Film, Art, and the Third Culture: A Response

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Let me begin by thanking my critics for their contributions and for their willingness to engage in detail with my work in this forum. They do me a great honor. Let me also thank Ted Nannicelli for proposing both this symposium and the panel on my book at the 75th Anniversary ASA conference in New Orleans, November 2017, one of the events that preceded and led to this publication. The other events were the Aesthetics Today symposium, hosted by the Aesthetics Research Centre, at the University of Kent, 5-6 June 2017, and the Naturalized Aesthetics of Film workshop at the CUNY Graduate Center, 27 March 2018, for which my thanks to Joerg Fingerhut and Jesse Prinz. I have benefitted immeasurably from the feedback of speakers and audience members at all of these occasions, as I did from the BSA 2016 symposium "Is Psychology Relevant to Aesthetics?" devoted jointly to *Film, Art, and the Third Culture* and Bence Nanay's *Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception*.[1]

In expressing my gratitude to the participants at these occasions and to the contributors to this volume, I am not merely paying lip service to etiquette and tradition. Whatever contribution *Film, Art, and the Third Culture* (hereafter, FACT[2]) may make, its value is greatly amplified by the critical engagement of its readers, whether that engagement takes the form of endorsement, dissent, or something in between. Indeed the format of the author-meets-critics panel and the target article symposium embody the very methodology and central values that the book seeks to describe and defend – including openness to criticism, and the pursuit of knowledge as a collaborative activity. Whatever shortcomings FACT may exhibit in terms of its substantive arguments about film, spectatorship, emotion, and so on, if it helps to advance the cause of rational, critical dialogue within the humanities, and between the humanities and the sciences, it will have achieved something.

One of the contributors once said to me: if you look closely enough at anything, you'll find holes. FACT is certainly no exception. You probably don't even need to examine it that closely

to see the problems. I cannot attend to all the many good criticisms raised by my critics – for that I would have needed an entire book, outreaching even the great generosity of the editor. But in what follows, I've tried to make connections between and among their comments, in an attempt to figure out where the book fails, what it achieves, and where the conversation might turn next.

Transparency, (liberated) embodied simulation, and the 'skin-screen'

In his commentary, Vittorio Gallese sets out the theory of 'embodied simulation' (ES) that he has developed and refined over many years. ES is a general theory of human social interaction – or an aspect thereof – but one which applies, ipso facto, to narrative film viewing. (More on this assumption later, when I turn to an objection from Kate Thomson-Jones.) Gallese writes: 'Embodied simulation describes, from a functional standpoint, the neural mechanisms that ensure the clarity of our connections with the world around us, forming a dialectical relationship between the body and the mind, between subject and object, you and me. The pivotal motor aspects of our bodily-self integrate and anchor to a bodily first-person perspective the multimodal sensory information about the body and about the world it interacts with' (9).[3] Gallese argues that, in the context of film viewing, embodied simulation is 'liberated,' in the sense that our generally immobile position while watching a film frees up our (embodied) cognitive capacity, allowing more of that capacity to be devoted to modelling imaginatively the experiences of the characters whose fates we follow. This seems to be in accord with the argument in FACT that film viewing may expand our ordinary empathic capacity 'in scope and intensity' (xx-xx; an argument also noted by Stadler (7-8) in her contribution, and perfectly exemplified by *Under the Skin*, particularly in respect of 'scope,' as Levinson demonstrates, 8-9). What Gallese stresses here is the neural dimension of the explanation – in my terms, the neural 'leg' of the triangulation model: our experience of powerful empathic experiences with a wide range of characters connects on the one hand with the psychological (and social) functions of empathy, and on the other with the neurophysiological mechanisms which enable it. The methodological claim here is that the theory is strengthened by virtue of the consilience across the phenomenological, psychological, and neurophysiological levels.

Gallese pushes his application of ES to film spectatorship into new territory here by considering how embodied simulation might work in the context of viewing moving images on mobile devices. Given the explosive development and dissemination of new motion picture technologies, it is surely important to consider their impact on the psychology of viewing; FACT makes some gestures in this direction, though in relation to 'immersive' viewing technologies, like virtual reality and 4D projection systems, rather than portable screens (chapter 2). Gallese argues that mobile devices make a significant difference to the operations of embodied simulation, by allowing us to control through touch the temporal flow of a movie. (And not only the temporal flow: some mobile devices also enable us to zoom into selected parts of the frame.) The screen of a tablet or smart phone thereby takes on a tactile presence, a 'skin' that we stroke in order to stop, start, rewind, skip forward, and so forth.

Gallese's argument about this new viewing 'regime' depends, however, on what I regard as a problematic background idea regarding 'standard' film viewing – the idea that the latter is characterized by 'transparency' (note that Dominic Topp also makes reference to this notion in relation to my analysis of *Heimat* (3), although I don't use the term myself in that context). On this view, the default mode of film perception is one in which we have little or no awareness of the 'configurational' aspect of a film – it's surface and design features. To use the terminology introduced by Richard Wollheim in his theory of still depiction, we see *through* the surface of a film to what it depicts, while we see the depicted contents of a painting *in* its surface. (I'll return to the idea that we can talk of the 'surface' of film later on, in relation to Joerg Fingerhut's commentary.) So film is 'transparent' in the sense that we see straight through it. This is a very longstanding idea in film theory, and one articulated, refined, and defended with exceptional care by George Wilson in recent years.[4]

Nonetheless, it's at best a misleading idea. There can be little doubt that watching a film contrasts in many ways with looking at a painting – the presence of movement alone guarantees that much. But capturing that difference, and describing film viewing in terms of,

transparency overlooks the extent to which we retain an awareness of the configurational dimensions of a film even as we perceive what it depicts: consider, for example, lens and film stock artefacts – lens flare, racked focus, visual distortions arising from wide or telephoto lens, visible grain or pixilation, and colour grading. Far from being marginal, exceptional qualities of the look of a film, these features are absolutely standard.

So how does this have a bearing on Gallese's proposal? There are two points to consider here. The first is that, once the transparency thesis is cut back, the contrast between film viewing under traditional conditions and in the new mobile landscape is diminished. That's not to deny that mobile viewing is different in many ways; but the contrast is not primarily a matter of transparency. Mobile film viewers are perfectly capable of becoming absorbed in a film, just as much as a traditional film or tv viewer; witness train passengers glued to their screens during rush hour. Touchscreens are a relatively new phenomenon, it's true, but pausing live tv or playback on a dvd, and leaving the auditorium to visit the bathroom in a traditional cinema are entirely familiar practices. What's common to the old and the new technologies is the fact that we sometimes need to suspend our engagement with a film: life intervenes, whether in the form of bladder pressure, the baby crying upstairs, or the ticket inspector.

So, the screen of a mobile device can't cease to be transparent (16) because it wasn't transparent in the first place. What of the second issue? Gallese suggests that the literal tactility introduced into our experience by mobile screens 'doubles the tactility of vision' (16) by compounding the haptic, tactile dimension of film perception already in play by virtue of embodied simulation. That is surely right, but it is important to note that these are two parallel, rather than integrated, forms of 'tactile vision.' When we touch the screen to manipulate the passage of the film, the divide between the depicted, diegetic space, and the real space we inhabit, is, if anything, underlined; it is certainly no less apparent to us than in a traditional screening setting. In the case of virtual reality environments, by contrast, our actual and simulated embodied experiences come into close – ideally, fully unified – alignment.

Aesthetic experience

In the course of laying out his arguments on embodied simulation and the 'special context' of film spectatorship, Gallese in effect invokes one traditional conception of aesthetic experience – famously cast in terms of 'Psychical Distance' by Edward Bullough, which 'has a *negative*, inhibitory aspect – the cutting-out of the practical sides of things and of our practical attitude to them – and a *positive* side – the elaboration of the experience on the new basis created by the inhibitory action of Distance.'[5] In a similar vein, especially in respect of the latter 'positive side' of such 'Distance,' Gallese argues that attention to a fictional world involves a psychological 'distancing from the unrelated external world…[a] temporary suspension of the active grip on our daily occupations, [which] liberates new simulative energies' (13). The link in Gallese's theory between this conception and 'liberated embodied simulation' is thus clear.

The topic of aesthetic experience brings us to Paisley Livingston's commentary. Livingston teases out the following necessary condition on aesthetic experience from FACT: '(AE) If an experience is aesthetic, it is self-conscious due to extraordinary perceptual, affective, or cognitive functioning' (2). Against this condition, Livingston directs two counterexamples: unreflective aesthetic responses, that is, those lacking the second-order 'savouring' that I claim is important to aesthetic experience; and Castelveltro cases, that is, those lacking any 'stressing' of our ordinary cognitive capacities. Here I put my hands up! AE surely is too demanding a condition to capture the entire range of aesthetic experiences. Livingston generously recasts the proposal as a necessary condition on the kind of aesthetic experience generally sought by proponents of modernism, but then still wonders on what grounds *that* type of 'exalted' aesthetic experience could be judged to be superior to his counterexample types of aesthetic experience. And, while endorsing the suggestion in FACT that being aesthetic is a matter of degree (6), he casts doubt on whether self-consciousness is the right scalar property, instead favouring the proposal that the (or at least an) 'essential scalar factor in aesthetic experience is the *relative* emphasis on the object's *inherent* value, where this is understood to occasion contemplative experiences having an intrinsic value' (7).

Livingston's positive proposals certainly deserve a full hearing. But here I will say a few things in defence of a more moderate version of AE. One thing to say here is that self-consciousness might be thought of as neither necessary, nor sufficient, for aesthetic experience – but nevertheless typical of it, or at least the subtype of aesthetic experience prompted by ~~art in general and~~ modernist art ~~in particular~~. Nor need we *value* reflexive episodes of aesthetic experience more highly than unself-conscious instances, even while holding that, as a matter of fact, aesthetic experiences vary along this dimension. For we face the following difficulty. On the one hand, not only do there seem to be unreflective aesthetic responses, but self-consciousness 'is inimical to some kinds of first-order aesthetic experiences, such as an experience of un-self-conscious immediacy, spontaneity' (3), as well as, Livingston suggests, the fluent-processing typically afforded by mainstream narrative films. On the other hand, it is not as if the second-order 'savouring' an aesthetic experience is a rare or obscure phenomenon.

With this in mind, another way forward suggests itself: it might be that self-consciousness is a necessary condition of aesthetic *appreciation* – where such appreciation is demarcated from aesthetic experience precisely by virtue of the reflexive dimension whereby we recognize the value of the experience as we have it.[6] The value *or* the disvalue, I should say: Livingston is right to note that, while the rhetorical accent in FACT falls on cases of positive aesthetic value – the word 'savouring' points emphatically in that direction – the theory presented in FACT is perfectly compatible with negative aesthetic experiences, and with self-consciously registered negative experiences to boot.[7] Interestingly, however, there seem to be few words in English which give expression to a negative aesthetic experience in second-order terms – 'dislike,' 'disgust,' 'unpleasant' all operating at the first-order level – but I think we can all recognize what it is to 'unsavour' an experience: one reflects on just how bad it is.

A third point concerns what sort of affective, cognitive, or perceptual activity counts as extraordinary, or at least pushing normal function. Livingston claims that the auditor listening to a composition by Satie is not having her perceptual or cognitive capacities in any way stretched. This claim is debateable. Arguably, the kind of auditory perception at play in listening

to music in general is already divorced from ordinary perceptual functions: we're not listening to it to discover anything about the world around us, but for its own sake. If one thinks of the arts as an outgrowth of our aesthetic capacities, then music is perhaps the clearest example of an artform which has developed through and as a specialized exaptation of a more basic cognitive capacity.[8] (I propose something similar with respect to depiction in FACT: 'Arguably, *seeing-in* itself is the basic form of expansion here' (42). More on this idea below.) In this sense, the threshold for 'extra-normal' perception or cognition may be much lower than Livingston takes it to be. But beyond this observation about music in general: it's true that Satie's *Gnossienne No. 2*, like the rest of his gnossienne compositions and much of his other work, is a minimal, atmospheric piece which doesn't strain our pitch perception, or other parameters of auditory perception, is neither here nor there. But in *cognitive* terms, Satie's composition *does* put some pressure on our musical cognition: what is this strange, spare, calm but eerie music? What sort of unusual formal, harmonic, and rhythmic principles does it embody? The fact that Satie invented the word 'gnossienne' for these compositions suggests that he was concerned to highlight their novel characteristics. In his own way, Satie is as much a modernist as Schoenberg or Stravinsky.

Dream on

Another motif that Gallese weaves into his account of embodied simulation in the context of film viewing is the analogy with dreaming, and relatedly to vision in early development, when our motor skills and autonomy are limited. He writes: 'Perhaps it is no coincidence that some of the most vivid fictional experiences we entertain, as those occurring through dreams, are paralleled by massive inhibition of the muscle tone in our body' (14). Jerrold Levinson picks up on a passage in FACT which alludes to dreaming, noting that I suggest that 'perhaps *all* films offer us a distinct kind of immersive experience, one that contrasts with *both* ordinary perceptual experience and perceptual experience in dreams, being somewhat intermediate between the two' (8). From my perspective, these are two quite different hypotheses. The role of the dream comparison in my argument is limited to the point that, just as we accept that dreaming is a distinctive form of conscious cognition – distinct from waking cognition in its

experiential character, psychological functions, and neural underpinning – so we should not rule out the possibility that film viewing might similarly constitute a distinctive type of conscious cognition. (And yes, I do insist that dreaming is a form of *conscious* cognition – just in the sense that dreams are experienced, and sometimes remembered. The epistemic deficiencies of dreaming as a guide to our actual state does not compromise its status as a form of conscious cognition.) I do not even go quite as far as Levinson suggests when he writes that film perception may be 'somewhat intermediate' between ordinary perception and perceptual experience in dreams.

Gallese's analogy between dreaming and film perception is much more direct: watching a film and having a dream are alike in that in both contexts, our bodies become immobile as our minds represent vivid scenarios. But the inhibition of movement in the context of dreaming is quite different to that which accompanies film viewing: the literal, if temporary, paralysis of REM sleep is quite different to the voluntary (and never quite complete) stillness of film spectatorship. Movie viewing involves both 'micro-movements' (shuffling, fidgeting, shifting, eating, drinking) and 'macro-movements' (those trips to the bathroom). It also involves a lot of social interaction – a dimension of film viewing explored in Julian Hanich's recent book.[9] All of these factors are disanalogous with dreaming. This is not to say that there is nothing to Gallese's argument that focussed attention on a represented environment combined with reduced motor interaction with the real environment enables the 'liberation' and the redirection of the resources of the 'brain-body-mind' towards embodied simulation. But it is to resist the historically longstanding and evidently very tempting, but ultimately misleading, analogy between film and dream. Levinson's more measured formulation is about as far as it is plausible to go in this direction.

Expansionism, cognition, and culture
Joerg Fingerhut's commentary brings together two topics already touched upon: embodied simulation, and seeing-in. Fingerhut sees an opportunity to extend the work done by embodied simulation in my account of film experience in general, and in particular in the case of the

sequence from *Strangers on a Train* which features in chapter 7, by showing how it applies not only to the actions, emotions, and sensations of the characters depicted by a film, but also to the artist's actions as they are evident in the depiction itself. In the case of a painting, the traces of those actions might include brushstrokes on the canvas; in the case of a film, the movement of the camera through space. In each case, these movements will possess expressive qualities – they will be fast or slow, abrupt or gradual, controlled or erratic, for example. Fingerhut refers to studies which show that, among types of camera movement, the steady-cam shot is the most apt to trigger 'motor resonance' (7) in viewers. Considering this finding in relation to *Strangers*, Fingerhut pinpoints the moment when, struggling to retrieve the lighter, Bruno tips it down a further level in the drain. This moment is rendered visually through a downward pan and a slight track back and away from the lighter – a fluid movement comparable to that of a steady-cam shot (though of course the film long precedes the invention of the steady-cam). Fingerhut hypothesizes that, via motor resonance, the shot creates 'an experience of physical distancing [from] the object of desire for Bruno,' intensifying our 'experience of [his] loss and disappointment' (10).

This strikes me as a persuasive and desirable extension of the role of embodied simulation in my general account of empathy in film, and an enrichment of my analysis of *Strangers*. But Fingerhut has his eye on bigger game beyond this sequence, or even the application of ES to camera movement in general. Fingerhut worries that the notion of 'expansionism' – 'the pushing or pulling of ordinary perception and cognition out their comfort zones and customary functioning' (FACT, 7) – is made to do too much work in FACT, at least without further elaboration; and relatedly, he is concerned that I underestimate the extent to which human cognition is bound up with 'our interaction with cultural artefacts' (2), putting too much weight on 'the biological basis of mental capacities' (1), narrowly-conceived (a worry shared by Topp, who urges me to put more culture in the 'bioculturalism' I advocate). These deficiencies are connected in that, Fingerhut holds, my pallid and undernourished account of expansionism might be cured by a fuller recognition of the cultural dimension of human cognition. How does this work?

Fingerhut notes that expansionism is first introduced in FACT in relation to seeing-in, as the 'basic form of expansion' (42), before returning in chapter 7 in relation to empathy. But Fingerhut complains that while the expansion of our basic empathic capacities through the cultural practices and technologies of representation is worked out in some detail, the theorization of expansion at the more basic level is only sketched. Fingerhut addresses this lack by bringing in more detail from Wollheim's theory of seeing-in – already present in my account – and developing it through ES. Fingerhut emphasizes the importance of *twofoldness* in Wollheim's theory: the idea that our perceptual experience of a depiction involves a simultaneous aware of its 'configurational' (surface and design) and 'recognitional' properties (the space and figures it represents). While Gallese and Freedman have shown how embodied simulation may shed light on our experience of the configurational fold of paintings and sculptures, Fingerhut extends this argument to moving depiction. The ubiquity of filmic representation ensures that we learn a 'filmic body schema,' that is, a set of 'sensorimotor rules' (4) – bearing on editing, camera movement, and presumably other aspects of film style - which allow us to grasp and respond appropriately to filmic representations. These rules or 'embodied perceptual skills' (11) are ones that we learn (3), presumably informally, and are in that sense cultural; at the same time, these rules augment our more basic perceptual capacities.

I'm in sympathy with the 'thickening' of my account of filmic seeing-in that Fingerhut proposes here. Indeed an emphasis on the ways in which the arts, and cultural practices more generally, may amplify our ordinary cognitive capacities is central to chapter 7, the case being made there via engagement with the theory of the 'extended mind,' as well as the idea of 'niche construction' drawn from evolutionary theory. This 'techno-cultural' dimension of the overall theory advanced by FACT is noted by Jane Stadler in her commentary (1); though it is fair to argue, as Fingerhut does, that the force of this dimension is not felt equally across every part of the theory. But I would note two caveats in relation to Fingerhut's positive claims. First, while Fingerhut argues that 'spectators do pick up on the two folds' of filmic depiction (11), in his

analysis of *Strangers*, the motor resonance generated by camera movement that he identifies appears to be channelled straight back into the recognitional level. Rather than working to make salient the configurational fold, the movements intensify our empathic understanding or 'mindfeeling' of Guy and Bruno (FACT, 194; Stadler notes mindfeeling, 5). To this extent, the example looks like a more limited addition to the analysis of the sequence I offer, adding attention to camera movement alongside the facial and bodily expression and framing that I emphasize, but retaining a focus on character (the recognitional fold) rather than the means of depiction (the configurational fold). Thus more work would need to be done to show how embodied simulation works to make the configurational fold salient in our experience, as part of its twofoldness.

My second caveat concerns Fingerhut's distinction between expansionism (0) and expansionism (1). I'm not sure I see the need to make a distinction between two sharply-distinguished levels here, or the reasoning behind making such a distinction; I am more inclined to think of expansion as something that comes in degrees. I wonder if I detect the influence in Fingerhut's argument here of Alva Noë's theory of the arts, referenced by Fingerhut in a footnote, which makes a distinction between the ordinary operation of depiction, and the more self-conscious practice of putting such tools 'on display' (note 1). As in the parallel case of aesthetic experience, discussed above in relation to Livingston's commentary, it is more plausible to think in terms of a continuum of cases and possibilities, ranging from the most functional uses of still or moving depiction (your wedding video) to the most elaborately reflexive (*The Man With a Movie Camera*). Otherwise, we run the risk of developing a rather parochial theory, only covering or skewed towards the kind of reflexive artistic practice typical of modernism (a risk that, as we have seen, my own account of aesthetic experience runs).[10]

Mention of modernism brings me to Dominic Topp's commentary. Topp, like Fingerhut, wants to put (more) culture into bioculturalism. Fingerhut alludes to modernist artistic practices ('our more peculiar and outstanding experiences of film' (4)), but they are central to the charges Topp brings against me. Focussing on my discussion of *Heimat* in chapter 6, Topp argues that

although I lay claim to an approach giving due to both biology and culture, universal mechanisms of response do almost all of the work in the analysis. (Thomson-Jones makes a related complaint about this analysis, to which I turn below.) So what gives here?

The example of *Heimat* is not quite fit for purpose. Although the series is an instance of 'late modernism,' the particular sequence I focus upon is very classical in its construction; only the perplexing presence of the estate agent acts anything like a stone in the shoe of the viewer. Topp's chosen alternative, *Eros + Massacre*, is certainly a better fit. Nonetheless, the example of *Heimat* does serve to bring into focus a number of questions about the role of culture in film (and art) appreciation: how can viewers unfamiliar with the language, cultural practices, and socio-historical context of a film possibly hope to understand it? Aren't we trapped in the prison house, if not of our native language, then of our home culture?

Topp takes me to be arguing that none of these factors constitute much an impediment, and to the extent that he rests his argument on my analysis of the sequence from *Heimat*, that's a fair assessment. But the burden of the discussion as a whole is not to deny that culturally specific factors play an important role in our appreciation of films, but rather to deny that an understanding of culturally unfamiliar films is wholly beyond our grasp. And this where the notion of bioculturalism, rejecting as it does 'standard dichotomous accounts of the human mind that…oppose nature to culture, without fully eliminating this binary opposition…[instead envisioning] the cultural as an extension or outgrowth of the natural – ie. as an evolved capacity of humans to develop and use instrumental intelligence' (Gallese, 4), does its work. Our understanding of culturally distant films will certainly be 'less precise' (8) than the understanding achieved by a cultural insider. The evidence that Fingerhut cites (4) regarding the difficulty novice viewers, wholly unfamiliar with mainstream filmmaking, have in grasping the spatial implications implied by continuity conventions, may be a good example. But such understanding is always a matter of degree. Of *Eros + Massacre*, Topp asks: 'how can I know to what extent my incomplete understanding of the film is an intended effect of artistic strategies common to the international culture of modernist cinema…and how much it derives from my

ignorance of specifically Japanese cultural matters?' (9) The answer is: you can't! Not for sure. But it is generally true that our higher-level interpretative judgements have a probabilistic character, whether these bear on culturally proximate or remote works.

Fiction and emotion

I noted above an important assumption underlying Gallese's application of ES to film spectatorship: that ES is relevant to film viewing because film viewing is a species of human social interaction more generally. This is so because when we watch narrative films, we typically interact with both characters depicted by them and with other audience members. But this is an assumption that Kate Thomson-Jones challenges. Objecting to the apparently direct and unqualified transfer of scientific research on emotion to the context of our appreciation of film art – as exemplified by my analysis of *Heimat* in chapter 6 – Thomson-Jones writes: 'It is not enough to cite research on emotion recognition in everyday life. For all we know, emotion recognition could work quite differently in the context of film' (5). In related vein, Friend notes that 'a Hitchcock thriller differs dramatically both from short clips constructed by psychologists and from everyday emotional interactions. If our aim is to understand the affective experience of films like these, we should not just resign ourselves to extrapolations from studies of something else' (4).

I am happy to concede that the difference(s) insisted upon by Thomson-Jones and Friend need to be registered, and that it may not be sufficiently apparent in the analyses of *Heimat* and *Strangers* how they are so registered. But the point is certainly accommodated within the larger theory that I present, in the following way. On the one hand, and as discussed above, there is my insistence – not shared by all aestheticians, as Livingston notes – that aesthetic experience is distinctive: it is not identical with ordinary experience. On the other hand, I argue that aesthetic experience *depends on* ordinary perception, cognition, and affect: we do not have special physiological organs or brain circuits or mental modules which have evolved uniquely for the purpose of apprehending aesthetic qualities in the arts or the natural world. And that is what it would take for 'emotion recognition [to]…work quite differently in the context of film.'

As Rainer Reisenzein writes in his commentary, 'emotional reactions to film are just another kind of emotional reaction (if perhaps a special kind)' (3). Insofar as we call such responses 'emotions,' they must, at least by hypothesis, bear *some* resemblance to ordinary emotions. The assumption is widespread and longstanding in philosophy as well as psychology: Gallese quotes Merleau-Ponty to the effect that 'we can apply what we have just said about perception in general to the perception of a film' (11).

But what *justifies* this assumption, Thomson-Jones might press? A first point is that one might say that it is the most reasonable assumption to start with. If we find ourselves saying we were surprised or horrified by a film sequence, or saddened by the outcome of a fiction film, why would we assume that these responses bear *no* relationship to our ordinary responses of surprise, horror, and sadness? The burden of proof here is on the sceptic who thinks that this way of speaking of our responses to fictions is fundamentally erroneous. But a second point can be made: the assumption is that our emotional responses to fiction are a species of emotion in general, or at least bear an important relationship to our ordinary emotions, is an empirical one, subject to confirmation, refutation, or revision. It is most definitely *not* the case that '*for all we know*, emotion recognition could work quite differently in the context of film' (my emphasis), because the question is not an obscure mystery, but a tractable, empirical question about which we have abundant evidence. To take just one example discussed in this symposium: Gallese discusses the evidence demonstrating that the brain circuits active in experiencing, and imagining, an emotion are overlapping (10). So long as we take seriously the familiar physicalist idea – central to the model of triangulation presented in FACT – that psychological states supervene on neurophysiological states, then this is strong evidence in support of the assumption I favour. And as no commentator takes issue with this principle, it looks like this kind of evidence is secure.

Friend is also concerned that 'the classification of emotional responses to fiction with other emotional responses is a *presupposition* of psychological and neuroscientific research, not a conclusion' (5). I agree, but once again, it is a presupposition subject to empirical confirmation

or disconfirmation. It is not *merely* a presupposition. This is an important aspect of theory construction as a philosophical method, expounded in chapter 1 of FACT, and the essence of Neurath's image of the scientist and the philosopher aboard a ship at sea (chapter 2): every aspect of a theory can be subjected to scrutiny – and in particular empirical scrutiny – but not all at once, lest the ship sink. Stacie herself notes that Colin Radford's well-known arguments on the irrationality and 'incoherence' of emotional responses to fiction depends in part on empirical observations (6), which by implication are subject to revision. Theory construction requires a continuous shuttling between making empirical assumptions, testing empirical assumptions, and the refinement of the logical and conceptual fabric of the theory.

Friend plays up the normative dimension of emotions, holding that 'emotions in different contexts are subject to different *normative constraints*' and that there is no 'simple bifurcation' between emotional responses to existents and fictions (5).[11] I think this is the right picture; once again we face a spectrum of cases ranged on a continuum rather than sorted into two neat boxes. It may no longer be coherent to hope for gifts from Santa once we've learned he doesn't exist, but it can be perfectly coherent to respond with anxiety to the thought of some possible future event – both for 'backward-looking' reasons (we have good grounds for thinking that it might happen) and for 'forward-looking,' strategic reasons (the anxiety motivates us to take action to avoid the event). Note also that Friend's argument brings out the way in which descriptive and normative questions are inextricably bound up with – though not reducible to – one another in the study of emotion. At a minimum, the empirical study of normative phenomena is possible, and of interest to many scientists. I agree with Friend that such research is usually best conducted by psychologists working collaboratively with experts in the relevant normative domain – in the present case, aesthetics (FACT, Intro). Gallese and Reisenzein are models in this respect, each of them working with colleagues in the humanities. I return to the complex question of the relationship between naturalized aesthetics and normative questions below, in my discussion of the contributions of Davies and di Summa-Knoop below.

Neuroscience

Opinions on the role and value of neuroscience vary markedly across the contributors. Elements of the neuroscepticism that I discuss in FACT are evident in the commentaries of Davies, Friend, and Levinson. Davies argues that neuroscience is simply irrelevant to normative questions in aesthetics – those concerned with the merit, warrant, or appropriateness of our responses to artworks; he also expresses concern that the specific literature that I draw upon concerned mirror neurons is much more controversial than I allow, and that my appeal to it violates an epistemic norm of naturalism – that we should draw on the best available knowledge in a given domain. Friend, meanwhile, revives a concern that Davies has expressed in earlier work (and which I address in FACT, chapter 3): that neuroscience may offer us nothing more than an 'implementation story' about the neural underpinning of psychological capacities and processes, including aesthetic ones (Levinson expresses the same worry, 6). In his commentary, Davies distances himself from the strongest version of such a view, which holds that the only evidence relevant to aesthetics is that which is 'manifest' in the actions of artists and appreciators (a view Davies attributes to Graham McFee in relation to dance).

What can be said to allay these criticisms? To begin with, Reisenzein makes the basic but important observation that neuroscience is 'simply a special brand of psychology that relies heavily on measurements of neural activity to test psychological hypotheses' (3), so to the extent that Davies and Friend admit the relevance of psychology to aesthetics, they cannot consistently deny it to neuroscience. (Of course, it is still open to them to raise questions about the ways or extent to which neuroscience, as a type of psychology, is relevant to aesthetics.) As we've seen, this intimate relationship is evident in the work Gallese, which can be understood as a neuroscientific contribution to the encompassing psychological and philosophical debates regarding mental simulation, and the embodied mind. I've also noted the sense in which Gallese's ES thesis specifically builds on one aspect of Bullough's theory 'Psychical Distance' as an essential constituent of aesthetic experience. As is abundantly clear from his contribution here, it's not as if Gallese is only in conversation with other neuroscientists. And if he was, and in this conversation he and his fellow neuroscientists restricted themselves to descriptions of

brain activity with no reference to the psychological functions subtended by the brain, it would be a meaningless dialogue (as I argue in a passage from FACT cited by Levinson (5) , FACT, chapter 2, 64). But this is a fantasy. Neuroscience, or at least the neuroscience of interest here, isn't cut off from psychology or philosophy. That's why it's called *cognitive* neuroscience.

Digging further: Stadler and Thomson-Jones both pick up on the contribution of neuroscience to triangulation – the model of triangulation being an attempt to formalize the mutual interdependence of psychology, neuroscience, and phenomenology (in the broad sense of a concern with our experience of the world). Acknowledging that I am no neurofundamentalist, Stadler aptly characterizes triangulation as a kind of 'cross-checking' among these domains and the disciplines associated with them. The quote that she draws from FACT, to the effect that 'neural evidence sheds light on the functional nuances of the phenomena that elude ordinary experience and reflection' (3, FACT, 103), is the answer that I offer there to the 'implementation' objection. So long as we are correct in assuming that our cognitive architecture is shaped by our neural architecture, we certainly cannot rule out learning things about the mind via its neural realization. In principle, at least, this is something that 'moderate optimists' like me, and 'moderate pessimists' like Davies, can agree upon (Davies, 4). Thomson-Jones similarly recognizes the value of neuroscience as a component of triangulation, endorsing the neuroscientific experiment I propose as a way of resolving (or at least advancing debate on) the problem of anomalous suspense (4). But Davies might contend that this problem is descriptive rather normative, for the questions driving the debate are: what is suspense? Are cases of anomalous suspense genuine cases of suspense or, so to speak, false friends? More then needs to be said in relation to the challenge of the normative posed by Davies: can the empirical discipline of neuroscience scratch the normative itch of aesthetics? I return to this question below.

Naturalism - a work in progress
After offering a lucid and concise characterization of my naturalized approach to film, Rainer Reisenzein notes my reliance on an 'extended version' of the basic emotion theory (BET)

associated with psychologists such as Ekman, Ellsworth, Frijda, LeDoux, and Scherer. Noting that the main constituents of this theory are logically independent of one another and 'can therefore be held separately or in different combinations' (5), Reisenzein goes on to offer a three-pronged critique of BET, raising questions about the robustness of evidence supporting noncognitive pathways to emotion, the facial feedback hypothesis, and Ekman's basic emotion theory (the core of the extended version of BET). I wholeheartedly welcome Reisenzein's critical feedback on BET here (as I do Davies' on mirror neuron research, to which I'll return). Whatever the exact substance of his criticisms, and wherever this leaves us in terms of theorizing emotions, Reisenzein's criticisms exemplify a central plank of the naturalistic method: various empirical components of the orthodox theory are subjected to testing, and some found in need of revision or elimination. Naturalistic philosophy, like the sciences with which it allies itself, is always a work in progress.[12]

Also notable here is the fact that this overview of empirical research raising doubts about the adequacy of BET, along with a number of specific investigations contributing to this effort, are led by a psychologist of emotion – Reisenzein – but one who, as we've seen, recognizes the potential distinctiveness of emotions in different domains of experience. Reisenzein's efforts, like those of Gallese, represent the kind of collaborative dialogue between scientists and humanists that I advocate in FACT. I imagine that every one of my commentators is on board with this 'third cultural' research programme. Friend, however, raises some questions about the fine detail of my position. She worries that the division of labour I posit between philosophers and scientists is too stark – 'both unrealistic and undesirable' (3) – and that a consequence of my focus on the implications of various bodies of scientific research for the humanities is a 'rhetorical diminution' (2) of the contribution that theorists in the arts and humanities might make to the third culture.

While I certainly accept that FACT has this emphasis, I do think that it is a matter of rhetoric (which is not to say that it doesn't matter). The book gives a lot of space to psychological, neuroscientific, and evolutionary findings, *but* all of this material is filtered through the

sensibility of a philosopher and film scholar – mine! In this sense, the traffic is rather less unidirectional than Friend suggests; indeed Reisenzein notes the value of naturalized aesthetics *a la* FACT to psychologists, as a venue for the testing and refinement of psychological theories of emotion (5), and as a species of 'theoretical psychology (). I am also on board with Friend's campaign to   develop 'experiments that are more likely to shed light on philosophical issues' (5). As Thomson-Jones notes (4), this is precisely the goal of the neuroscientific experiment I propose in chapter 2 as a means of advancing debate on suspense.

Moreover, the description of the division of labour that I describe and endorse, targeted by Friend, is intended as an idealized model of the way collaborative research is conducted. In actual practice, this is inevitably going to be a lot messier. The roles I allocate to the philosopher-theorist on the one hand, and the empirical researcher on the other hand, are exactly that: roles. These roles might be filled by a few or a great many people, depending on the scope of the project, but in any event the key point is that sometimes the philosopher will get her hands dirty in the lab or the field, while the scientist will sometimes settle back into the armchair. So long as the distinct roles and tasks in the process of generating knowledge are ful(filled), it doesn't matter in principle to which department or faculty the investigators belong. (It might matter in terms of funding, of course.) Indeed, an absolute division of labour, strictly allocating the distinct roles to separate individuals, would likely have the effect of entrenching the traditional 'two cultures.'

Reisenzein's critical examination of BET leads us back to the relationship between ordinary emotions, and emotions in the context of art and film appreciation. Reisenzein and I share the view that 'fiction emotions' are a species of emotion in general. But recognition of this fact, along with Friend's related view that the exact dynamics of emotional behaviour will vary across different contexts, leads to a nice twist: BET may be misleading or flat-out wrong as an overall theory of ordinary emotions, while remaining illuminating in relation to emotions in the context of fiction films. How does the circle get squared? The hypothesis here is that, while it may be correct that facial expression of emotion is considerably less significant than BET implies

for emotions in general, that theory might retain centrality as an account of the way emotions are represented in films. The grounds for this hypothesis are that the distinctive communicative conditions of filmic representation lead filmmakers to employ legible representations of emotion as a core tactic. As Stadler makes clear in her commentary, in chapter 6 of FACT I argue that real-world emotional expressions are shaped and sculpted in films according to the purposes of filmmakers, and these vary across individuals, traditions, and periods. But orthodox narrative films, at least, place a premium on the dramatic clarity. As David Bordwell has demonstrated, real-world behaviours in general are typically streamlined in films, and sometimes substantially transformed. All of this shows, I hope, sensitivity to point urged by Thomson-Jones and Friend: recognition of the particularity of emotion in the specialized contexts of art.

A related methodological observation is also worth making here: while Reisenzein cites a (single) quantitative study of the prevalence of legible emotional expressions in film which casts about on the assumption of their ubiquity, echoing the challenge to BET in the context of real-world emotional behaviour, one wonders if a qualitative approach to this question might reach a different conclusion. In effect, chapters 6 and 7 of FACT constitute just such a study and conclusion. What is to be done? In the spirit of the third culture: more research on the particular case of film, conducted collaboratively by psychologists and film specialists, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, combined with an effort to see how all of this, in the words of Wilfrid Sellars, 'hangs together' (quoted in FACT, 21, 24).

Naturalism and normativity

'Values do not just drop from on high,' writes Friend, 'like a pair of stone tablets from a mountain' (5). What naturalist will disagree? And yet values and standards – epistemic, ethical, aesthetic – suffuse and shape human actions and practices. FACT insists that the discipline of aesthetics Is not *exhausted* by normative questions, and that there are many explanatory

questions about what *is* the case that we can fruitfully address without being drawn into what *ought* (by some standard) to be the case. But there's no denying that normative questions occupy an important position in aesthetics – works are judged to be good or bad, interpretations more or less correct or adequate, acts of appreciation more or less appropriate. So in the long run, naturalized aesthetics will need to say something normativity.

We've seen Friend's own response to this problem: an insistence upon the normative constraints governing emotional responses, constraints which vary across real, imagined, and fictional contexts. In the study of emotion, at least, it is not possible to entirely disentangle from the descriptive and the normative. FACT takes a broadly similar line (even if it does not always satisfy Friend), which I'll attempt to elaborate on here, especially in response to Laura di Summa's commentary, which focuses on the relationship between naturalism and criticism. But before doing so, I want to acknowledge another stance on value which is often obscured in naturalistically-oriented debates on the topic. Values don't descend from mountain tops, for sure; but maybe they don't need to. Perhaps they are just 'there' in the first place. Perhaps they are simply part of the structure of the universe, in the same way that numerical truths exist irrespective of there being material particulars to instantiate them (or that matter, conscious agents to notice them). Different species have evolved to grasp numerical realities to different degrees, and the 'extended numeracy' of the human species – the mathematical dimension of the extended mind – is central to its nature and success as a species. Perhaps beauty and goodness are like numbers: they are part of the fabric of the universe, and smart creatures can develop a capacity to recognize them. But then, aren't such values they just another variety of fact? And as such, they fall within the ambit of naturalism?[13]

The challenge of normativity to naturalism is discussed by Davies and Friend, but it is Laura di Summa who confronts it most directly. While Davies argues that neuroscience can't tell us whether a given response to an artwork is merited or appropriate, but only what kind of a response it is, di Summa to the contrary argues that naturalism can shed light on the 'fittingness' of our responses. Perhaps the gap between these two perspectives is not as large

as it appears, though, if we take into account that Davies' argument is specifically targeted at neuroscience, while di Summa has in mind the overall theory of naturalized aesthetics that I present (which, as I stress in the last lines of chapter 1, should not be thought of simply as 'the science of aesthetics'). This would align her more closely with Friend's remarks on the normative dimension of emotions which, as we have seen, Friend does believe can be tackled via the collaboration of psychologists and philosophers.

Even so, di Summa wants to push the normative boat out much further. She does this by exploring the potential contribution of naturalized aesthetics to *criticism* – by which I take it she means the evaluative interpretation and assessment of particular works (or groups of works). She does this against the backdrop of the marked scepticism I express on this topic in FACT, where I argue that 'there is a very marked contrast between criticism and theory' (53). Nonetheless the third of her three suggestions, concerning the role of naturalism in illuminating the character and value of the individual work, does echo a line of thought in FACT, where I propose that 'a naturalized approach to aesthetics can help us recognize the singular character of works of art, by showing how they emerge from – the and stand out in relief against – a background of patterns and regularities' (55). This is especially salient in chapter 8, where the focus is on the way individual films can give expression to unique emotional blends, like the mix of 'exuberant melancholy' A.O. Scott finds in many of Pedro Almodóvar's films, including *Los abrazos rotos* (2009). Levinson furnishes two further striking examples, in the expression of an alien sensibility in Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013), and of a state at once 'of utter fascination and utter boredom' in Béla Tarr's *Turin Horse* (2011) (8-9). The strange emotional brews found in these films stand in contrast to the more familiar emotions at play in the sequence from *Heimat* explored in chapter 6, but we get a better grip on both by setting them in the context of the general theory of emotion set out by FACT. That, at least, is the claim.

Di Summa also proposes that 'a close analysis of [the] empathic and sympathetic responses [elicited by films]…can inform an understanding of the ways in which value judgements may be implied by such responses' (3); di Summa has in mind moral values (6), but presumably

aesthetic values might also be in play here (the power or beauty or delicacy of a work might arise from its weave of sympathy and empathy). I think di Summa is onto something here. Her position might be related to that of Jenefer Robinson, who holds that an emotionally-attuned response to a work, far from being symptomatic of an 'affective fallacy,' is essential to its *proper* appreciation (the normative at work again). Di Summa's proposal effectively focuses on the other side of this coin: if an emotional response is necessary for a correct appreciation, then there must be an affective structure – the structure of sympathy and empathy – which is the object of the response. By teasing out the character of that structure – as I do in relation to Hitchcock's *Saboteur* and *Strangers*, among other examples – we can get clearer on both the implied moral stance of a work, as well as the degree to which it adheres to or departs from generic patterns of sympathy, antipathy, empathy, and counterempathy.

This point about the importance of our emotional responses to characters as a ground of the moral and/or aesthetic value of a work provides an answer to another question posed by Thomson-Jones: 'why [is] viewers' recognition of characters' emotion an important part of their understanding and experience of a film *as art*?' (5). Recognizing the affective states of characters – the focus of the *Heimat* sequence analysis which prompts Thomson-Jones to ask this question – is, generally speaking, a prerequisite to responses of sympathy and empathy; only in the case of low-level emotional contagion might it be said that we can respond with some sort of fellow feeling to a character without conscious recognition of their state. If the play of sympathy and empathy with characters is integral to the value we attach to works of narrative film art, then recognition of the emotions of these characters is indeed a necessary part of our proper appreciation of them. One might also legitimately ask: on what view would this *not* be the case? Only an extreme formalism, of the type articulated by Clive Bell, in which the representational content of a work is at best incidental to its aesthetic value, would seem able to make our recognition of characters and their states of mind so marginal.

Di Summa concludes by articulating two broad objections to her own proposals: first, that critical interpretations and evaluations may change over time, and thus may lack the stability

necessary for a systematic, naturalistic analysis; and second, that naturalism is somehow restricted to a focus on the aesthetic experience arising from direct engagement with a work, neglecting the 'reflective afterlife' of the work, in Peter Kivy's evocative phrase (11). On the first point: it is certainly true that the variability of interpretations and value judgements across individuals and audiences makes life complicated for anyone looking to come up with a theory of such judgements. But variability is everywhere, in our biology as much as our psychology, and as such doesn't put interpretation or evaluation beyond the reach of naturalism. Indeed chapter 1 of FACT sketches out a naturalistic account of anti-intentionalist acts of interpretation (of the type that di Summa sees as a threat to naturalistically-informed criticism, 9). As for the second objection voiced by di Summa: chapter 7 of FACT in fact presses home a very similar point to the one made by Kivy, specifically in relation to empathy. We shouldn't think of our empathic responses as being limited to the duration of our direct engagement with a film, since we may find ourselves simulating in imagination the experiences of characters retrospectively, long after the light on the screen has ceased to flicker (FACT, 196-7).

We cannot leave the topic of the normative dimension of aesthetics without returning to the questions raised by Davies about the (ir)relevance of neuroscience – and by implication, any strictly empirical enquiry – to this dimension. Neuroscientists might discover that the expressive qualities we attribute to music might vary notably depending on whether we are 'audio-viewing' a performance of a musical composition, or listening to it; but, says Davies, that won't make a jot of difference to the question of the correct conditions of musical appreciation (which are presumably, on a traditional classical vision at least, narrowly aural). Similarly for the case of dance: the fact that (there is neural evidence that) dancers and other experts in dance respond notably differently to dance performances than lay viewers doesn't affect at all the correct norms of dance appreciation. Those norms, Davies argues, are set by the practices of artists themselves, and it is up to critics and philosophers alike to recover and reconstruct them in exploring these practices. (It's worth noting here that such recovery of the (often tacit) norms of artistic practices is itself a largely empirical activity, though admittedly one that operates at the 'manifest' rather than 'subpersonal' level.)

But is it right to say that these empirical discoveries simply leave our norms intact, in all cases? That such discoveries *necessarily* have no bearing on normative questions? Let's revisit the case of expression in music…

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[1] Forthcoming in *Estetika* 1/2019 LVI (New Series: XII).

[2] Jerrold Levinson's poetically-licensed acronym for *Film, Art, and the Third Culture*, introduced at the outset of his commentary (1).

[3] Gallese's ES theory also makes an appearance here in Jane Stadler's commentary (10), where she relates it to kindred research, including that of Mark Johnson; David Davies strikes a more critical note on the embodied simulation/mirror neuron research programme in his contribution (10-12).

[4] Note that the notion of 'transparency' defended by Wilson and at stake here is *not* the same as the version of 'transparency' defended by Kendall Walton as a property of photographs, appearances notwithstanding. Walton's theory of photography is discussed in chapter 1 and the Conclusion of FACT.

[5] Bullough (1912). Bullough's influential essay is another reminder of the long history of naturalistic approaches to the aesthetic discussed in FACT (chapter 1, xx-xx).

[6] Sherri Irvin (2014) has proposed an account along these lines.

[7] I argue for the symmetry between aesthetic value and disvalue in my review (Smith 2018) of Jerrold Levinson, *Aesthetic Pursuits* (2016).

[8] On this point, see Raffman (1993), xx-xx.

[9] Hanich (2017).

[10] Noë (2015); see also the useful review by Hyman (2017).

[11] On this point, see the discussion in my interview with Angelo Cioffi (2018).

[12] Fingerhut too remarks on the 'revisional capacity' of naturalism (11), though it's unclear to me why the adoption of research on 'motor empathy with the camera' – or any other specific body of empirical knowledge – would increase this capacity.