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AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF RESEMBLANCE
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE NOTION
OF PICTORIAL RESEMBLANCE

by

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Abstract

The notion of resemblance has adopted many metaphorical senses and as a result has grown in language to become a very powerful and pregnant concept, a concept which deserves philosophical attention and clarification. Mere similarity in just any regard is insufficient for resemblance. Only sufficient similarity in some regard which is contextually indicated to be relevant, or in which the person making the judgement has interest, is sufficient. Two things need to be understood when a resemblance statement is made, and these will figure in truth conditions: (1) respects in which x and y are being compared; (2) comparison class. The statement 'x resembles y' implies that x and y share common characteristics, or that they are similar in certain regards; and also that x is much like y in these regards in comparison to other things in a specified class that x belongs to.

Resemblance is a symmetrical, but is neither a reflexive nor a transitive, relation. Not all information is equally important or significant in judgements of resemblance.

Two notions of pictorial resemblance ought to be distinguished, one which relies upon a literal interpretation of the concept of resemblance, and another which trades upon a highly metaphorical use of the notion. Artistic resemblance, the metaphorical application of pictorial resemblance, is often the goal of good artistic representation.

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CHAPTER ONE

In this paper I will attempt to accomplish two objectives. First, I will attempt the philosophical exercise of offering an analysis of the notion of resemblance. This necessitates that a distinction be clearly defined between the primary or central sense of 'resembles', and metaphorical uses of the expression which are now commonplace in language. This analysis will also involve consideration of several philosophical questions related to the notion, and thus the second chapter includes discussions pertaining to questions of transitivity, reflexivity, symmetry, resemblance predictability and significant information.

Secondly I will attempt to support a thesis I will present concerning resemblance in the pictorial arts. My argument is that there are two distinct usages of the notion of resemblance within the pictorial arts and that very different criteria can be used to justify the resulting two types of resemblance statements. Before I begin my actual study, a few introductory remarks concerning methodology and presupposition may be helpful to the reader.

It has been said that examples are to the philosopher what experiments are to the scientist. This short saying may perhaps be offered to begin to account for the seeming overabundance of examples which are to be found throughout this paper. Particularly in my first chapter, where I posit that there are numerous important and valid

metaphorical meanings of 'resemble' in addition to its literal or core meaning, there will be found many examples from ordinary language in an attempt to add support and credibility to a particular use of the term 'resemble' which I may be trying to establish as an important metaphorical application of the expression.

The scientist is often characterized as one who first formulates a hypothesis and then conducts experiments which he expects will either confirm or discredit the hypothesis. The method employed in this first chapter corresponds to that of the scientist in that examples are continually cited as evidence for the accuracy and truth of the proposed use of 'resembles' I may be discussing. As in all philosophical exercises of this sort, full and ultimate authority must be given to examples of how the expression is used in meaningful sentences. The adequacy of chapter one will be determined by how competent I will prove myself in my attempt to learn the lessons and discover the insights which language usage has to offer.

Three dictionaries of the English language attach the following definition to the word 'resemble':

"to be like, to have likeness or similarity to, to have some features or property in common with (another person or thing)" ¹

"to be similar in appearance, quality or operation; be of the same or like nature or aspect with"²

"to be similar to in appearance, quality or character"³

These definitions clearly rest upon a prior understanding of the concepts "to be like" and "to be similar to". Both of these

expressions, however, are in need of as much clarification as the word which these definitions presume to explain; and when we turn to these words' definitions, we discover explanations which ultimately rely upon the idea of resemblance. For instance, the Oxford English Dictionary, from which the first definition above was quoted, includes the following in its definition of the word 'like':

"Of two or more persons or things. Having the same or closely resembling characteristics; mutually similar"⁴

The word 'similar' is defined:

"Having a marked resemblance or likeness; of a like nature or kind"⁵

and 'similarity' is defined as:

"1. the state or fact of being similar; likeness, resemblance...
2. pl. Points of resemblance"⁶

Resemblance is defined in terms of likeness and similarity. Likeness and similarity are defined in terms of resemblance. The presentation of these definitions seems to reveal some sort of inadequacy if the initial dictionary definition of 'resembles' is intended to be a comprehensive explanation of the meaning of the term. Suppose I wanted to know the meaning of 'violin'. If someone defined a violin as a 'small cello' and then proceeded to define a cello as a 'large violin', I would not be very far advanced in the fulfillment of my desire to have some sort of detailed explication of the notion of 'violin'. Analogously, the expressions 'to resemble', 'to be like' and 'to be similar' all seem to be defined in terms of each other.

I should immediately add at this point that I am not attacking the quality of the dictionaries quoted above. Dictionaries do not claim to give complete explanations and explications of the meanings of words in the definitions they provide. And since there are only a finite number of words in a dictionary, and every word in a definition is defined elsewhere, it follows that dictionaries must include circular definitions. The points that I intend to emphasize by the disclosure of the circle generated by the meanings of the three terms is that, (1) a dictionary gives an explanation of the meaning of 'to resemble' which can be greatly enriched by such a study as we will present in chapter one and, (2) these three terms are intricately related to one another and an awareness of their interdependence can aid us in our study. These definitions indicate the necessity of any attempt to come to terms with the concept of resemblance to include an attempt to clarify and explain what it is for one thing to be like or to be similar to another. Any analysis of resemblance which neglects the task of elucidating the notions of 'to be like' or 'be similar to', or is unsuccessful in this task, falls short of a complete analysis of the meaning of resemblance. On these grounds I admit from the outset that I will not achieve, nor will I attempt to achieve, a complete analysis of the essence of 'resemblance'. (I realize that upon these stringent criteria perhaps no word would ever be able to be completely analyzed. This does not alter the use of such discussions.)

I will not begin with, nor feel obliged to later contribute, an analysis of the meanings of 'to be similar' and 'looks like'. The audience to which I write knows basically what it is for one thing to

look like or be similar to another. Having said this, and mindful of the interdependence of the three expressions, I must also conclude that the reader already knows something of the nature of resemblance. Indeed, in this chapter I will have occasion to compare examples of contexts in which the word 'resembles' appears and will discuss how similar and dissimilar these examples are to each other. In other words, I will assume an understanding of resemblance in my attempt to analyze the concept of resemblance! How can I justify my claim that this study is a useful and profitable inquiry into a theory of resemblance?

The word 'resembles', as the many examples from ordinary language cited later in this chapter will illustrate, is used in many different contexts. What the word means, (as is the case with any word) ultimately depends upon how it is used in meaningful sentences, and within the discussion I will present many different contexts in which it may be employed. Even though all these examples rely upon a previous basic grasp of what it is for one thing to be similar to or look like another, it should be recognized that the concept of resemblance has grown in language and in thought to become a very rich and pregnant concept indeed. Similarly the notion of 'action' or 'human action' is basically understood by virtually all people, yet throughout the history of philosophical thought the need for exposition and clarification of this concept has been constantly recognized. The purpose of my study in this chapter is to explore and clarify some of the manifold ways in which the expression 'resembles' is employed (though admittedly in metaphorical senses) in our language. To the nature of resemblance I now turn my attention.

The most central or core meaning of 'to resemble' must be 'to look alike'. If one was asked to give the most basic and undeniable sense of what it is for one thing to resemble another, I would expect the thoughtful answer would be that two things resemble each other if they look alike. If one was searching for a paradigm case of what it is for two things to resemble one would cite the case of two objects that looked alike. It seems undebatable that the primary and most direct meaning of 'resembles' has to do with 'looking like'.

Although I do not hesitate to categorically assert that the central meaning of resemblance has to do with looking like, there are other very strong uses of the term. Similarity as the result in the comparison of any of the sensible properties between two or more persons or things is almost immediate cause to introduce the notion of resemblance. One thing is said to resemble another if it is judged to sound like, feel like, taste like, or smell like, the other.

When two things are said to resemble each other in smell, we know that the speaker means to draw attention to the fact that these things have similar odours. When two sounds are said to resemble each other, we know that the speaker is drawing attention to the similar noises heard. But when two objects are said to resemble each other, without further hint as to how they resemble each other, we firstly anticipate that they will look like each other. This is a strong indication that although similarities with respect to any sensible quality are strong and sufficient reasons to speak of resemblance between two or more objects or things, 'looking like' is still undoubtedly the most central and literal meaning of the notion.

When speaking of resemblance of sensible qualities between two

or more things, indistinguishability is the ultimate degree of resemblance possible. An object may look like, sound like, feel like, taste like or smell like another object to such an extent that it may be difficult to tell them apart. I posit that 'looking like' is the most literal and least metaphorical meaning of the notion of resemblance, and that there being similarities in other sensible properties usually is what prompts most other resemblance statements.

Comparison of sensible properties is by no means the only strong use of resemblance statements. The notion of resemblance is interesting precisely because it has outgrown these more literal uses and has become a very rich concept in our language, a notion used in many contexts to convey various important ideas and concepts. The rest of this chapter will be concerned with discussing particular metaphorical uses of the term which are commonplace in our language. The metaphorical uses which are discussed below are not intended to be an exhaustive, nor disjunct, list of the metaphorical uses of 'resembles' in ordinary language. Indeed, because of the nature of metaphor, which depends upon employing words in unnatural or unusual settings, there can never be a complete list of the metaphorical uses of any word. The object of the following exercise is simply to give the reader some idea of the more interesting and universally understood metaphorical uses of 'resembles' which have gradually found acceptance and importance in our language. It is because of the vast number of metaphorical applications that clarification of the notion of resemblance has become such a crucial task with respect to several philosophical debates. One such debate in contemporary philosophy is that which centers upon the relation between the concepts of representation

and resemblance in the philosophy of art or aesthetics. In the third chapter I will deal indirectly with this issue in presenting an elucidation of the notion of pictorial resemblance. In the remainder of this chapter I will proceed to discuss various common metaphorical uses of resemblance.

The expression 'x resembles y' may be used to mean that x and y share characteristics which are more complex qualities than simple sensible qualities. For instance, two pairs of scissors might resemble each other in that one is as durable as the other. We can imagine two people arguing over whether one pair of scissors resembles another, with the point of disagreement being how much alike in durability they are to one another. The one wishing to deny that any real resemblance exists in this respect may say something like, "I also once thought that 'zinger' scissors resembled 'Mills' scissors, but I later found out that I was wrong when a pair of 'zinger' scissors lasted only a week, whereas a pair of 'Mills' scissors had lasted for over twelve years".

Let us consider another example. In determining whether two inks resembled each other, not only colour and appearance but also fluidity and texture would be considered. That is, not only similarity of simple sensibles (looks like, feels like, etc.), but also comparisons of more complex dispositionals (is as durable as, functions like, etc.) are relevant to the question of how closely two inks resemble each other. We might be interested in how closely a new ink functioned with respect to an old ink in a search for a surrogate. The better the substitute that the new ink would be for the old one, the greater the resemblance that would be determined to be between the two. Given

specific situations and purposes, different aspects of the inks become important in judgements of resemblance. It may be the case that one owns a desk which has had a hole drilled in the top for the purpose of holding a bottle of ink of a certain shape. In this case, the search for two resembling brands of ink involves the consideration of the size of the bottle — this feature may be viewed as more significant in the judgement of resemblance, here, than similarity of appearance, fluidity, texture or durability of the inks. Where the two inks are similar only in bottle size and shape it is still proper to say that these inks resemble each other. In ordinary language it is acceptable to use 'x resembles y' to mean that x and y share any characteristics, simple or complex.

Another metaphorical use of resembles may be recognized such that A resembles B if A is a visual aid to the understanding of B. Consider the statement, "The lines drawn around the picture of the magnet resemble the lines of force around a bar magnet".

In attempting to confirm this statement it would be pointless to look for a confirmation of the accuracy of the drawing by attempting to compare the lines drawn around the picture of the magnet with any lines around the real magnet. Literally 'looking like' is not a question here, as there are no lines around a magnet. The lines drawn around the picture of the magnet can be said to resemble the force field of the magnet because the lines in the picture can be used as an aid to understanding the concept of a force field, and may assist a person to grasp the concept of magnetic force. It is almost as if a teacher said, "If the lines of force were visible, this is what they would look

like". Similarly, small styrofoam balls in certain arrangements often are said to resemble atoms because they are used to illustrate and explain the structure of atoms. The teacher implies that if atoms were this large (as large as styrofoam balls), this is what they would look like.

As a student of chemistry progresses in his comprehension of concepts these crude models soon become not sufficiently refined to provide him with accurate information. Very detailed and symbolic diagrams replace the styrofoam balls in representing and resembling atoms. Nevertheless, these advanced visual models are still said to resemble what they model on the grounds that they are visual aids to the understanding of the respective concepts. This metaphorical usage of resemblance has gained almost universal acceptance and understanding in our language.

If the same general concepts, dicta, maxims or principles can be applied to both A and B, then this is good, and often sufficient, grounds for saying that A resembles B. The leadership of Adolf Hitler in Germany and that of Stalin in Russia can be said to have resembled one another because concepts of tyranny, dictatorship, unjust and undemocratic rule, etc., can be applied to both instances. Or, to cite another example, it might be said that two previously fought wars resemble each other if it is judged that similar types of warfare were employed, the scale of battle was approximately the same, the ease of victory by the victors not too dissimilar, etc. I conclude that if the same general maxims, dicta, concepts, or principles can be applied both to A and to B, then it is often acceptable to say that A resembles B.

This is another instance of a metaphorical use of the notion of resemblance which is employed to convey an important and interesting type of comparison.

The notion of resemblance is also applicable if both A and B have the same or a similar psychological or emotional effect upon a spectator. A piece of music might be said to resemble some particular painting if it expresses the same or similar mood or attitude to the audience. A huge building may be said to resemble a monster because of the common psychological feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, and awe which one experiences both when standing under a huge building and when one thinks of monsters.

An interesting feature of this last example is to note that whether or not, or to what degree, a huge building is said to resemble a monster depends upon the psychological condition of the spectator. In a heightened state of emotion one may very quickly agree that a huge building resembles a monster, whereas the same person might deny this resemblance at other times.

Lastly I will examine two ways in which the notion of resemblance is used in connection with painting and pictorial art. One of the ways in which a painting may be said to resemble an object is if the picture looks like the object. This use of 'resembles' has been described as the most literal and least metaphorical application of the term. This literal type of visual resemblance is that which is identified by such things as point to point matching, proportionality of parts, colour matchings, etc. These are criteria which can be objectively alluded to and measured.

I will argue that the notion of resemblance is also used to

convey an idea which is not that of 'looking like' in the ordinary sense described above, and that even if such relations as point to point matching, proportionality of parts, colour matchings, etc. are not present between the painting and the object, a true resemblance statement can still be made. A painting of a person or object is correctly said to resemble that person or object if the audience claims to be able to 'see' the person or object in the painting. The major theme of the remainder of this chapter will be that a distinction does exist between a literal type of visual resemblance, which relies upon 'looking like' in a standard sense, and another type of visual resemblance which (like all metaphor) is more elusive and difficult to define. To introduce several aspects of this theme I will begin with a discussion of the statement, "This painting entitled 'Duke of Wellington' does not resemble the painting entitled 'Horizontal Tree'".

At first glance the truth of this statement seems too obvious to be interesting. The two paintings do not resemble each other because they are of different subjects. When examined more closely, however, one becomes aware that the meaning of this statement is unambiguous only when given certain intentions of the speaker. If the above statement has to do with style and technique of painting, i.e. with the comparison of the use of line, colour, shape, lighting and texture in the production of the painting, then this statement certainly is meaningful. Just as Picasso's 'Man with a Violin' and Braque's 'Musical Forms with the Words Fête and Journal' do resemble each other in technique, effect and expression, so do Goya's 'Duke of Wellington' and Mondrian's 'Horizontal Tree' not resemble each other in pictorial style. These latter two artists have attempted to represent their

subjects in very dissimilar ways, whereas Picasso and Braque are said to belong to the same school of painting, viz. cubism. Another plausible interpretation of this statement is that the spectator is not affected emotionally or psychologically in the same way when he views both works of art. This dissimilarity is not solely due to the different styles and conventions employed in the two paintings, as there can be paintings of very different style and technique which express similar moods and emotions. Two landscapes resemble each other that differ both in style and subject matter, yet share a look of deep, mellow repose.

A painting may be said to resemble a second painting rather than a third though all the paintings may be of the same style and technique. An impressionist painting of a dog will be said to resemble another impressionist painting of a dog more than it resembles an impressionist painting of a tree. Here we are speaking of how the paint on the canvas is 'seen' by the spectator. When we attempt to discover resemblances with regard to what we 'see' on the canvas, we may either be comparing the paintings with respect to how similar they are in formal visual correspondence (such aspects as point to point matching, proportionality of parts, length of lines, colours, etc. are all relevant here) or we may be comparing the paintings on the basis of what is 'seen' or recognized in the paintings. The first type of visual resemblance may be objectively measured, and it may be thus determined whether or not, and to what degree, two paintings visually resemble each other. The second type of visual resemblance cannot be analyzed or determined by any set of objective standards.

Constable made several sketches for his well-known painting

'Valley Farm'. These sketches are very different from each other and from the final painting in terms of space, form, line, perspective, etc., yet they are also close resemblances of each other in that we recognize the same subject in each of them. A child may very carefully (but not very accurately) attempt to trace Constable's 'Valley Farm' with a piece of tracing paper placed over a reproduction of Constable's painting. He may then apply the same colours as appear in 'Valley Farm' in as close position and spreads as he can, making use of his tracing. We may suppose that the child's painting will most likely be closer to Constable's 'Valley Farm' than any of its sketches (as will become clear if the reader examines the sketches of, and the final painting of, 'Valley Farm') in terms of space, line, form, position of colour, etc. But when these three paintings ('Valley Farm', the sketch, and the child's copy) are looked at by a spectator, the spectator probably would see and recognize that the same place is depicted in Constable's 'Valley Farm' and its sketch, but fail to judge that the child's painting was of the same scene at all. The child's copy more closely resembles 'Valley Farm' in terms of literal resemblance; Constable's earlier sketch more closely resembles 'Valley Farm' in terms of 'seeing' or recognition.

Let us review the discussion to this point. First, paintings can be said to resemble each other if they exhibit the same general style and technique. Second, two paintings can be said to resemble each other if they tend to evoke the same emotional or psychological response in a spectator. Third, two paintings may be said to resemble each other in visual appearance. On the one hand they may be similar with respect to such things as point to point matching, proportionality

of parts, form, line, etc. On the other hand they may resemble each other in that the spectator 'sees' the same object or scene depicted in the two paintings. I have indicated that these two types of visual resemblance are independent of each other. I will now pass to a more detailed examination of the notion of the depiction of a painting.

It seems not a perverse use of the expression to say that a painting is 'of' whatever the painter intended it to be of. We can imagine a painting which vaguely resembles a tree and doesn't at all, to anyone, resemble a spider with its legs in the air. Yet if the painter intended the painting to resemble a spider with its legs in the air it seems that we sustain correct usage if we say that the painting is indeed a painting of a spider in said condition. It may be judged to be an extremely poor, even disastrous, painting of a spider with its legs in the air, but it may still be judged on the basis of what the artist was trying to achieve. It is a bad painting precisely because it is a painting of a spider and it doesn't resemble a spider.

Technical reasons may preclude the identification of the painting on the basis of resemblance. Aging, fading and other purely physical determinants may cause the painting not to resemble its subject. (The painting may have been damaged in a shipment and part of the paint scraped from the surface.) Another, and more common, way in which a painting may be said not to resemble its subject on technical grounds is if the artist is not sufficiently skillful nor competent enough to paint what he would like, to be able to achieve the effect he desires.

If the artist is able to reconstruct to his satisfaction his way of seeing or how he wishes to resemble his subject, then we can say that the artist has personally succeeded. This is one judgement of achieve-

ment of which only the artist himself can judge his work. If purely physical conditions have not distorted the original look of the painting, and if the artist judges that he has closely painted what he desired, i.e. has achieved his desired effect, then the painting cannot be said not to resemble its subject on technical grounds.

There is at least one other way in which a painting may be judged. It may be judged by spectators other than the artist himself. After the artist feels satisfied that he has 'captured' a resemblance the public then has a chance to express their opinions of whether or not the artist has been successful. The public will test the painting by judging whether they see a resemblance between the painting and what the artist claims the painting to depict and subsequently resemble.

The above explains one way in which an artist may both succeed and fail in depiction at the same time. Some artists attempt only to paint canvases which will be readily recognizable by the public, while others have little interest in public opinion and paint only to satisfy their own standards and judgements. The interesting aspect of all this is the realization that it can be said that the artist is able to both succeed and fail in producing a painting which resembles the subject. The artist may be very pleased that his painting does indeed resemble the subject, while at the same time the public may ridicule the proposed resemblance and deny that there is any resemblance at all between the painting and the subject. This phenomenon strengthens our conviction that there is a type of visual resemblance involved in painting which is not always determined by such things as point to point matching, proportionality of parts, etc., a type of

resemblance which is not able to be objectively determined or evaluated.

Is it not more likely, however, that the conflict between the artist and the public is generated simply because of a lack of clarity of meaning in the terms used? Surely the artist and the public do not agree on what it is for one thing to resemble another, or there would be no such disagreement. We can see the painting, we can see the subject of the painting, and just as we are able to agree on whether two cats resemble each other with respect to colour, so we should be able to tell without argument whether the painting resembles the subject, that is, unless the word 'resembles' is not being used consistently in the two cases. On the contrary, we hope to offer evidence that the failure of the artist in the eyes of the public when he himself feels he has been successful is not an indication that the artist has a perverted understanding of what it is for one thing to resemble another, or that he lacks some knowledge or understanding of the concept of resemblance.

The following examples from the history of art add credibility to this claim. It was once thought that impressionist paintings did not resemble their subjects.⁷ When the very first works of impressionism were created it could truly be said that in the eyes of the public they failed to resemble. Shortly after this initial hostile reaction impressionism began to be recognized as a style of painting which closely resembled its subject matter. Likewise, when Cézanne first showed his still-lives they were unfavourably received by the public. Because Cézanne used distorted shapes and non-literal shadings, his paintings were thought not to resemble their intended subjects. In

the world of art today Cézanne's still lifes are often presented as employing a style which achieves a close resemblance to the objects depicted. We cite these examples to illustrate the fact that at one time the public failed to see the intended resemblance in these paintings, and now the public accepts these paintings as involving an intimate type of resemblance. The public has been 'convinced' by the artist, critics, etc., that his paintings do indeed resemble what they are paintings of. Just as the impressionist painters or Cézanne did not have a perverted understanding of the concept of resemblance, so neither should it be prima facie judged that an artist who claims that his paintings resemble when the public disagrees with his judgement has a perverted understanding of the concept, or uses the term in an uncommon fashion.

It is clear that the type of resemblance which is being attempted by the artist in the above situations is not a literal resemblance which depends exclusively on such criteria as point to point matching, proportionality of parts, exactness of colour reproduction, etc. If this objectively measurable type of resemblance is intended, then indeed I do not deny that there may be situations in which the artist may be wrong in his judgement that a particular painting of his resembles its subject. An artist would be using the term 'resembles' incorrectly if he claimed that his painting resembled its subject in a literal sense when it exhibited nothing close to point to point matching or proportionality of parts. This would be a mistake similar to that of a writer who uses the expression, 'Tim is a mouse' not as a metaphor or figure of speech, but as a literal statement. Tim is a man

and therefore Tim is not a mouse. When an artist claims a literal resemblance his success or failure can be fairly accurately determined. Literal resemblance may almost be considered as capable of being determined to be true or false, accurate or inaccurate, answered, fulfilled, etc. An artist who claims that his painting of a shoe shows literal resemblance, when it looks to everyone else to be a painting of General De Gaulle, is misusing the concept of literal resemblance which relies on the existence of point to point matching and other objectively determinable criteria.

Most artistic painting, however, is a deliberate departure from this literal notion of resemblance. To judge most paintings correctly is not to judge them with regard to the fact that they deviate from the standard use of the notion of resemblance. The artist intentionally deforms the visual appearance of his subject matter so that point to point matching is not possible (nor desirable).

I hope that the reader will soon agree, on the basis of the following paragraphs, that the artist trades precisely on the notion of literal visual resemblance in an attempt to create another type of resemblance which is inventive, novel and creative. This type of resemblance which the artist strives for is less literal (it may not be literal at all) than point to point visual matching, but ultimately depends upon an understanding of literal visual resemblance. Consider metaphor in language. Metaphor deviates from the literal uses and meanings of words and expressions but ultimately depends upon a literal understanding of the words or expressions used. If the literal meanings of the words used in the metaphor 'Tim is a mouse' were not known, then the metaphor would not be effective, and could not be understood at all.

Likewise, if literal resemblances were not understood, then artistic resemblances (I will hereafter refer to these resemblances as A-resemblances) would not be possible.

In this A-type of resemblance the artist not only attempts to get us to notice new ways in which a painting may resemble an object, but he attempts to influence our vision of and our attitude toward the object itself. A painting may offer us the challenge to see Alice in a way we never have before, and if indeed we proceed to see Alice in the way that the painting dictates, then it is obvious that we will admit that the painting does resemble Alice. The painting will organize our view of Alice in a novel way which will enable us to see her in this atypical manner. But we must first have an understanding of what a literal resemblance of Alice would be like before we begin to speak of less literal resemblances of Alice. The artist's demand that we see objects differently from our normal visual perception is only reasonable if there is a common or usual way in which the object is ordinarily seen, a way which most often depends exclusively on such things as point to point matching and literal resemblances. This analysis supports our suggestion that the A-resemblance which the artist employs trades on the notion of literal resemblance.

The earlier examples of the impressionist paintings and the paintings of Cézanne also indicate another interesting feature of the concept of A-resemblance. These examples show that the resemblance involved in painting not only depends upon, but oft-times determines, literal resemblance. The role of the artist in creating a resemblance which may not initially be recognized as such is to convince the public that he has created a likeness. Later (when, for instance, the

impressionist paintings and the paintings by Cézanne were accepted by the public) these paintings themselves may be received as literal and faithful resemblances. These paintings may become the standards for judging other paintings as to the degree of resemblance which they contain to their subject matter. In this way a particular painting or style of painting may actually be said to create the literal resemblance upon which it relies. As the novelty of a particular way of resembling objects wears off, the style of painting may become more literal; much the same process by which a metaphor may acquire a literal meaning as it becomes commonplace in a language.

A painting can be said to resemble its subject not only if it displays literal visual resemblance, but also if it presents or prescribes a certain unusual way to view the world, a way which is eventually (though perhaps only gradually) accepted and acknowledged by the public. Although this obviously is a highly metaphorical use of 'resembles' it is also an almost universally accepted use of the expression in our language. I would guess that the presence of A-resemblance is some sort of criterion of good artistic representation.

Before I continue in more detail my discussion of artistic resemblance, I wish to complete my general analysis of the notion of resemblance. In the brief chapter immediately following I will examine the notion of resemblance with regard to questions of transitivity, reflexivity, symmetry, resemblance predictability and significant information.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Reflexivity, Symmetry and Transitivity

Resemblance is not a reflexive relation. Although it might be thought that an object looks like itself more than it looks like any other thing in the world, we would think it an unusual and confusing use of the expression in a statement if one were to say, 'Bob Martin resembles Bob Martin', or, 'Venus resembles Venus'. The initial response would be to wonder what anyone could mean by uttering these statements. The hearer of either of these statements might initially wonder if there were two objects by the same name which were being compared with each other as to the degree of resemblance between them. This is understandable since if this is not the case, i.e. if the name 'Bob Martin' refers to the same individual both times, then the statement, 'Bob Martin resembles Bob Martin' conveys no information at all to the hearer. I note that if we were trying to teach the notion of resemblance to someone we certainly would not begin by trying to make the student understand that he totally resembles himself, i.e. that he totally looks like himself. This approach would only tend to confuse the student and would not advance his grasp of the notion of resemblance at all. To be a significant and proper use of the term, I conclude that for two things to resemble each other they must be different in at least one respect, viz., quantitatively. It is not a

proper use of the term 'resembles' to say that an object resembles itself.

Resemblance is a symmetrical relation. If A resembles B, then necessarily B resembles A. If A looks like, sounds like, feels like, tastes like or smells like B, then B also looks like, sounds like, feels like, tastes like or smells like A. If A is like B with respect to function, durability, or other properties, then B is like A to the same extent.¹

Resemblance is not a transitive relation. A red Volkswagon automobile may resemble a red shirt, the red shirt may resemble a blue shirt of the same style, yet the red Volkswagon automobile will not necessarily resemble the blue shirt in question.

2,2 Resemblance Predictability

Everything resembles everything else. I question the truth of this statement, but the apparent truth of this claim is what constitutes the major problem for any resemblance theory. It is precisely because it is commonly thought that everything does resemble every other thing in some way, that it is difficult to give an adequate account of a speaker's intentions when two objects are singled out for comparison of resemblance. To say that the planet Venus resembles my pet worm on the basis that both are physical objects and both can be seen without the aid of telescopes is perverse, and misleading. One must intend to draw attention to a common aspect or feature of two things which is not also common to any two objects in the world. Yet

this is a peculiar claim. How can it be perverse or misleading to say that the planet Venus resembles my pet worm when in fact, given certain conditions, this statement is true?

It is perverse because there would be no purpose to such a comparison; it would convey no information to the hearer and would serve only to confuse him. There must be some point or purpose in a comparison or else the comparison is idle and indeterminate. If one is asked, 'Does Venus resemble my pet worm?', one would immediately question what sort of similarity there could be between the worm and the planet which would be worth identifying. One would not answer, 'Yes, they both occupy space and exist in time', but one would try to imagine some context or purpose which the questioner may have had in mind. Nor would it be a proper resemblance statement to say that the planet Venus resembles my pet worm in that they both appear at the same time each morning and each evening. Mere similarity in just any regard is insufficient for resemblance. Only similarity in some regard which is contextually indicated to be relevant, or in which the person making the judgement has interest, is sufficient.

Because an affirmative answer might be thought able to be given to any statement of the form, 'Does x resemble y', the question of resemblance is empty and meaningless until a context or purpose is given to the proposed comparison. To make the blanket statement, 'Everything resembles everything else' is to obscure the crucial fact that, although everything does resemble everything else in some way, degrees and significance of resemblance are what give content and import to the notion of resemblance, especially to its importance in

epistemology and concept forming.

The statement 'A resembles B' implies that there is a peculiar, interesting and non-trivial similarity or likeness between A and B which caused the particular resemblance statement to be made. A resemblance statement is made by a speaker who has a purpose for making the comparison. For instance, we all agree that automobiles off an assembly line resemble each other, but different judgements of resemblance can be made by people with different purposes in mind. To the colour inspector who checks off 'red', 'green', 'blue', a green compact car may resemble a large green car of another style more than two cars of identical style with slightly different colours. Or, if man A drives one car on to the truck, man B the next, man C the next, then man A again, etc., man A may feel that car number one resembles car number four more than car number two. Resemblance is a similarity which is interesting or significant. The notion of resemblance requires that a specific purpose be defined before a comparison can be made, and if no specific purpose is mentioned then it is assumed that what is being questioned is the degree of overall resemblance between the two things. In most cases, unless the overall comparison is able to be easily made, when no specific purpose for comparison, or regard relevant to which considerations are being made, is indicated, it remains undetermined whether or not 'x resembles y' is true.

When a resemblance statement is made we immediately, and justifiably, become alert for particular similarities which may be intended. The audience tends to establish expectations as to the type of similarity being alluded to.

If the statement was made that, 'Those two cats resemble each other', we would expect the speaker to mean that those two cats were more alike than most other pairs of cats selected at random. Various different things could be meant (they could resemble each other in age, colour, softness of fur, length of tail, etc.), but without further stipulation we would expect the two cats to closely look alike. We might even reasonably suppose that it may be difficult to tell the two cats apart. On the other hand, consider the statement, 'Bob Martin resembles an owl'. Here we certainly do not predict that there will ever be any danger of mistaking Bob Martin for an owl. The most natural interpretation in this context is to assume that Bob Martin has some characteristic looks or temperament usually attributed to the owl. But not only this. The statement implies that Bob Martin is more like an owl than most other people. If I say that 'x resembles y', there are two conditions which must be met for the statement to be true: x and y should be similar in certain regards (share certain characteristics) and x should be much like y in these regards in comparison to other things in a specified class that x belongs to. To say that Bob Martin resembles an owl is to say that Martin and the owl are of serious demeanor, stare blankly, and like to stay up late at night, and to say that Martin is more like an owl than many other people in this regard.

That Bob Martin has a serious demeanor, stares blankly and likes to stay up late at night would not be the only state of affairs which might prompt the statement, 'Bob Martin resembles an owl'. Let us imagine that Bob Martin is at a party and is involved in some sort of

mimic game. In this situation the statement could mean that Bob Martin is trying to imitate an owl, or, if many people are involved in the same attempt, that Bob Martin best imitates an owl. If either of these things was intended by the resemblance statement, then this situation would have to be explicitly specified before a hearer could grasp the intended meaning.

When a resemblance statement is made the audience proceeds to predict what sort of resemblances are not part of the speaker's intention. Even if a person should say that Bob Martin very closely resembles an owl, we would not expect that Bob Martin catches and eats mice, nor that he lives in a tree, nor that when you meet him on the street you may mistake him for an owl.

Because of the possibility of being able to specify particular aspects of any two things to be compared, and given the unlimited potential to construct possible situations, it is conceivable that the statement, 'A resembles B' might represent an indefinite number of different possible meanings. Although this is the case, we also observe that in any resemblance statement there is a natural interpretation of what is most likely meant by the comparison. Often this interpretation is so natural and predictable that it need not be specified if the speaker anticipates that the audience will interpret him without further qualification. Only a limited number of things can reasonably be meant by an unspecified resemblance statement, and it usually is clear the way in which A won't resemble B. This process of resemblance expectation and natural interpretation is often so rich and developed that we are easily able to predict what is meant and

intended by a given resemblance statement. I will call this phenomenon 'resemblance predictability'.

When the resemblance between one object and a second is in question, we must be clear about what aspect it is which is being singled out for comparison before a judgement can be made. Resemblance is relative to contexts involving observer's interests. For instance, let A: a red rose; B: a red tulip; C: a yellow tulip. According to an impressionist painter, $A R B > B R C$ (where R denotes 'bears resemblance to'), whereas a botanist may feel that $B R C > A R B$. Both are correct in their judgements relative to their particular concerns. If a particular feature is not mentioned in the resemblance statement (nor so predictable that it need not be mentioned), when it is said that 'x resembles y more than z' it is assumed that some easily predictable or overall comparison of similarity is being made. If a specific purpose for comparison, or regard relative to which considerations are being made, is not indicated nor easily predictable, then it remains undetermined whether or not x does resemble y more than z.

2.3 Significant Information

In this section I will discuss two examples which will show that not all information is equally important or significant in judgements of resemblance.

I will first consider possible pictorial representations of a literary character. It is clear that for a picture to resemble Don Quixote, it must agree with the literary descriptions of this character by Cervantes in the novel Don Quixote. There are, however, many

different possible representations of Don Quixote which are consistent with the descriptions given in Don Quixote. Which one do we choose as most closely resembling the character, and on what basis?

When examining two paintings we might look to see which gives more information about the character as he is described in the novel. There may be two paintings, one of which shows only a sitting portrait, the other which shows a person who almost exactly looks like the man in the portrait but shows him in outrageous apparel which includes a tin basin on his head, riding an old bony nag, and about to crash into a windmill which he seems to be attacking. Both pictures are entitled 'Don Quixote'. The second picture conveys so much more information that although figures in both paintings are very similar, we would say that this latter one more closely resembles the character of Don Quixote. The basis for this judgement that one picture contains a greater degree of resemblance than the other is that one picture allows us to more easily recognize the figure in the painting to be Cervantes' character. Without knowing that both paintings were entitled 'Don Quixote', we would be much more likely to guess that the second painting was a picture of the literary character.

At this point a third painting may be introduced which contains a subject who does not have any of the facial features of the man who is depicted in the two paintings discussed in the previous paragraph; but because this man (who is also dressed in ragged clothes with a tin basin for a hat) is depicted as being helped off a windmill arm by a fat stolid companion, we also say that the man in this painting resembles Don Quixote. (Of course we recognize the fat companion as Sancho Panza.) This discussion implies that not all pictorial informa-

tion (information conveyed by a painting) is equally important in the identification of the literary character. In identifying Don Quixote the facial features appear not to be very relevant at all, whereas the tin basin worn for a helmet is a very important piece of information which causes most other aspects of the person to become secondary.

Because we are presented with a man who wears a tin basin for a helmet we are immediately inclined to identify the subject of the painting as Don Quixote and we look at other aspects of the painting to confirm, or at least not to deny, our suspicions. A painting resembles Don Quixote if it conveys significant information which allows the recognition of the painting as one in which the artist intended to represent Cervantes' character. Some information conveyed by a painting (such as whether the subject has high cheekbones, or blue eyes) is irrelevant to the identification; other information (such as the ragged clothes or the tin basin for a helmet) is almost indispensable.

As the public develops an awareness and a conception of Cervantes' character, we may witness an interesting phenomenon. It may happen that what was initially insignificant information may become more weighty in the eyes of the public. Let us suppose that Cervantes makes no mention of whether Don Quixote has a beard, but that as paintings of Don Quixote are produced they for some reason all portray him as a man with a beard. The public develops an image of the character as being a man with a beard. We can imagine (with perhaps more than a little effort) that the author's original painting of Don Quixote may be unexpectedly found and that this painting may depict Don Quixote as a man without a beard, causing the public not to accept this painting as

resembling Don Quixote. An initially irrelevant piece of information becomes very significant and almost essential to the recognition of a resemblance between a painting and the literary character because of an image which the public inherits and develops.

Because literary descriptions are incomplete, artists are able to paint pictures of literary characters like Don Quixote which agree with the written descriptions yet differ in appearance. There are certain aspects of the character which are important features to be included in the paintings, and other features which are irrelevant and which can vary from painting to painting without making identification more difficult. We have seen how the public may develop a conception of the visual appearance of a literary character and certain features may become significant which were irrelevant in the original literary description. A painting is only said to resemble Don Quixote if it conveys enough significant information that the literary character can be recognized by the spectator familiar with the written description.

Second, in order to continue my discussion of the issue of significant information, I will consider photographs of a girl named Alice. The extent to which a photograph resembles Alice is largely dependent on the amount of significant information which is to be found in the photograph. It is precisely because of the lack of significant information given that a photograph of Alice taken while she was on a hill a mile away from the camera is said not to resemble Alice. If the speaker in the photograph is recognizable as a person at all, it would be impossible to identify a particular person as that speck. Even though this photograph is of Alice, it fails to resemble her because it does not give enough detail for a spectator to be able to recognize

Alice in the photograph.

Imagine three separate photographs of Alice, all showing more or less an equal amount of her body. The first photograph shows her feet, the second her buttocks and the third her face. Most people who know Alice would only recognize the third photograph as being of Alice. They would only exclaim, 'That photograph resembles Alice' when shown the photograph of her face, and not when shown the photographs of either her feet or her buttocks, because more significant information is given of Alice in the photograph of her face. On the other hand we could conceive that it was a well known fact that Alice had lost two of her middle toes on her right foot. If this were the case then people would also exclaim, 'That photograph resembles Alice' when shown the picture of her feet. A photograph must be able to provide a sufficient amount of significant information to the spectator before it can be said to resemble that person. There are privileged features of a person of which recognition of only a very few is sufficient to allow a spectator to see a resemblance between a photograph and a person, whereas a whole host of other equally accurate information may be inadequate to justify finding a resemblance between a photograph and a person.

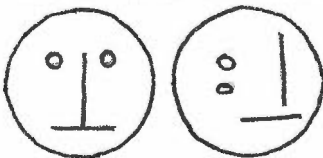
Once the significant information necessary to identify a person or object is conveyed by a photograph, other information is often disregarded and not missed if absent. Black and white photographs of two men may be sufficient to tell which man is represented in which photograph and the fact of the absence of colour will not be of concern to the spectator. On the other hand, black and white photographs of

two different horses may not be as useful to tell which photograph is of which horse as two blurred or not so detailed colour photographs. In the recognition of people, objects and scenes in photographs, the presentation in the photograph of significant information seems to be a crucial factor.

This concludes the discussion of significant information. Through discussion of the two examples presented above I have hoped to convey something of the notion and importance of significant information in judgements of resemblance.

CHAPTER THREE

The question of pictorial resemblance demands special attention in our general analysis of the notion of resemblance. To look at a picture qua picture is to look at it as the likeness of some object or thing — this fact serves to distinguish a picture from a replica. A painting is not usually meant to be compared with the actual object it is said to resemble in any sense of 'being like' or 'functioning like'. A two-dimensional surface will very seldom be judged to be very much like a three-dimensional object, nor, where the painting is of an idea, very much like an abstract thought. In paintings it is the visual appearance of an object, character, or object of thought which is said to resemble the visual appearance of the painting. Fine black lines are used to convey the sharp outlines of ordinary physical objects and although the contours in a drawing aren't themselves edges, when we look at a drawing as a representation we see the contours as edges. In literal or realistic painting the artist attempts to imitate the external form of the object in front of him (i.e. the artist abstracts the form from the object he sees), and the beholder, in his turn, recognizes the subject of the work by this form. In the two drawings,



, the first succeeds whereas the second fails in the attempt to resemble a face. The first drawing is said to resemble a face because the drawing correctly maps the spatial relations between, or overall form of, the head, eyes, nose and

mouth. The resemblance is achieved in spite of the fact that eyes are not circular and noses and mouths are not thin lines. When we view a painting we are supposed to recognize the visual appearance similar to the visual appearance of an event or object in the world. A still-life painting entitled 'Apples and Oranges' prompts us to imagine not wine and cheese, but the two types of fruit mentioned. In pictorial art the resemblance is between the visual appearances of the object and the picture — not between the object and the picture as a physical object.

Pictures can usually be easily compared with a restricted visual aspect of a three-dimensional object, e.g., colour, shape, size, proportionality of parts, etc. Some artists, however, may attempt to paint something which visually resembles the whole object or experience of that object. These artists are not concerned with any visual resemblance between the appearance of any specific aspect of the painting and the appearance of one feature of the object. A successful cubist painting, for example, may be said to visually resemble its subject only when the canvas is looked at as a whole and no single aspect of the painting may be recognizable as resembling a corresponding feature of the subject. This phenomenon is due to the cubist technique of trying to portray an object or person in many different positions at the same time, prompted by the desire to paint something which resembles one's experience of an object. This method produces a painting which initially looks like a disarray of lines and shapes but when it is perused as an entire composition, the spectator should see the visual resemblance between the object as it is experienced in the

world and the visual appearance of the painting.

An essential distinction to be made when speaking of resemblance in the pictorial arts is that between a picture which 'looks like' an object and thus represents it, and a picture which represents an object only through a particular interpretation of a schema. It might be objected that a schema is not a picture at all, but rather an arrangement of lines and sometimes colours which only results in representing an object when it is interpreted by a particular method or formula appropriate to the schema at hand. In order to identify what any schema represents, rules and formulae of interpretation must be known. In this sense a schema is like a puzzle. On the other hand, in a picture involving resemblance we don't decipher a puzzle, but discover the intended object in the painting. If one has to figure out with the help of memorized pictorial rules (no matter how familiar) what is represented in a picture or painting, then resemblance is not involved in the picture.

To illustrate this point let us imagine an ordinary painting of a landscape. Now suppose we take this landscape painting and reverse the colours so that every object in the landscape is depicted in the complementary of its real colour. The painting is then fragmented into various sections and these sections are re-arranged according to some formula but regardless of the look of the landscape. Of the resulting painting we agree with Wollheim, who says:

"We have not now a picture that we look at, but a puzzle that we unravel."¹

The original landscape painting could properly be called a

resemblance of the landscape it represented because it could immediately be seen as representing the landscape. But when this painting is re-painted and re-sectioned, and it is only by means of some formula or derivation that we are able to go from the painting to what it is said to depict, we can no longer speak of the painting as containing a resemblance to its original subject. It is now a schema which must be translated.

Many contemporary philosophers would claim that in the pictorial arts the notion of resemblance itself depends upon convention. They would judge that I am wrong in suggesting that a distinction exists between schemata and pictures which resemble. One cannot, they claim, 'simply' imitate an object's external form without first having learnt how to construct such a form. If it were otherwise, they argue, then there would be no need for the innumerable books on 'how to draw the human figure' or 'how to draw ships'. If it were otherwise, then there would be no explanation for the growth of and changes in painting styles and modes of representation through the centuries. This line of reasoning argues that resemblance is really a misused and misunderstood concept when applied to the pictorial arts, and that there is nothing which can be identified as a 'natural' resemblance and that it is only that some conventions exist which are more familiar than others, i.e., that some schemata are easily worked out (these are the ones which mistakenly are said to contain resemblances), whereas others are more difficult and require concentration of effort.

We have already suggested (cf. chapter one) that resemblances can be created and prescribed to the audience by the artist, and that if

these resemblances are accepted then through convention they may eventually become literal resemblances. However this fact does not refute, but only serves to sharpen and clarify, why it is that some paintings are said to resemble, and others are said not to resemble, the objects they depict. When a convention is so universally accepted that the spectator begins to 'see' and does not have to interpret or work out by formula what is intended, then to that extent resemblance is involved in the picture or painting. A schema that is automatically, unintentionally and subconsciously worked out is not a schema at all!

A recently attempted explanation or account of the changing styles in the history of art is that which depends upon an understanding of what has been referred to as 'umbrella conventions'. This explanation relies on the distinction between two types of convention. There is one type of convention, language is an example, of which every element or component of the convention must be learnt separately. To understand the convention 'cat' as the word to refer to a cat does not give any indication of what the conventional linguistic representation of any other idea or object is. To know that 'cat' refers to a cat does not suggest that 'Alice' is the name of a particular person, nor that 'unicorn' is the conventional linguistic representation of the mythical creature.

But there is another type of convention. Knowing that a certain picture is of, say, a dog, may enable one to tell at a glance what objects are represented by other pictures drawn under the same convention. To understand that picture A below is of a house is also to understand, without further explanation, that under the same convention

picture B below represents a tree:



picture A



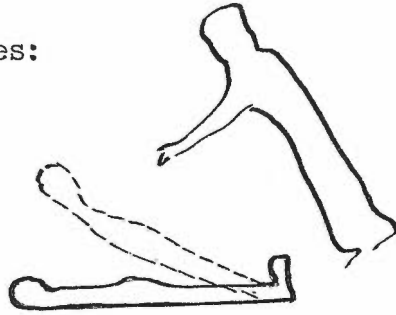
picture B

This is the type of convention which has been referred to as 'umbrella convention'. To understand what one drawing depicts is also to be able to recognize the object depicted in any drawing of the umbrella convention. A dog painted in the realist, impressionist, post-impressionist or fauvist styles would enable one to 'see' other objects in different paintings of the same styles. To understand one picture is to understand any picture of the same style or convention.

My primary concern here is to illustrate that whether or not resemblance ultimately depends upon convention has no real effect on my thesis. Whether it be the distinction between 'umbrella' and other types of convention, whether resemblances are created by the artist and gradually are universally accepted, whether resemblances are schemata whose interpretations are so familiar to us that we instantly and automatically interpret them, or whether indeed it does make sense to speak of 'natural' resemblances, my thesis remains unchallenged. These descriptions are all consistent with, and do not tend to refute in the least, my contention that a real distinction does exist between drawings, pictures and paintings which resemble their subjects, and those which depict their subjects only through some kind of memorized or learnt formula which must consciously be applied to the drawing, picture or painting.

Finally, consider a picture which intends to represent a soul by

the use of dotted lines:



Is this a picture of a man's soul leaving his body after death to be assumed into heaven? Do the dotted lines resemble the soul leaving a man's body? It might be said that this picture does not resemble the soul at all, but is more like a schema. From the above exposition we can conclude that it is through the learning of pictorial conventions that we claim to be able to 'see' the soul. On the other hand this drawing is unlike a schema, in that it doesn't have to be interpreted by a method or formula but it can be said that we actually do 'see' the soul, or something which resembles the soul. The use of dotted lines to represent invisible objects is properly called an umbrella convention because as soon as it is understood that one dotted picture represents an invisible object, then every object drawn in this convention can be likewise easily interpreted. This example is a borderline case of the distinction we have been trying to achieve. Although we only know that the picture represents the soul by the learning of pictorial convention or a formula (which suggests it is a schema), the convention involved is an umbrella convention and it can reasonably be argued that people who are familiar with this convention 'see' invisible objects represented by the dotted lines (which suggests that some[obviously metaphorical] notion of resemblance is involved). The existence of borderline cases indicates that there is area on either

side. The indefinite status of this example serves to suggest that there are two different types of phenomena which it could be identified with; that a real distinction exists between schemata and pictures which resemble.

The remainder of this chapter will mostly be devoted to a discussion of the question of literal versus artistic resemblance. In my discussion in chapter one I have already explained the various ways in which a painting may be said to resemble. As well as literal visual correspondence, a painting can resemble if it affects the spectator in a similar emotional or psychological way. I have suggested that two landscape paintings of different styles and the landscape itself may all resemble each other in a look of deep, mellow repose, even though the visual detail in all three be significantly different.

Because resemblance is a judgement of comparison there is much difficulty in determining the final criteria to be met before a painting is judged to resemble what it depicts. Everyone agrees that two red apples resemble each other because of their common redness. We assume that Goya's 'Duke of Wellington' resembled the man whom it was a portrait of. But what decision is to be made if only a small percentage of people claim to see a resemblance between a painting and its subject? Is there a sense in which the final criterion for resemblance is the fact that most spectators agree that the painting does indeed resemble? Suppose a painting is judged by only ten per cent of its spectators to contain a resemblance. Do we say that the painting resembles its subject to ten per cent of the audience, or do we consider the possibility that these people are mistaken in thinking that the painting

resembles its subject, just as a child may be wrong in thinking that a square and a circle resemble each other in shape? Perhaps their claim to see a resemblance indicates that their perception or their judgement is somehow impaired and that they are not capable of making a proper evaluation. Consider the artist who stubbornly insists that his painting does resemble what it depicts, even though no one agrees with him. Surely we are inclined to say that the artist is subjectively opinionated on the matter to the extent that he is unable to make a proper judgement. We could reasonably say in this case that there is strong evidence to suppose that there is no real resemblance between the painting and the object it depicts. My question is whether a canvas must pass the test of the spectator's viewing before it can be said to contain a resemblance. Is public judgement, acceptance or approval a necessary criterion for resemblance?

When considering one sense of the notion of resemblance, we must reply in the affirmative. Because resemblance requires a comparison subjective judgements cannot be said to be false, but only consistent or inconsistent with public or common standards. However, surely there is something amiss when a person continually disagrees with everyone else concerning resemblance statements. The following example shows how public criteria might be said to determine or establish resemblance. When Cézanne's works were first introduced to the public they were condemned and ignored because they distorted and deformed their subjects. Because of this perception of the audience, it might be said that at this initial stage Cézanne's works did not resemble their subjects. Very few people would have agreed that Cézanne's paintings contained a

strong resemblance. It could be argued that his still-lives only began to resemble their subjects as the public began to accept Cézanne's visual argument that his paintings did in fact resemble. As more and more people would agree with resemblance statements concerning Cézanne's works, resemblance became a feature of his works. This analysis should not be surprising if my previous discussions are recalled in which I have emphasized the important role of the spectator in any judgement of resemblance. As spectators gradually began to 'see' the subjects in the paintings, then the paintings were increasingly becoming true resemblances of their subjects.

There is a common attitude in contemporary philosophy and psychology that good grounds are available for maintaining that there is no such thing as the appearance of an object for a picture to resemble, i.e., there is no one way in which the world is.² Owing to the fact that perception in its very nature requires thought, it is argued that the world can be perceived in many alternative fashions. On this basis it becomes conceptually absurd to suppose that one can view the world 'innocently' without thought or interpretation.

This view obtains substantial credibility by its capacity to explain why an artist is able to set down on the canvas an image which he judges to literally resemble an object, and still be totally uncertain as to how a spectator will see his image or painting. One theory of artistic change, the perceptual theory of artistic change, relies on precisely this type of reasoning. This theory claims that each painter paints the world as he sees it and consequently different styles and types of painting are constantly emerging. According to this view, the recognition of umbrella pictorial conventions is simul-

taneously a recognition of pictorial realism. As Nelson Goodman says:

"That a picture looks like nature often means only that it looks the way nature is usually painted."³

We have spoken of two distinct ways in which a painting may resemble an object. First, the painting may literally correspond to the visual appearance of the object. Point to point matching, proper spatial relations, proportionality of parts, colour, shadings, texture, etc., all exist between the painting and the object. Second, a painting can be said to resemble an object if the spectator 'sees' the object in the painting. Point to point matching does not necessitate that the painting will resemble the object in this important sense of resemblance. Exact point to point matching and formal correspondence do not necessitate that 'seeing' or recognition of the object in the painting will automatically follow.

Recognition and 'seeing' do not fully depend upon, and cannot be adequately analyzed in terms of, point to point matching. A photograph of a man with his feet thrust forward may not look very much like a man lying down, yet it may be a technically accurate photograph taken from the perspective of the man's feet. The photograph will look distorted and may be exceedingly hard to interpret. This example illustrates that exact point to point matching does not necessitate that 'seeing' or recognition automatically follows. It is often a re-touched photograph which is said to more closely resemble a person, even when the original un-touched photograph was technically good and accurately reproduced the image fed into the lens. It is interesting to note that cameras are fitted with tilted backs and elevating lens-boards with the

intention of preventing accurate point to point matching of the photograph with the scene, in order that the scene be more easily recognized and not look 'distorted' in the photograph.

An artist generally has one of two purposes in mind when his painting does not admit of point to point matching, i.e., when his painting does not resemble in the literal sense of 'looks like' but metaphorically resembles its subject on the grounds that the spectator should be able to 'see' or recognize the subject in his painting in lieu of the presence of point to point matching. He either plans to show the subject of his painting in a new and interesting light, or he wants to endow its subject with expressive qualities. (When the latter is the case we speak of the resemblance between the painting and something which expresses a similar emotion or feeling.) It is because of this A-resemblance (artistic resemblance) which is able to be achieved in paintings that an artist is able to produce a painting which both resembles and fails to resemble its subject at the same time. Where this particular type of pictorial resemblance is involved there are no objective criteria by which to determine the degree of resemblance contained in a painting.

In the first chapter I spoke of how the artist may be said to create resemblance. It was described how the visual appearance of an object may be distorted so that it is forced into a resemblance to the painting. By this technique the artist succeeds in influencing our vision of and attitude toward the object into the mold of the painting. When an artist has succeeded in this pursuit and the audience becomes increasingly willing to accept his 'style' or manner of representing

the world, and if his artistic method is conducive to such a phenomenon, we may witness the blossoming of another umbrella convention. Resemblance, far from being a constant and independent source and criterion of representational practice, can be seen to be, to some degree, a product of it. Visual resemblances are seen often in virtue not of our innocent eyes, but rather our shared sophistication.

An excellent example of the notion of artistic excellence which I have presented is seen in Picasso's 1937 etching, 'Weeping Woman'. In the following quotation we find a most illuminating analysis of the etching, and although it is very lengthy I think that it is most accurate and a fine illustration of the theory of artistic representation which I have advanced. In speaking of this etching, which is part of the series of works connected with Guernica, Andrew Harrison says,

"Its effect is to shift our conception of weeping, of outraged female grief, and the outrage of such grief, by the method of representation employed. John Berger says of Guernica, "What has happened to the bodies in being painted is the imaginative equivalent of what has happened to them in the flesh". The same can be said of this smaller work. One way of seeing the picture is to see it as an at best ambiguous, at worst inaccurate line drawing of a weeping woman. It is important that this is the reaction of those whose expectation of what a picture represents is conditioned by the idea that it must represent a visual aspect of its topic visually. This is only partly the case with the etching in question: the very shifting of the expected position of the parts of the face of the woman, the fact that the shapes pointing to the corner of the woman's right

eye may represent either the line of tears running down from the eyes or nails driving into it, that the shape above the nose of the woman may be either the line of a hand clutching the head or a forehead bursting with pain are in this case best described, not as ambiguities in the representation, but as non-ambiguous representation via an expected ambiguity, of the very disintegration of grief. That is how grief feels. The picture shows us that that is how we may recognize a particular variety of weeping. The picture is a structural analogue, not merely of an appearance, but an experience. As with all such structural analogues, it presents us with a paradigmatic possibility. It shows us the form of a possible experience, something we may not have attended to in this form hitherto. This is a genuine shift in, or addition to, our concept of grief but it is not an addition to any theory of grief."⁴

This concludes my discussion of artistic resemblance. Although both literal and A-resemblance are possible in a given pictorial representation, it is clear that A-resemblance generally (though certainly not exclusively) is involved in the most active or effective use of painting. Two types of photographic resemblance might also be discerned, analogous to literal and A-resemblance in artistic representation.

Much, perhaps most, photography is done in an attempt to produce a photograph which looks like, or resembles, the subject to as great a degree as possible, i.e., in which the photographer tries to give as much visual resemblance as is necessary so that the judgement, 'This photo resembles Alice' can easily be made. The photographer is often

not trying to present his subject in a manner which is out of the ordinary and not easily recognizable, but attempting to achieve the very opposite. This type of photography attempts to produce a photograph of Alice which will easily be recognizable by her acquaintances.

There is another use which can be made of photography and which is more akin to many forms of painting than to standard or realist photography. The photographer's intentions are to surprise the spectator with a view or perspective of the person or scene which the spectator does not expect or is not accustomed to. If he either presents the subject to the spectator in such a way that the spectator is momentarily 'taken aback' or amazed at the never before realized aspect of the object which is being presented, or in such a way that the subject of the photograph is not recognized at all for a period of time until the correct interpretation suddenly dawns on the spectator, then the artistic photographer has succeeded. The photographer wishes the spectator to eventually 'see' the subject and at the same time hopes that this recognition will enrich the spectator's understanding and awareness of the subject photographed. The artistic photographer reaches out to the sophisticated and sensitive spectator who has the ability to discern out of the ordinary and more than mundane perspectives and interpretations of a person, object or scene.

One difference between the photographer and the artist in their respective attempts to achieve artistic resemblance is that although the photographer is able to distort the image from normal perspective in an incredible number of ways simply by the use of lighting and photographic technique, he is still less free than the painter is to distort the

subject of his art in a given desirable fashion. That is, the artistic photographer is more limited in his potential to offer a new way of seeing to his audience. It may be argued, nevertheless, that artistic photography, which involves a more creative type of resemblance, is the more active and effective use of photography.

CONCLUSIONS

Through metaphorical uses of the term, many of which are now commonplace in our language, the notion of resemblance has grown to be a very powerful and rich concept. In the first chapter I have attempted to show by example how the metaphorical meanings deviate from, yet rely upon, the literal or core meaning of 'resembles'. I have discussed how this notion is now used to convey such ideas as that: (1) A is similar to B with respect to simple sensible (looks like, feels like, sounds like, tastes like, smells like) or other more complex dispositional (is as durable as, functions like, etc.) properties; (2) A is a visual aid to the understanding of B; (3) the same general concepts, dicta, maxims or principles can be applied to both A and B; and (4) A and B have the same or similar psychological or emotional effects upon a spectator. Mere similarity in any respect was shown not to be sufficient condition for resemblance between two objects. I concluded that two things need to be understood when a resemblance statement is made, and that count as truth-conditions: (1) respects in which x and y are being compared; (2) comparison class. To say that x resembles y is to say that x and y share characteristics C1, C2, C3, or that they are similar in these regards; and also that x is much like y in these regards in comparison to other things in a specified class that x belongs to.

In the second chapter I claimed that the notion of resemblance

is a symmetrical, but neither a reflexive nor a transitive, notion. My discussion of resemblance predictability emphasized that resemblance is relative to contexts involving observer's intentions and that unless these contexts are specified it remains undetermined whether x resembles y. I showed that not all information is equally important in judgements of resemblance, and have tried to convey something of the notion and importance of significant information in judgements of resemblance.

Other than a general analysis of the notion of resemblance, the major thesis in this paper was that pictorial resemblance admits of two different types of resemblance. One type of resemblance (literal resemblance) relies upon the literal meaning of 'resembles'. Paintings 'look like' their subjects in the usual and most direct sense of the term. The other type of resemblance (artistic resemblance) relies upon a more metaphorical use of 'resembles'. When the spectator claims to be able to 'see' or recognize an object in a painting, and when the painting does not 'look like' the object in terms of proportionality of parts and colour matchings, then artistic resemblance has been achieved.

Notes to Text

CHAPTER ONE

1. The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, vol.8, R p.509.
2. Funk and Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1963, p.2091.
3. Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary, Pleasantville, N.Y.: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1971, p.1143.
4. The Oxford English Dictionary, vol.6, p. L 283.
5. Ibid., vol. 9, p.559.
6. Ibid., vol. 9, p.559.
7. Cf., "Had the impressionists really the right to claim that they saw the world as they painted it...", G.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, New York: Pantheon Book, 1966, p.14.

CHAPTER TWO

1. My conclusion that resemblance is a symmetrical relation does not preclude the possibility that some highly metaphorical use of the term might not admit of exact symmetry.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Richard Wollheim, "On Drawing an Object", in On Art and the Mind, London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1973, p.25.

2. See especially: Nelson Goodman, "The Way the World Is", Review of Metaphysics, vol.14, 1960, pp. 48-56, where he argues that the world is as many ways as it can be truly described, seen, pictured, etc., and that there is no such thing as the way the world is.
3. Nelson Goodman, Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols, N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill Co.,Inc., 1968, p.39.
4. Andrew Harrison, "Representation and Conceptual Change", Philosophy and the Arts: Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, vol. 6, 1971-72, London: The Royal Institute of Philosophy, 1973, pp. 130-131.