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The term “aesthetic” has followed a convoluted path from its origins in Ancient Greek where it evoked the notion of sense perception. The narrower, more “modern”, conception of aesthetics as concerned with matters of “beauty” or “art” only developed through the ideas of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762). Kant uses the term “aesthetic” in both of these senses, in his first and third critiques respectively, reflecting the shift in its meaning during the 18th century (as will be discussed in more detail below).

Why does this matter? Two points seem immediately important. First, when writing about aesthetics, or any concept, it is important to have a sense of what is meant by the term, even if that is only to point up its ambiguity. What is crucial is *not* to take for granted that which falls under such a concept. The second point involves the notion of bifurcation. If one concern of this collection, or this chapter at least, is to trace what might be involved in, or required by, attempts to integrate the aesthetic into thinking and the world, while avoiding any unhelpful or unwarranted bifurcations, then a sense of where such bifurcations come from could be helpful, as it would indicate the kind of work that needs to be done to either avoid or overcome such purported gulfs in thinking, experience and the world. With regard to the two senses of the aesthetic – the possibility of perception and the study of beauty – there are a host of competing bifurcations, rather than one simple gulf. For example, within the traditional philosophical version, there is the possibility of bifurcating the perceiver from the world that is perceived, the knower from the known. Treating aesthetics as concerned with matters of beauty risks producing other bifurcations, for example - between the beauty of the object and the perception of beauty by the perceiver.

The identification of such bifurcations does not entail that the task at hand is to *re*-integrate a separate realm (of art, perception, beauty or representation) back onto or into a placid realm of inert matter. This would be to accept, tacitly, the very bifurcation which enables beauty and reality to be conceived as separate. The more demanding task is to avoid that which leads our thought and lives into such bifurcations.

Whitehead and the (Metaphysical) Need for Aesthetics

It could perhaps be argued that it was a recognition of the extent of this demanding task that led the logician, mathematician and mathematical physicist – Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) – to the need for a novel metaphysics, as set out in his monumental *Process and Reality* (1978 [1929]). It also sheds light on Whitehead's bold description of his own philosophy, which he calls “philosophy of organism” as follows:

The philosophy of organism aspires to construct a critique of pure feeling, in the philosophical position in which Kant put his *Critique of Pure Reason* [...] Thus in the organic philosophy; Kant's “Transcendental Aesthetic” becomes a distorted fragment of what should have been his main topic. (Whitehead, 1978: 113).

Kant's “transcendental aesthetic” which comprises one of the earliest sections of *his* monumental *Critique of Pure Reason* (1986) “discovers” that space and time are not, as Newton held, receptacles which contain the things of the world but are *a priori* intuitions (not concepts) which make *perception* of the world possible - an *a priori* intuition of space and time is necessary to ground the very possibility of sense perception and experience of events in the world, according to Kant. Questions of beauty or art are not involved at this stage. Only in his later critique (around 1790), the *Critique of Judgement*, does Kant use the term aesthetic in its more current sense, as concerned with matter of taste and beauty.

In the “transcendental aesthetic”, Kant's use of “aesthetic” alludes to its pre-Baumgarten role, as the guarantor of perception, where it is concerned with the capacity to perceive perceptible things. This form of aesthetics is necessary for both perception and epistemology. Whitehead will argue, that it is necessary for perception, epistemology *and* reality and metaphysics. To achieve this, Whitehead follows Kant in his adventure into transcendental aesthetics but insists that Kant has not gone far enough. He has reduced the process of perception to the process of thought and in doing so has limited this process to the operations of human minds. Here lie the roots of one of several bifurcations which plague modern thought. The aesthetic, be it in terms of the possibility of perception or the possibility of beauty, always refers to or is derived from either human cognition or human judgements. The objects of perception or of art always lie on the other side of a gulf unknowable or unfeelable in their own term. This is set out in Kant's first and third critiques, which deal with different aspects of *human* experience, both labelled as aesthetic, but divorced from that which is seen or felt. Moreover, post-Baumgarten aesthetics is always situated within *human* feeling.

Whitehead argues that there is no need to make such an assumption, but this stance has major implications. Two of these are:

- Everything that exists is a subject which experiences or feels¹
- Whatever the aesthetic is, it cannot rely upon, or only be generated by, the feelings, perceptions or thoughts of humans

This version of the aesthetic needs to be given its place within (the process of) reality. And this is what Whitehead sets out to do. One first move is to broaden the remit of perception: ‘perception is a feeling’ (Whitehead, 1978: 179) and is not predicated upon, or limited to, human sense perception. Whitehead goes further and broadens the notion of “feeling”.

In feeling, what is felt is not necessarily analysed; in understanding, what is understood is analysed, in so far as it is understood. Understanding is a special form of feeling. [...] Kant, in his *Transcendental Aesthetic*, emphasizes the doctrine that in intuition a complex datum is intuited as one. (Whitehead, 1978: 153-4).

Whitehead takes the first sense of the aesthetic, as concerned with perception but expands its reach so that perception no longer assumed to be solely a human affair. And yet, Whitehead is not simply engaged in advocating a return to pre-Baumgarten conceptions of aesthetics. He chose this term knowing that it would also evoke notions of beauty and art. The balancing act that he is trying to perform involves holding together, or entertaining,² that which is evoked by both senses of aesthetic.

What does this involve? How is it related to feeling? And what is “aesthetic” about it? One short, limited, but important answer to such questions is assert that whatever constitutes the aesthetic, it is certainly not beauty. In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead only uses the word “beauty” twice (Whitehead, 1978: 213, 346 - and “beautiful” (Whitehead, 1978: 48). Likewise, Whitehead uses “aesthetic”, in his particular metaphysical sense, only on a few pages of *Process and Reality* (pp. 213, 279-80, 317), though he does use the word, in its more current sense, at other points. In total he uses the word “aesthetic” about 25 times.

¹ ‘apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness’ (Whitehead, 1978: 167).

² In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead makes extensive use of the word “entertain” (see, for example, Whitehead, 1978: 43, 147, 188, 193, 195, 197, 258, 259) with a slightly unusual usage of the term which refers to its root meaning, that is, to “hold together” or to “hold among”.

The composition of *Process and Reality* was not linear.³ Whitehead revisited his text on various occasions but disliked and avoided wholesale rewriting, revising or even editing. Instead, he preferred to add a paragraph or a section to change the slant or implications of all that went before, or after. This would seem to be the case with his metaphysical discussion of the aesthetic. Whitehead only uses “aesthetic” in the metaphysical sense on a few pages (Whitehead, 1978: 213, 279-80, 317). The first two of the three passages which, in total, make up about four pages of the whole of *Process and Reality* are to be found not just at the end of a chapter, but in the final chapter of one of the five “Parts” of the text. The third discussion (Whitehead, 1978: 317) which comes toward the end of Part IV, is not situated in the final chapter, but Ford (1984: 233-5) lists the chapter in which it does occur (that of “Strains” (Whitehead, 1978: 310-321) as comprising one of the very final revisions of *Process and Reality*.

Such positional and temporal positioning within text matters. Parts II and III make up the main body of *Process and Reality*, they are its core. And yet, at the end of each Part, Whitehead feels that something is lacking, something needs restating, a different emphasis needs to be given. And to address this lack, this need for restatement, Whitehead draws on the aesthetic. For some, this might suggest that Whitehead’s concept of the “aesthetic” is simply an add-on, something which can be taken out, or ignored. I want to argue that the opposite is the case. The fact that Whitehead felt the need, not once, but three times, to restate his metaphysics through the concept of the aesthetic tells us that it is the strongest way of understanding all that has gone before in each Part. As will hopefully become clear as this chapter unfolds, the positioning of these arguments within the text itself bears witness to the operation of the aesthetic within all elements of existence. To justify such a claim, some more detailed analysis is required.

Some Details: Whitehead’s Use of “aesthetic” within *Process and Reality*

In the final chapter of the Part II of *Process and Reality*, Whitehead “sums up”, his metaphysics.

An actual occasion is nothing but the unity to be ascribed to a particular instance of concrescence. [...] The analysis of the formal constitution of an actual entity has given

³ See Lewis Ford (1984) for a fuller discussion of some of the complexities involved in the composition and publication of this text.

three stages in the process of feeling: (i) the responsive phase, (ii) the supplemental stage, and (iii) the satisfaction. (Whitehead, 1978: 212)

Whitehead sets up actual occasions in terms of stages of feeling but has not mentioned the aesthetic yet. The centrality and importance of feeling harks back to Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic, in the sense of referring to the very possibility of perception. For Whitehead, such perception, intuition or feeling is not limited to human subjects. The becoming of an actual entity or an actual occasion (Whitehead's term for one of his two fundamental metaphysical elements (the other being "eternal objects" which there is not time to go in to here)) incorporates feeling. This is not the feeling of the world (an object) by an already existent subject. Instead, the process of feeling generates the subject. This is still too simple an account. There are stages to this feeling. However, importantly, these stages are in neither space nor time. It is, perhaps, hard to think about stages which are non-temporal but that is what Whitehead is asking us to do. This is perhaps, one first indication of the role of the aesthetic, in terms of the original sense of the possibility of perception (hence, again, Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic). There is another sense of the aesthetic which inhabits this more general account of the possibility of perception, and this develops in the second, supplemental, stage. He describes this as follows:

The second phase, that of supplementation, divides itself into two subordinate phases. [...] Of these two sub-phases, the former so far as there is an order is that of aesthetic supplement, and the latter is that of intellectual supplement.' (Whitehead, 1978: 213)

The aesthetic element "precedes" or has priority over the "later" intellectual stage and Whitehead soon provides some more detail:

In the aesthetic supplement there is an emotional appreciation of the **contrasts** and rhythms inherent in the unification of the objective content in the concrescence of one actual occasion. In this phase **perception** is heightened by its assumption of pain and pleasure, beauty and distaste.' (Whitehead, 1978: 213. Emphasis added)

It is important to note the linkage between aesthetics and perception, as mentioned previously. This again situates the argument within the pre-Baumgarten realm, within the original Greek sense of aesthetics, and also the Transcendental Aesthetic of Kant's first critique which is now broadened so that it does not rely upon or emanate from human consciousness. Such perception does not emanate from humans or animals alone, it is an integral part of any actual occasion. Perception is a mode of feeling the world which does not have to involve sight or any other of the senses. All things feel, and all things perceive. This is one of the tenets of Whitehead's

metaphysics. The aesthetic, therefore, inhabits all elements of existence, to a greater or lesser extent.

This is a surprising, if not bewildering, proposition – any “thing” that exists both feels and perceives and partakes of the aesthetic. In recognition of the peculiarity, Whitehead, in the quotation given above, attempts to explain his point in his next sentence where he talks of “pain and pleasure, beauty and distaste”. With this mention of “beauty” surely Whitehead is drawing on some kind of notion of aesthetics. Perhaps, but it is important not to go too far too quickly.

Whitehead’s metaphysical account of existence in terms of “actual entities” does not map on to human experience of the world. The kind of experiences that we have of the world involve, rather, Whitehead’s specific understanding of what he terms “societies” (Whitehead, 1978: 89-109). Such societies are collections which endure, and are far-removed from apparently ultimate metaphysical entities such as “actual entities”.⁴ To assume that Whitehead’s metaphysical discussion of existence in terms of “actual entities” “actual occasions”, feelings, “eternal objects”, etc. can be immediately taken up and used to describe *our* world, *our* experiences is to misunderstand the metaphysical aspect of Whitehead’s philosophy. Whitehead’s philosophy is speculative precisely in so far as it is *not* merely a description of *our* existence. And yet, such metaphysical explanation needs to be balanced with the requirement to *explain*. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to return to Whitehead’s mention of “pain and pleasure, beauty and distaste”. Two points can be made. The first, rather tepid one, is that this phrase is simply an example of Whitehead trying to clarify his surprising proposition that all things feel and perceive by using terms with which we are more familiar. The second, more interesting point, can build on this first one and ask us to extend our surprise.

As discussed previously, Whitehead is attempting to develop a “critique of pure feeling”. Feeling is primary; feeling constitutes the process and outcomes of actual occasions. Such feelings might, for us, appear to refer to an already known or understood aesthetic realm of beauty, pleasure, pain or distaste. However, this is to

⁴ Many Whitehead scholars missed the crucial distinction between actual entities and societies and it took some real effort to bring the importance of societies in his philosophy to the forefront (see Debaise, 2006: 133-72, Halewood, 2011: 79-104, Stengers, 2011).

go too far too fast. Whitehead's main point is that feeling is not inert. It always happens in a certain way. There is a qualitative aspect which is constitutive of all existence; it is not an addition. To avoid the perils of the Bifurcation of Nature, Whitehead must develop a scheme in which feelings, and ways of feeling, occur within existence, without reference either to humans or to human consciousness. This is one role of the "aesthetic" within his metaphysics. To give a place to qualities of feelings which are in no way reliant upon humans. The mention of beauty and pain is offered to elicit an initial understanding of this point but then asks us to take the next step; to allow for the possibility that that which humans refer to as beauty, pleasure, pain, distaste is an element of all existence. No thing is inert. More than that, all things in the metaphysically potential sense, could experience what humans call pleasure, pain, distaste, beauty.

A Missing Shade of Blue

Another way of reading Whitehead's passages on the aesthetic is as a response to a major philosophical problem which is sometimes referred to as Hume's missing shade of blue. Indeed, Whitehead makes it clear that this is one of his goals (Whitehead, 1978: 260-1). David Hume, the arch empiricist, allowed for an exception to his empiricism which Whitehead wants to avoid. Hume maintains that a person confronted with a spectrum of shades of blue, going from light to dark, with one shade missed out, will be able to conjure up in their mind this missing shade. Whitehead disagrees. The details of Whitehead's argument are dense but I will give a flavour in the following quotation which provides more detail on the supplemental phase (the one where the aesthetic "occurs"):

It is the phase in which blue becomes more intense by reason of its **contrasts**, and shape acquires dominance by reason of its loveliness. What was received as alien, has been recreated as private. This is the phase of, including emotional reactions to **perceptivity**. In this phase, private immediacy has welded the data into a new fact of blind feeling. Pure aesthetic supplement has solved its problem. This phase requires an influx of conceptual feelings and their integration with the pure physical feelings.' (Whitehead, 1978: 213-4. Emphasis added)

Again, we are in the realm of "perceptivity"/ of perception (or "sensible intuition, as Kant might put it). There is also mention of "conceptual feelings" and these invoke Whitehead's notion of eternal objects, in their role of providing both potentiality and novelty (though here is not time to go into detail here). There is also mention of

“loveliness”. Is this a reference to aesthetics? Perhaps. But if so, it is not crucial to the argument being made and could perhaps be filed as another example of Whitehead’s attempt to explain. What matters is the mention of contrast, of the “emotional reaction” and the move from blind feeling into the conceptual.

It is important to remember that Whitehead is partially in dialogue with Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, in that he is trying to establish a Critique of Pure Feeling. The first stage of feeling is a blind feeling, where the public, the outside, the “alien” begins to be felt privately. The second, supplemental phase of feeling, the one where the aesthetic occurs, involves those feelings which don’t have the physical as their datum, but have potentiality, alternatives or possibilities as their data - this is the realm of eternal objects and conceptual feelings. Feeling becomes more “complex”, does not emanate from a subject, but produces a subject which is the conveyor and conveyance of such novel reactions to the world. Contrast and contrasts are the porters of conceptuality and novelty. It is not a matter of conjuring up an absent shade of blue but of focussing on the intensity of this blue, in contrast to other possible blues, or even reds or greens. The completion of this feeling turns that private event into a public fact. It also renders this fact as “aesthetic”, in that the contrast, the conceptual novelty is integral to that fact, indeed to all facts in so far as they populate the world.

Whitehead makes this point clear when he returns to the notion of the aesthetic at the end of Part III of *Process and Reality*: ‘an actual fact is a fact of aesthetic experience. All aesthetic experience is feeling arising out of the realization of contrast under identity’ (Whitehead, 1978: 280). Contrast is, again, crucial. For the awareness, the inclusion, of the possibility of things being otherwise, of the world not being a procession of blind repetition of sameness, of the integral character of novelty, is the hallmark of the aesthetic. So much so that all facts are an aesthetic fact.

If every fact has an aesthetic element, in that it, to an extent comprises and contrast, then the aesthetic is “reduced” to the rather boring contrast between, for example, something being warm or cold. One consequence of this is that the “aesthetic” is widespread, one might say even “commonplace”, “banal”. We are a long way from questions of beauty, or “Art”. Perhaps this is not surprising, in that we are at the heart of Whitehead’s metaphysics. Nevertheless, such considerations need to be given their place. And some indication of this is to be found in Whitehead’s third and final

discussion of the aesthetic in *Process and Reality* where he states that 'The canons of art are merely the expression, in specialized forms, of the requisites for depth of experience' (Whitehead, 1978: 317). Art, beauty, whatever they may turn out to be, are no more, and no less than, an example of the deeper form of (aesthetic) fact and feeling which suffuses existence, and constitutes both objects and subjects.

Examples, Metaphysics and John Dewey

One aim of this chapter is to outline the role of the aesthetic within Whitehead's metaphysics, as set out in *Process and Reality*. It transpires that any such outline might be felt to be lacking, in that the very instantiation of the aesthetic as a metaphysical elements entails that any examples, or particular instances, need to be written out of the scheme, or introduced only as secondary, "explanatory", elements. As a result, those mentions of "beauty, pain, pleasure, etc" had to be removed from the scaffolding of the argument. Whitehead declares metaphysics to be 'a dispassionate consideration of the nature of things, antecedently to any special investigation into their details' (Whitehead, 1932: 195). Yet, the demand for examples, for further explanation, is a strong one. Rather than turn to one of Whitehead's later texts, such as *Adventures of Ideas*, I will take a detour through a philosophical contemporary of Whitehead, namely John Dewey. The intellectual concerns of these two thinkers not only crossed but intertwined to such an extent that I maintain that it is possible, with some care and caution, to read them together, as helping develop and extend the reach of each other's arguments.

The main point to note is that where Whitehead, in *Process and Reality*, focusses on developing an abstracts metaphysical scheme which by definition cannot rely on example, Dewey eschews metaphysics and maintains that only through specific arguments and examples can any metaphysical point be made.

In order to *understand* the esthetic⁵ in its ultimate and approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens: the sights that hold the crowd – the fire-engine rushing by; the machines excavating enormous holes in the earth; the human-fly climbing the steeple-side; the men perched high on girders, throwing red-hot bolts. The sources of art in human experience will be learned by him who

⁵ Dewey chose to use this spelling. I could have changed it to "aesthetic" to fit in with the other uses within this chapter. However, I have kept it in its original version, as I have the feeling that this slight alteration, disturbance, in some way fulfils an aesthetic role, in the sense being set out in this chapter.

sees how the tense grace of the ball-player infects the onlooking crowd; who notes the delight of the housewife in tending her plants (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 3).

When confronted with a piece of text which seems to assume that only men look, listen, enjoy learn the sources of art in human experience, that man can stand in for all humans, and that men perch high on girders while housewives tend their plants, the usual convention is to place [*sic*] after the offending text, and perhaps a footnote mentioning such attitudes represent no more than the common academic convention of the time. I think it is important not to do this. Rather, let us take the text at its word. Reading this text, this quotation, is an experience among many other experiences. In trying to understand the text, the reader will be confronted or affected by the skewed language, assumptions and phraseology. While trying to latch on to the “fact” that the raw components of the aesthetic are to be found in machines, fire engines, building sites, sport and gardening, the manner in which this fact is elicited and framed cannot be shorn from the fact itself. ‘There is not parting from your shadow’ (Whitehead, 1932 [1925]: 23).

We need to *entertain*, in the original sense of the word - of holding together - rather than *enjoy* Dewey’s text, at this stage at least. Our reaction is an example of the aesthetic at work throughout existence (though Dewey might not put it in so general manner). For Dewey, as with Whitehead, what matters is experience. ‘Even a crude experience, if authentically an experience, is more fit to give a clue to the intrinsic nature of esthetic experience than is an object already set apart from any other mode of experience’ (Dewey, 2005 [1934]). It is a mistake, when thinking about the aesthetic, to start with supposed art objects and consider how they fit in with some notion of the aesthetic. Aesthetics, for Dewey, is a theory of specific feelings and experiences but he does not predicate such experience upon human individuality or subjectivity. Dewey gets rid of any notion of a fixed self which endures behind its experiences. He talks of the ‘failure [which] is found when the self is regarded as the bearer or carrier of an experience instead of a factor absorbed in what is produced, as in the case of the gases that produce water’ (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 260-1). The self, insofar as one can talk of such a “thing”, comes and goes, is an element of a wider event. ‘Because experience is the fulfilment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. Even in its rudimentary forms, it contains the promise of that delightful perception which is esthetic experience’ (Dewey, 2005 (1934): 18-19). The

hallmark of an aesthetic experience is that the organism and environment work together to constitute and experience within which it makes no sense to talk of the self and the world as separate. This hallmark is actually borne by all experiences; it is simply that the aesthetic experience brings it most to light:

the uniquely distinguishing feature of esthetic experience is exactly the fact that no such distinction of self and objects exist in it, since it is esthetic in the degree in which organism and environment cooperate to institute an experience in which the two are so fully integrated each disappears. (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 259)

Albeit via a different route, Dewey has brought us to a conclusion which was made toward the end of the discussion of Whitehead's placement of the aesthetic within his metaphysics. Aesthetics is not a creation of the human mind, or of human feeling. It is wider than that and incorporates the external world, the environment, in a co-operation with a range of organisms (including humans). The aesthetic has a wider remit than first thought, in fact it has such an extraordinarily broad reach that it might even be felt to be commonplace or banal. This might constitute a problem, in that the aesthetic has been so diluted as to have lost the purchase upon feelings (of beauty, distaste, or otherwise) that both Whitehead and Dewey both want to retain, or at least be able to encompass within their theories, without predicating their arguments upon the specificity of human feelings.

Dewey renders this troublesome consequence as follows: 'The problem of conferring esthetic quality upon all modes of production is a serious problem. But it is a human problem for human solution; not a problem incapable of solution because it is set by some unpassable gulf in human nature or in the nature of things' (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 84). To address the problem, it is necessary to address that which generates the problem. There is no gulf, no bifurcation, within human nature, within nature, or between human nature and nature. That is not the source of the problem. It is not that there is aesthetic on one side and reality on the other. The problem, as signalled by Dewey's use of the more familiarly Marxist phrase "modes of production" is one situated within the very *character* of the economic, political, psychological, industrial environs of that which we call, don't call, or want to call "aesthetic".

'Capitalism has reduced 'Art' and the aesthetic so that the emphasis is placed on the object and the ownership of them be it in private collections or museums' (Dewey,

2005 [1934]: 7). One important consequence of the argument made throughout this chapter, namely, that the extent and remit of the aesthetic has often been underestimated. It has been restricted to the human realm, predicated on consciousness and lifted off from nature or reality. Whitehead and Dewey aim to give the aesthetic its rightful place within existence, as occupying a much broader plane. In doing so, although without always making this clear, they make a distinction between the aesthetic and what might be termed “Art”. For Dewey, whatever Art involves, it will involve work. ‘The product of artistic activity is significantly called the *work of art*’ (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 290). Art is a form of work. Can it be said that work is a form of art? Not exactly, but there will be an element of the latter within work. This turns attention from Whitehead’s metaphysical description to Dewey’s focus on the metaphysical within the everyday, through the inherence of the aesthetic within the processes of production. Recalling that the self and environment cohere within specific experiences, it is not possible to generalise, to posit laws which govern the processes of production.

The psychological conditions resulting from private control of the labor of other men for the sake of private gain, rather than any fixed psychological or economic law, are the forces that suppress and limit esthetic quality in the experience that accompanies processes of production. (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 357)

Capitalism is slippery. It evades our grasp, mentally and physically. Capitalism is not a thing, a substantive, a noun, which can be isolated and named. Capitalism is a way of doing things; hence the term *mode* of production - there are *market-like* relations rather than markets in which such relations occur (see Halewood, 2021: 71-88, for a fuller discussion of this). Capitalism like ‘Art is a quality of doing and of what is done. Only outwardly, then, can it be designated by a noun substantive [...] it is adjectival in nature’ (Dewey, 2005 [1934]: 222. Where Dewey uses the adjectival to express the qualitative character of the aesthetic, I would like to add the adverbial, to emphasize the modes of activity and experience. The environment within which work occurs is not governed by immutable economic or psychological laws; the conditions of works do, however, “suppress and limit [the] esthetic quality” which necessarily inheres in all experiences which accompany work.

The argument has shifted, rather quickly, from metaphysics to capitalism. This is not to suggest that there is a necessary step from the metaphysical situating of aesthetics

to a discussion of capitalism. It is, however, to suggest that a metaphysical account on its own tells us only of metaphysics. This does not make it irrelevant, as metaphysical conceptions or presumptions lurk within our everyday thought. To help clarify the consequence of metaphysics, rather than simply clarifying the metaphysic argument itself, other discussions and applications are required. This is the role that I have assigned to Dewey in this chapter. This leads quickly to Art, work and capitalism, as indicators of the possibilities that can be enabled by a detour through metaphysics. During this detour, it may have been noted that the “style” or tone of the analysis changed. As I have argued elsewhere (Halewood, 2020: 135-153), tone, force and rhetoric matter. And, as I want to argue here, they could be taken of markers of both Whitehead and Dewey’s conceptions of the aesthetic as that which not so much accompanies all facts or experiences but provides facts and experiences with their definiteness, their specificity, which Whitehead refers to as ‘the aesthetic appreciation of the bare fact: the bare fact is merely *that* region, *thus* qualified’ (Whitehead, 1978: 317). *That* cloth is *light blue*. This later portion of the text is *less formal* and contrasts with the *earlier, drier* passages. Whether this contrast is pleasing or unhelpful is a secondary, derivative, element. It could fulfil the demand which some might make for a traditional version of the aesthetic (in terms of judgements of “beauty”) but only insofar as such judgements are made possible by the aesthetic elements of all experiences and facts – in this instance, unbreakable association of the facticity of the text with the manner of its presentation.

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