

Pictures and the Standard of Correctness

Michael Newall

A range of theories of depiction incorporate a ‘standard of correctness’ in order to defend themselves against certain kinds of potential counter-examples. However, disagreement exists about what sets the standard of correctness. Richard Wollheim and Robert Hopkins hold that it is the picture-maker’s intention, while Dominic Lopes argues that it is the source of the information embodied in the picture. This paper criticises these existing approaches and presents a new account, in which non-photographic and photographic pictures have different standards of correctness. These standards of correctness, however, are determined by a single rule that takes into account the different kinds of information these two ways of picture-making can reliably convey.

1. The standard of correctness

The idea of a standard of correctness was developed by Richard Wollheim. In order to understand his motivation for introducing it is important to understand the outlines of his theory of depiction.¹ According to Wollheim, understanding a picture involves an experience he calls ‘seeing-in’: *seeing* the picture’s subject matter *in* the picture surface. ‘[W]hen seeing-in occurs’, he writes, ‘two things happen: I am visually aware of the surface I look at, and I discern something standing out in front of, or (in certain cases) receding behind something else’ (idem, 46). While Wollheim held that seeing-in was necessary for depiction, he acknowledged that seeing-in was not on its own sufficient for depiction. Two kinds of counter-examples make this clear. First are instances of pictures in which we are able to see things that the picture does not depict. For example, despite the fact that I can see the face of my friend in a Pontormo portrait, the portrait does not depict my friend. Second are non-pictorial surfaces that occasion seeing-in. For example, a chance stain on a wall is not a picture, despite the fact that it may prompt us to see some object in it.

Wollheim held that both kinds of counter-example can be avoided by proposing that a standard of correctness exists which distinguishes “correct” seeing-in, of a picture’s subject matter, from “incorrect” seeing-in, which does not effect pictorial understanding. Wollheim thought that the standard of correctness is set by the maker’s intention. That is, that to correctly understand a picture, what the viewer sees in the picture must accord with what the maker *intends* the viewer to see in the picture. Wollheim’s theory can thus be phrased as follows. A surface, X, depicts an object, Y, if and only if (i) viewers can see Y in X, and (ii) X’s maker intends viewers to see Y in X. On this account, the Pontormo portrait does not depict my friend because the maker did not intend it to do so. Instead it depicts the Florentine nobleman who sat for the portrait, because not only can we see this individual in the painting, it was also Pontormo’s intention that this nobleman be seen in the painting. The stain does not depict anything because there is no intention involved in its production (and no maker to have

an intention, assuming the stain is naturally occurring). In the first case intention sets the standard by which correct understanding of the picture is judged. In the second case, the lack of such a standard (since there is no intention on the part of a maker) identifies the surface as non-pictorial.

A range of recent theories of depiction also find themselves potentially vulnerable to counter-examples of these kinds. These have adopted Wollheim's idea of a standard of correctness, although without always adhering to his idea that the standard is set by the maker's intention. I focus here on two general kinds of theories of depiction, experience-based theories and recognitional theories, both of which have an important presence in the current literature on depiction.² Wollheim's account is an example of an experience-based theory. Generally these theories hold that a picture must be capable of occasioning a certain kind of visual experience – one that is in some way “of” the subject matter. I will call this ‘pictorial experience’. Different theories characterise this experience in different ways. Wollheim describes it as seeing-in; Robert Hopkins, to take another prominent example, thinks it is a somewhat different kind of experience, which is better described as an ‘experienced resemblance’.³ It will be apparent that all such theories are potentially vulnerable to the counter-examples I have mentioned. However one characterises pictorial experience, it will always be a kind experience that can be occasioned by stains on a wall, or that can be of a friend, when the picture is of a Florentine nobleman.⁴ Turning to Hopkins' account, if pictures give rise to an experience that they resemble their subject matter, so we will also be able to find stains on a wall that can be experienced as resembling something, and find old portraits that occasion an experience of resemblance to people they do not depict. Like Wollheim, we shall see, Hopkins guards against these by introducing a standard of correctness and defining it in terms of the maker's intention.

Recognition theories hold that a different kind of response on the part of the viewer is integral to depiction. Rather than a kind of experience, it is the cognitive activities underlying our experiences of pictures that should be understood as necessary to depiction. So recognition theories hold that a picture engages visual recognitional abilities engaged by its subject matter. Again this idea is vulnerable to the counter-examples I have mentioned. For if a picture of X engages a visual recognitional ability for X, so a stain on a wall with the right shape will trigger the same recognition ability, and an old portrait that depicts Y could well trigger the recognitional ability for X. Dominic Lopes, who has developed the most thoroughgoing recognition theory, also develops a standard of correctness which guards against such counter-examples.⁵ However, as we shall see, he does not think the standard of correctness is set by intention, but by the source of the information embodied in the picture.

We have now seen why a standard of correctness is required by certain theories. I have touched on one account of the standard of correctness, Wollheim's proposal that the picture-maker's intention sets the standard of correctness; and I have mentioned another, Lopes's “information” account. I will have criticisms to make of both approaches. The account that I present in their stead will seem, at first, to be not an especially neat one by comparison. I hold that there are two different standards of interpretation for two different types of pictures. Hand-made, “manigraphic” pictures, such as paintings, drawings and traditional prints, have the standard of correctness set by the maker's intention.⁶ Photographs, and other photo-based pictures, have their standard of correctness set by a causal relation. In developing this account I will spend some time explaining just why such a ‘split’ account is called for, and we shall ultimately find that both standards can be understood as unified by a single principle close to that described by Lopes. A final note before beginning: I do not want to favour

experienced based-theories here, so I will speak of “experience or recognition” throughout.

2. Manugraphic pictures

Let us start with manugraphic depiction. As we have seen, for a manugraphic picture to depict something, it is not enough that it prompts us to have a visual experience or recognition of that thing. Here, much like Wollheim, I hold that this experience or recognition must also accord with the intention of the picture-maker.

This account faces certain challenges. Let us consider first a complaint made by Lopes, which he directs at Wollheim. Lopes claims that pictures with ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ subject matter are counter-examples to such a standard of correctness (Lopes, 164–165). He uses Rembrandt’s painting *Bathsheba Reading King David’s Letter* (1654, Louvre, Paris) to illustrate this point. It is widely thought that Rembrandt used his companion Hendrickje Stoffels as his model for Bathsheba. The painting thus depicts both Bathsheba (since we have an appropriate experience or recognition of the (perhaps fictional or fictionalized) Biblical heroine, and Rembrandt intends his audience to have this experience or recognition) and Stoffels (since we have an appropriate experience or recognition of Rembrandt’s mistress, the picture being a recognizable portrait, and presumably Rembrandt meant his audience to have this experience). So far, so good for an intention account. However, Lopes has it that matters are more complex than this: the painting is *primarily* identified as of Bathsheba and *secondarily* as of Stoffels. *Bathsheba* is first and foremost a picture of Bathsheba; it is only secondarily a portrait of Stoffels. Lopes claims that intention gives us no way to differentiate between Bathsheba being the primary subject matter, and Stoffels being the secondary subject matter.

The first thing to say here is that the intention condition is not meant to distinguish between these kinds of depiction – it just allows us to distinguish things that are depictions of Y from those that are not. So this proposed counter-example is not an especially compelling one. Still, it is fair to ask that the intention condition should be compatible with a distinction between primary and secondary subject matter. This it is: I would suggest we consider subject matter primary just when its depiction depends on the depiction of a model. In such circumstances the model will then be the picture’s secondary subject matter. So Bathsheba is the primary subject matter because her depiction depends on the depiction of the model; Stoffels, in virtue of this relation, is the secondary subject matter.⁷

Let us consider a more difficult problem, again making use of Rembrandt’s *Bathsheba*. A number of medical researchers have proposed that *Bathsheba* provides evidence that Stoffels was suffering from a medical condition affecting her left breast at the time she acted as model for this painting. It has been proposed that this condition is breast cancer, tuberculous mastitis or lactation mastitis, among other possibilities.⁸ Say we were to accept the first of these hypotheses: that Stoffels had breast cancer. We assume that Rembrandt was not aware that the shape of her breast when she modelled was a symptom of the cancer, for he would hardly have depicted this telling shape if he knew just what it indicated, and even if he would have intentionally depicted Stoffels with a tumour (as some artists of unflinching realism might), he would not have intentionally depicted the future wife of King David with this condition. On the face of it this appears to be a counter-example to the intention standard: Rembrandt seems unwittingly – that is to say, unintentionally – to have depicted Stoffels’ breast cancer.

My position here is that the tumour is not in fact depicted in these circumstances. Instead it is a shape that happens to be distinctive of a breast cancer tumour, rather than the breast cancer itself, that Rembrandt depicts. Depicting such a distinctive shape poses my account no

problem, for one does not have to realise that such a shape is distinctive of cancer (or indeed anything else) in order to intend the viewer to visually experience or recognize that shape.⁹

There is a point of view from which this reply might seem inadequate. If we conceive of Rembrandt as simply depicting what was before his eyes it may well follow that he does indeed depict Stoffels' cancer. The writers I have cited implicitly view Rembrandt in this way, as a faithful documenter of what is visible to him. Such a view is in obvious respects naïve (and it is fair to criticise their diagnoses on this account). It presents the artist as a passive receptor of Stoffels' image, rather than active, making decisions about narrative, style and technique, about which features to depict and which to omit, and responding to earlier traditions of picture-making (his Bathsheba, for example, is of a physical type familiar in Northern European art from the Renaissance). A painter of Rembrandt's abilities can paint from the imagination, or from memory, or from some other painting. He will elide details, or depict details that are not there. Textures of fabric and flesh, including the various irregularities of their surfaces that give a sense of truth to life, may be quickly and efficiently produced through techniques applied without reference to a model.

My point here is that because of this, Rembrandt's painting (and manographic pictures generally) cannot be considered reliable conduits of information if the picture-maker does not intend to convey that information. This does not rule out the possibility that Stoffels may have had breast cancer, and that Rembrandt unwittingly recorded its distinctive shape. That is, Rembrandt's painting *may* be a conduit of this information. But because of the general unreliability of manographic pictures in this respect, we are left in doubt over this point. The medical researchers I cite have interpreted Rembrandt's painting as one would a photograph, rather than as a manographic picture. The crucial difference here is that where manographic pictures are not reliable conduits of information in these circumstances, photographs are. This is an implicit part of our everyday understanding of pictures. Say one had to trust a doctor to make a diagnosis on the basis of either photographs taken by somebody without a medical background, or drawings of an artist, also without a medical background. The choice would be straightforward: the artist, whatever her other virtues, is not trusted to convey the relevant information, while the photograph is considered much more reliable. I think this also tells us something about how intention comes to be the standard of correctness for manographic pictures. We *believe* that manographic pictures are reliable conduits of that information the picture-maker intends to convey (provided they are skilled enough to fabricate a surface that can occasion an appropriate experience or recognition), but we *do not tend to believe* that they reliably convey information that the picture-maker does *not* intend to convey.¹⁰

Accordingly, when we consider manographic pictures, we discount possible meanings that we do not believe that the maker can have intended.

While intention does provide the standard of correctness for manographic pictures, this is not a matter of logical necessity. We can, for instance, imagine a situation in which manographic pictures operate according to a different standard of correctness. Imagine a community in which painters put their images to a popular vote in order to determine their meaning. Voters would be required to consider the various items that they find that each picture surface can occasion a visual experience or recognition of, and then choose one of these and write its name on a ballot. The picture's subject matter is then the item with the most votes. As I say, such a standard of correctness is no doubt possible, but it is significant that we cannot furnish any actual counter-examples along these lines. The reason for this is not especially obscure. A primary function of manographic pictures is communicative: to communicate the intended meaning of the maker. This, we have seen, is what manographic pictures are fitted to do. To

do away with a standard of correctness based on intention would be to make pictures much less useful to us. Understandably, this function is something that no culture that makes use of images appears to have sacrificed. The maker's intention as a standard of correctness is thus something like a convention. I say that it is only something like a convention, for this choice of standard is not an arbitrary one; rather, it is a condition of pictures' communicative function. We tacitly agree that the maker's intention provides the standard of correctness, because the alternative would be to lose this function.

3. Photographic pictures

As I have indicated, photographs and other photo-based pictures are subject to a different standard of correctness.^[11] Many of us are familiar with taking a snapshot only to be disappointed to find that the resultant photograph depicts something that we didn't intend it to – a relative whose head unexpectedly bobs up in frame just as the picture is taken, a passer-by unnoticed at the time, and so on. Consider too that the camera operator need not even intend to take a photograph in order for it to be produced. An accidental fumble can be enough to set in train a process that results in a photograph. Such a photograph is nevertheless as much a picture as any other photograph. Provided it is in focus, it will typically depict whatever the camera happened to be pointed at, at the time of its operation.

Hopkins has argued that photographs are subject to the intention condition; but this seems to me wrong (Hopkins, 71–73). He holds that the camera's designer intends it to depict whatever it is pointed at, whenever it is operated correctly, regardless of whether the operation is intentional or accidental. Although he does not mention it, he could claim support from Louis Daguerre's patent. The English patent of the daguerreotype calls it 'a new ... method of obtaining the spontaneous reproduction of *all* the images received in the focus of the Camera Obscura'.^[12] Still, it seems a lot to ask of one individual's intention (or the intentions of a handful of individuals, if one takes the position that it is particular camera designs and designers that are relevant here) that they provide the standard of correct interpretation for all photographs. How could this standard be universally understood – cross-culturally, and by adults and children – when only scholars are familiar with the wording of Daguerre's patent, and when other patents and instruction manuals are even more poorly read? Indeed, say that Daguerre (or subsequent camera designers) had not in fact intended this, but only intended that photography be a useful method to depict things that the camera's operator intends to depict. I do not think we would now understand accidental photographic images any differently.

I believe Hopkins is close to the mark in thinking that the standard of correctness for a photograph is what is present before the camera when the photograph is taken. But as we have seen, it is not the intention of a designer that ensures this standard. What then does establish this as the standard of correctness?

Photographs are made by relatively simple optical, mechanical and chemical processes. As a consequence of this, a photograph's depictive content is counterfactually dependent on what is present before the camera. A photograph of Y indicates that Y was present before the camera, and if Y had not been so present, then the photograph would not depict it. This is why photographs are reliable conduits of information about what is present before the camera. It is also for this reason that the major use of photographs and other photo-based pictures is not, like manigraphic pictures, communicative of a maker's intended meaning. Rather their major use is documentary: they reliably inform us about actual states of affairs. For us to make full use of this documentary function, a different standard of correctness is required to other

pictures. Thus, the standard of correctness is not set by the maker's intention but rather the presence of the subject matter before the camera when the photograph was taken. Again, this is something like a convention, for we can imagine cases in which it could be rejected. We can, for instance, imagine a society that made the standard of correctness for photographs the same as for other pictures: the maker's (that is the photographer's) intention. We might imagine that photographers there take photographs at random, then file each photograph away according to what it occasions a visual experience or recognition of. When the photographer wishes to depict a Y, they pull a photograph out of the relevant file and present it for exhibition, titling it Y, at which point it becomes a picture of Y. Note there is no need for the photograph's source to be Y – it might be Y, but might also be some other item – a suitably shaped cloud or stain on a wall – so long as it is capable of occasioning the experience or recognition of Y. Like my previous example, it is no coincidence that I have to resort to imagination to make this point. Such a use of photographs would ignore the fact that by virtue of being reliable conduits of information about objects in front of the camera, photographs are well-fitted to function as documents. Thus we find that wherever photographic pictures are used, it is the photographed item that provides the standard of correctness, for if it did not, it would render photographs substantially less useful to us than they actually are.¹³ Adopting this standard of correctness is a condition for taking advantage of that function to which they are best suited.

4. Sources of information

As my talk of pictures conveying information about their subject matter implies, I believe pictures can be considered conduits of information about their subject matter, and that, with some qualifications, the source of this information is the subject matter itself. This idea suggests another way of formulating the standard of correctness, although we will find it is equivalent to that I have just presented. Lopes, whose work inspires this analysis, makes a different inference about the standard of correctness, which I shall criticize.

How can pictures be understood as conduits of information about their subject matter? In the case of photographic pictures, this will be obvious. Being a photograph of Y is causally and counterfactually dependent on the presence of Y before the camera. A chain of causation and counterfactual dependence leads from photograph to its subject matter, and clearly here, the subject matter itself is the source of the information embodied in the photograph. For manographic pictures, the situation is more complex. I have described above how the depictive content of such pictures is dependent on the maker's intention. When the picture-maker's intentions are documentary, the depicted item will be the source of information. Here the causal chain that links picture and subject matter is more complex than that linking a photograph to its subject matter, but it ensures counterfactual dependence in the same way. More difficult are the following kinds of cases. First, those in which non-documentary details are introduced into an otherwise documentary picture, such as a portrait that flatters its sitter by giving them an improved complexion, or a landscape that adds a tree to improve the composition. Second are pictures of subject matter that is the invention of the picture-maker, such as the fantastical paintings of Dalí and Hieronymus Bosch. Third are pictures of fictional things invented by others, such as Honoré Daumier's illustrations to Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Note that the troublesome feature of each these kinds of subject matter is its fictional nature. Neither Daumier's interpretation of Don Quixote, nor Bosch's and Dalí's personal fictions, nor the fictional objects or properties depicted in the portrait or landscape, can be traced back to a source as a documentary picture can.

These can be dealt with using a two-part strategy. One part proposes that depictions of fictional objects can be traced back to make-believe sources of information about those objects. The other part gives an account of how properties in pictures of fictional things can be traced back to actual sources. I start with the account of properties. A fictional thing, since it does not exist, cannot be a source of information. However, the properties that it is depicted as having do have sources. These sources might be actual things, as when an artist drawing Don Quixote uses an actual suit of armour as a model for that of the fictional knight, or when Bosch contrives his demons out of human and animal parts. But they need not be so. Picture-makers can depict these features, and many others besides, without recourse to actual things. Here we have to conceive of a source in a different way, and I suggest we do so as follows. Recognitional abilities typically have their origin in exposure to the things they recognize. As Lopes puts it, '[a] creature possesses a recognitional ability when, on the basis of perceptual encounters with objects, it assembles dossiers of information enabling it to identify those objects as ones previously encountered' (Lopes, 137). When a painter, working without a documentary source, depicts some object as having property P, he draws on his ability to recognize P by finding a configuration of marks that engages that ability. The depiction of the object as P is thus dependent on the application of the painter's ability to recognize P, which is in turn dependent on the presence of this property in the objects that played a role in establishing this recognitional ability.¹⁴

We can see now how the individual properties that a fictional object is depicted as having can be tracked back to their sources, but we also need to say how the object depicted as instantiating those properties is connected to a source. Here I accept Lopes's account (Lopes, chapter 10, especially page 203–208) He proposes that pictures of non-existent objects find their sources in collections of information that are make-believable of the non-existent object. So, while Don Quixote never existed, a source of information about him does exist: the collection of information, make-believable of him, assembled by Cervantes in his novel, *Don Quixote*.¹⁵ Picture-makers themselves can establish fictional figures, or figures with fictional attributes, by entering into a pretence that a collection of information they have assembled is make-believable of such a figure. So Dalí and Bosch invite the viewer into a pretence that certain beings exist with the various fantastical attributes they depict. A similar account can be given of the portraitist or landscape painter who fictionalizes her subject matter in certain respects. She adds to an existing collection of grounded information further information that is only make-believable of her subject matter. In these ways, fictional depiction is causally and counterfactually dependent on collections of information that are make-believable true.

I have now sketched an account of how pictures are conduits of information deriving from their subject matter. This suggests a different route to specifying the standard of correctness to that I described in the previous section. This route is taken by Lopes, who proposes that the standard of correctness is set by the information source: '[a] viewer understands a picture ... only if her attempt at identifying its source is well grounded – if what she identifies as its source is in fact its source' (Lopes, 159). While I accept that the information pictures embody depends on sources in the way described above, I do not agree with Lopes that identifying information sources always suffices to identify the picture's subject matter. This is because some pictures embody information that derives from sources that are not the picture's subject matter. We have already touched on one such case. Suppose that Hendrickje Stoffels did have breast cancer, and that Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* happens to record its distinctive shape. We would then have an instance in which information (that Stoffels had cancer) is embodied

in a picture and can be traced back to a source (the cancer itself). But, as I have discussed, the cancer is not depicted by the painting. Now it may well be that Stoffels did not have cancer, and that the much discussed shape of the left breast should not be explained in this way. But this does not affect my train of argument here, for there surely will be some pictures that do unintentionally convey information in this way.

Another kind of counter-example to Lopes's proposal is found where a model is used to depict some other subject, say, a mythological or legendary figure, but where the resultant picture does *not* depict the model. Michelangelo's paintings of Biblical figures and prophets on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, for example, are based on drawings made from live models. These models, however, are not depicted in Michelangelo's fresco; only the Biblical figures and prophets are depicted. This point is made especially clear in a figure such as the Libyan Sybil. The preliminary drawings on which the Sybil's figure are based depict a male model (*Studies for the Libyan Sybil*, red chalk, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1508–12), but it would be absurd to say that this model is depicted in the painting. Nevertheless, it is likely that we can see the physiognomy of the model in the painting of the Sybil, and if so, we can trace the information available in this way back, through the drawing, to the model himself. It might be objected that I cannot say that the model is a source of information, since I earlier said that manographic picture-making is an unreliable conduit of information when the picture-maker does not intend that information to be conveyed. That is so generally speaking, but as I mentioned earlier, this does not contradict the fact that individual manographic pictures may convey unintended information about their source, as *Bathsheba* possibly does, and as the painting of the Libyan Sybil probably does.¹⁶ So again, even if I am wrong about this particular example (say, if Michelangelo's drawing was in fact of an imaginary subject), there will certainly be pictures that do convey information in this way.

A picture's information sources are thus not always identical with its subject matter. While Lopes's account of the standard of correctness is therefore not adequate, the analysis of the previous section suggests a way in which these counter-examples may be overcome. The counter-examples I have discussed both involve information conveyed by means that generally speaking, is unreliable. As I have described, manographic techniques do not reliably convey information that the picture-maker does not intend to convey. So whether or not they do in fact convey that information, they do not depict it. Where photography, as a reliable conveyer of such information, would depict Stoffels' tumour and Michelangelo's model, manographic techniques do not. The counter-examples can thus be overcome by stipulating that the standard of correctness is set by the information that the picture's method of manufacture can *reliably* convey about its subject matter.

This account of the standard of correctness proves equivalent to that presented in the previous sections. In the case of manographic surfaces, the method of manufacture reliably conveys only that information which the maker intends to convey, and in the case of photographs, the method of manufacture reliably conveys only information about the object in front of the camera. Like the accounts of the previous sections, this account is not logically satisfactory, for it depends on tacit agreement that the standard of correctness is determined by the meanings that pictures are fittest to convey, that is, those they can reliably convey. It is logically possible that these could be ignored, and others imposed. But as I have said, this is something that no community of picture-makers has done, or could find it advantageous to do, since it would involve sacrificing a large part of pictures' utility.¹⁷

Michael Newall teaches History and Philosophy of Art at the University of Kent. His recent publications focus on depiction. They include 'Pictorial Resemblance' in T, 'Pictorial Experience and Seeing' in , and 'Pictures, Colour and Resemblance' in The Philosophical Quarterly. His book on the subject, entitled What is a Picture? will appear in 2011. He was awarded the 2009 John Fisher Memorial Prize for Aesthetics by the American Society for Aesthetics.

1. Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, 48–51.

2. A third general kind of theory, resemblance theories, are potentially vulnerable to these criticisms as well. Resemblance theories hold that resemblance between a picture and its subject matter – such as a sharing of properties of shape and colour – is a necessary condition for depiction. But if a resemblance theorist is right about the kind of resemblance a picture must bear to an object in order to depict it, then a stain on a wall could well resemble something with respect to such properties, and an old portrait could well bear the right resemblance relation to an individual that it does not depict (say, an identical twin). These echo the famous counter-examples that Nelson Goodman aimed against resemblance theories in the first pages of *Languages of Art*. (Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1968, 3–5.) Resemblance theories have more problems in this general vein, for there are things that a viewer, looking at a picture, is neither apt to have a pictorial experience of, nor visually recognize, but that bear an appropriate resemblance to a picture surface. (For instance, a picture of an interior will resemble the distorted construction of an Ames room just as much as the room it actually depicts.) I thus leave resemblance theories aside here, as their problems are beyond the scope of this paper to address. One other general approach rounds out a broad account of currently available explanations of depiction. Conventionalist theories, such as Goodman's, hold that depiction shares with language a basis in conventional rules (Goodman, op. cit.). For Goodman depiction is set aside from language by a distinctive structure. Conventionalism has received relatively little support in recent analytic philosophy of art. For reasons of space I put aside some other important accounts of depiction, including John Kulvicki's theory, which combines aspects of Goodman's theory with a resemblance view (John V. Kulvicki, *On Images: Their Structure and Content*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006), and Kendall Walton's 'make-believe' theory (Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1990).

3. Robert Hopkins, *Picture, Image and Experience: A Philosophical Inquiry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

4. Here I exclude definitions in terms of depiction, which in the context of a theory of depiction would be circular.

5. Dominic McIver Lopes, *Understanding Pictures*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

6. I draw the term 'manugraphic' from Jonathan Friday (*Aesthetics and Photography*, Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2002.)

7. This distinction is inspired by Lopes's own account, which he frames in terms of information (Lopes, 164).

8. The diagnosis of breast cancer is proposed by P. A. Braithwaite and D. Shugg ('Rembrandt's Bathsheba: The Dark Shadow of the Left Breast', *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, vol. 65, no. 5, 1983, pp. 337–338). R. G. Bourne supports the diagnosis of tuberculous mastitis ('Did Rembrandt's Bathsheba Really Have Breast Cancer?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2000, pp. 231–232). S. Hayakawa, H. Masuda and N. Nemoto make the case for lactation mastitis ('Rembrandt's Bathsheba: Possible Lactation Mastitis Following Unsuccessful Pregnancy', *Medical Hypotheses*, vol. 66, no. 6, 2006, pp. 1240–1242).

9. Other problem cases can be treated with a similar analysis. Consider this, posed by Lopes: Imagine that an artist intends to represent a and, believing a is b, makes a picture embodying information only from and recognizable only as of b. While the resulting picture successfully realizes the artist's pictorial intention with regard to b, it fails to manifest and successfully realize his communicative intentions to represent a. (Lopes, p. 167.) What Lopes doesn't mention is that the artist surely intends to depict an object with properties distinctive of b (even though he thinks them distinctive of a). He therefore is likely to succeed in depicting his subject matter as having properties distinctive of b.

10. The medical researchers I have mentioned are exceptions. But I think they too would acknowledge this. No doubt, if they were dealing with a live patient, they would prefer to work from photographs, rather than a Rembrandt.

11. I put aside here the complex case of pictures that have been subject to digital manipulation.

12. Louis Daguerre, English patent of the daguerreotype, 1839 (my italics).

13. Of course photographers often do intend to depict the things their photographs depict, but I would say that realizing this intention depends on having those actual things as the photograph's source. That is, the photographic standard of correctness must be satisfied, for the photographer's intention to be realized.

14. A recognitional ability may have instead been formed by a picture or description, but in such cases the flow of information will still have its origin in a picture-maker or describer who has been perceptually exposed to the property itself.

15. Lopes models his account of fictive depiction on Gareth Evans's treatment of linguistic fiction in *The Varieties of Reference* (ed. John McDowell, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). The concept of make-believe is drawn from Kendall Walton (Walton, op. cit.).

16. Note that this probability still compares poorly with the certainty of a photograph.

17. Thanks to nkd in Dale, Norway, where I began writing this paper as a visiting researcher, and to David Davies, for prompting me to think again about the standard of correctness.

© Estheticatijdschrift.nl

Gedownload van de pagina's van <http://www.estheticatijdschrift.nl>