

Preface

The purpose of this volume is to show the different ways scholars who are preeminent in their fields are currently thinking about the processes that underlie creativity and aesthetic experience. The authors describe not only the established theory and research in their respective fields, but provide creative speculation on future problems for inquiry and new approaches to conceptualize and investigate phenomena. The book contains many new findings that have not been published before, or are new by virtue of the novel context in which they have been incorporated in the chapters. Thus, the chapters present new approaches to old problems and new problems not heretofore explored by the leading scholars in the areas covered in this volume.

The volume is divided into four major sections. Part I is devoted to the understanding of the nature of the aesthetic processes that occur during encounters with visual art stimuli. The authors bring a variety of research methodologies, ranging from traditional experimental procedures to naturalistic research approaches, to bear on phenomenon of common interest. In the first chapter Hochberg and Brooks present an overview of how the experimental study of the way movies work helps cognitive psychologists, neurophysiologists, and aestheticians learn more about human perceptual mechanisms that have real-life consequences. Specifically, their chapter is concerned with explanations of how objects integrate across views in moving pictures and how scenes integrate across cuts. They point out that future research in this field must focus on ways to identify and measure factors that contribute to the maintenance and integration of protracted perceptual inquiry when one watches a film. In the next chapter Locher describes how “brass instrument” techniques, such as recording eye fixation patterns of observers of art, are used to subject to empirical scrutiny the writings of art theoreticians about the influence of pictorial balance on the perception of visual art. The research findings presented demonstrate the valuable contribution traditional experimental approaches make not only to our understanding of why balance is such an important

design principle but also to their potential to reveal perceptual/cognitive processes that occur during an aesthetic episode with art. The central theme of Cutting's chapter is that the mere exposure phenomenon helps shape aesthetic preferences for art. He presents the findings of naturalistic investigations of the effects of cultural exposure on preferences for images drawn from the French Impressionist canon and explains how everyday exposure of individuals to artworks helps to establish and maintain an artistic canon. His research involves a most innovative procedure to determine image frequency of art stimuli and his findings demonstrate that the laboratory phenomenon mere exposure can be generalized to broader cultural behaviors such as aesthetic preferences. Smith and Smith's chapter focuses on their model of aesthetic fluency, which they define as the knowledge that a person has acquired about art and aspects of life closely related to art. The model was developed on the basis of their extensive research on people's behavior in art museums and they describe how the naturalistic study of what happens in museums contributes to an understanding of the development of aesthetic fluency. The study of museum behavior has not found its way to any great extent into the visual aesthetics or creativity literature. Yet, as Smith and Smith make clear in their chapter, both theory construction and research in the field of museology share considerable overlap with the more traditional approaches to visual aesthetics and creativity. Hence the editors thought it important to expand the variety of topics in this section to include this newly emerging dimension of the psychology of art. In the last chapter of Part I, Washburn illustrates how anthropological approaches to the study of art and aesthetic responses enhance our understanding about cross-cultural aesthetic universals in cultural perception and practice. She describes the nature of the aesthetic response to beauty that people from different cultures find in certain symmetrical arrangements of design. She explains how it should be possible to access and confirm such a deeply seated aesthetic using preference tests for symmetrical pattern configurations she and others are developing.

The four chapters in Part II discuss new dimensions in the study of creativity. Sternberg reviews the work he and his collaborators are doing in their efforts toward the development of a comprehensive theory of creativity—the *investment theory of creativity*. He provides an overview of a number of issues that a complete theory of creativity must address, such as the confluence of interrelated resources required by creative people and the types of decisions one must make to develop his or her own creativity. Research evidence supporting the theory is provided throughout this very comprehensive description of the investment theory of creativity. In the next chapter Dorfman lays out a

systems perspective of creativity that is based on a metaindividual world model. He explains how this perspective can integrate an understanding of the nature of personality and creativity into a unitary systems framework and he presents empirical findings to support the model. Simonton illustrates an analytic strategy that enables an investigator to simultaneously examine the major contributions to a film's cinematic success. He presents the findings of investigations regarding four aspects of cinematic creativity and aesthetics: the relationship between film awards and critical acclaim; creative clusters in cinematic art; budget, box office and aesthetic success, and gender differences in acting contributions. He discusses future directions of empirical research on cinematic creativity and aesthetics. Overbeeke and Forlizzi point out that product design is creative; it is about making innovative products. Since the introduction of electronics in consumer products, design has become more complicated and designers need to understand how human responses to products influence product design. The authors describe how designers now use research in the fields of perception, semiotics, and pre-cognitive and habitual psychological responses to create variations in the appearance and behavior of a new product and how it derives interactive meaning with a user. To understand the complex nature of the creative processes involved in design in this age of electronics, theory and research in this area has had to borrow insights and adopt research approaches from the fields of creativity and visual aesthetics. In so doing, design is emerging as an important area of interest within each of these fields.

In Part III three chapters deal with the application of concepts and models from cognitive psychology to the study of music, literary meaning, and the visual arts, respectively. Deliège outlines a model—the *cue abstraction model*—of the cognitive processes involved in real time listening to a piece of music. She describes the findings of a number of experimental procedures that have been developed to test the validity of the different components and processes of the model. Miall's chapter addresses the question, What are readers doing when they read a literary text? He discusses development of the major systematic experimental approaches to literary reading; the findings obtained from research in this field, and the questions and issues raised by an empirical approach to this topic. In the first part of their chapter Winner and her colleagues describe what research shows about the transfer of learning from the arts to non-arts cognition and they discuss the weakness of these studies. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of their current research, which is designed to identify the kinds of thinking skills or habits of mind that emerge from serious study of the visual arts at the high school level.

The four chapters in Part IV focus on the interactive contribution of the personality and affect state of observers to the creation and perception of art. Cupchik elucidates how the relationship between stimulus features of an artwork and the affect state of observers can be viewed as dynamic, bi-directional processes that underlie the pleasure and interest generated by an aesthetic work. He describes the relations between emotion and cognition in aesthetics in terms of the interaction of top-down and bottom-up processes across the time course of an aesthetic episode, be it with visual or literary material. Machotka examines the internal mechanisms by which personality expresses itself during the making of art and when one responds to it. Support for the view that taste is determined in part by personality is provided by the findings of analyses reported in the chapter that compared the themes and forms of art images created by individuals with the clinical picture of each participant obtained from personality interviews. In her chapter Russ reviews the theoretical and research literature that demonstrates the relationship between the affective processes in pretend play and the development of creativity in children. She describes the mechanisms and specific processes in pretend play that account for this relationship and presents techniques to facilitate pretend play that foster creativity. In the final chapter of this volume Gabrielsson reports the findings of his research project that asked participants to describe the strongest, most intense experience of music that they have ever had. His data provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the components—physical, behavioral, perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and social—contained in strong experiences to music and speculates about the “causes” and consequences of such experiences to listeners.

In conclusion, this volume provides a state of the art overview of the richness of work being conducted on aesthetics and creativity. My colleagues and I consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to edit a volume that contains contributions by scholars who are leading authorities in their fields and we thank them for their participation in this project. We are also very grateful to Stuart Cohen, President of Baywood Publishing Company, for his enthusiastic support of this work.

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