up with irresponsible consumer culture (Haug 1971, Wallgren 1995), escapism or the entertainment often emphasized in the context of popular culture (Park 1993), active criticism of the surrounding society and its values much as in classical aestheticism in Beardsley's interpretation of it (1988, 284-290), the 'epistemological necessity' of 'aesthetic thinking' in the postmodern world (Welsch 1991a and 1996b) as well as certain forms of cultivating oneself as a human being (late Foucault).

Irrespective of our agreeing or otherwise that this picture or some variation of it is accurate - or of to what extent the picture is defensible - as regards the whole Occident or at least certain individuals, there seems to be fairly extensive agreement among the promoters of aestheticization about what factors form its preconditions. A short list includes such partly overlapping factors as industrialization, urbanization, higher living standards, secularization, an increase in leisure time, an expansion of educational opportunities, technical progress, the breakdown of traditional hierarchies and values, increased knowledge of foreign cultures and ways of living through the mass media and travel, and the (philosophical) emphasis on historicity and the point-of-view dependance of 'fundamental' truths. The list would be similar applied to 'postmodernization' with which aestheticization is normally closely associated. The crucial point is to emphasize relativism, pluralism, and an increase in the range of philosophical, economic and social alternatives and choices; nothing is given and certain but one has to create one's own world-view by oneself. There is no freedom but compulsion of choice, and choices are made aesthetically, for want of other, more fundamental criteria.¹

But although many writers agree on factors that make aestheticization understandable or even necessary, there is no uni-

form answer to the question of what aestheticization is. Thus, although many claim that people frequently use aesthetics and focus on aesthetic factors, what these aesthetic factors are is described in different ways.

I take four examples. Firstly, Michel Foucault makes an issue of the aestheticization of ethics and the whole of human life in his late works, and for him that means - although not in any simple way - comparing building up one's life with producing works of art (1983, 1984, 1988; see also Schmid 1991); the concept of art, with all its undefined connotations is pivotal. Secondly, Gerhard Schulze (1992) accentuates the role of good or pleasant experiences (schöne Erlebnisse) in our lives, claiming that such experiences are more important, are sought more often in more various situations and by more people than previously. He identifies this kind of orientation in the world, which is directed toward having as many good experiences as possible, directly with making decisions and choices on aesthetic criteria. Thirdly, Wolfgang Welsch has correctly pointed out several times that the concept of aesthetics has many aspects (1996a). Sometimes, however, he particularly emphasizes the Greek-influenced aisthesis interpretation, and sees a certain kind of sensitive and perceptive aesthetic thinking, which is fundamentally tied up with perception (Wahrnehmung, Beobachtung), epistemologically necessary for dealing with the aestheticized contemporary world (1991a, 1996b). Fourthly, Mike Featherstone (1994) finds three senses in which one can talk of aestheticization. According to him, two of them are connected with the concept of art, while the third refers to the central role of a rapid flow of undiscursive or figural images (rather than words, the 'use value' of products, or 'true' conceptions of the world) in the aestheticized, postmodern con-

¹. Probably the best overview on variations in postmodern thinking and on their backgrounds is still Wolfgang Welsch's Unsere postmoderne Moderne (1991b).
sumer culture.

Divergences between interpretations of 'aesthetic' means that different thinkers graft their ideas to disparate strands of the polyvalent aesthetic tradition. This, of course, is exactly what one should expect, taking account of the breadth of the tradition. But to understand what the discussions of aestheticization is about, one has to be able to see to which part of the aesthetic sphere different writers refer. To art? To *aisthesis*? To aesthetic experiences? To visuality? Somewhere else? Thus one must be familiar with the whole sphere of aesthetics, and be able to see which corner of it is activated and whether or not it is being done credibly.

But identifying parts of the aesthetic sphere and assigning individual cases of aesthetics to them is not enough. One also has to know how they (parts and cases) relate to each other, and what factors are important in each. It is here that the figure above helps, supplying the relevant parameters, and distinguishing the differences between various versions of aesthetics (or between theories about them).

For example, while Featherstone says that the world has become aestheticized so that undiscursive, immediate and rapidly-flowing images are more significant than before, Foucault accentuates the importance of making one's life consciously a work of art by certain 'ascetic' 'technologies of the self', and he often sees writing as important in this. Also, for Foucault it is important that one create one's own kind of work, and he values the possibility of leading a different kind of life than others do, preferably one critical of power structures. Schulze, again, is more interested in typifying the commonly shared aesthetic styles of particular social 'taste groups'. Thus, crucial differences between various ideas of what the nature of aesthetics used (or said to be used) in the aestheticized world is are detectable by concentrating on continuums of tactness-explicitness, volatility-stability and originality-unoriginality. Roughly speaking, Featherstone's model seems to move closer to the tacit and volatile parts of the aesthetic 'space' than Foucault's, and Foucault's aesthetics is closer to individuality than Schulze's. They thus underscore disparate elements important for navigating and acting in the aestheticized contemporary world.

Lastly, I wish to emphasize once more that the broad outline given makes it apparent that aesthetics is often something other than writing academic philosophical studies. In fact, what academic studies can do very well (specify, analyze, comment) is not often needed in everyday life. People obviously want to deal with aesthetic dimensions of the world around them in other, more elastic ways. Aesthetics does not need to be philosophy but can be straightforward action or 'physical' presentation of conceptions and preferences. This aesthetics does not necessarily have any use for philosophy in its traditional form.

Another question is whether philosophy has any use for such unphilosophical aesthetics. Thus far, at least outside the art world, communication between them has been pretty minimal and it remains to be seen what will happen in the future. It is probable, however, that one needs some other philosophy than formal, language-oriented analysis to be able to deal with the 'other' side of aesthetics. What this philosophy should be in its ideal form, is a question that I cannot answer here.
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