

10 Cross-Cultural Aesthetics and Etiquette

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In transferring an object created in an Indigenous culture into a museum or gallery, we generally reclassify it as art, foregrounding the artists' skills and use of materials. This has been assumed to be a sign of respect. Yet it is also apparent that the artistic and aesthetic qualities that we admire about the objects from other cultures, religions, and other periods of history are not necessarily the predominant feature for the creators of those objects. In fact, the creators or guardians of such objects may object to the re-contextualisation that such admiration entails. In such a situation, aesthetic and ethical or political values conflict. This chapter analyses the normative and aesthetic features of the contexts in which the exchange occurs of 'inalienable possessions': those objects closely bound with identity. It argues that if aesthetic appreciation has the capacity to create communities of understanding and respect, as has been claimed for it, then this involves an imaginative engagement with the ceremonial contexts for which such objects were produced, including the etiquette of those contexts.

1. Introduction

In exhibiting an object in a gallery, some people claim that we are demonstrating respect for the society that produced it. An aesthetic response to the objects may also seem to be ethical because an aesthetic response to an object is often associated with special treatment, or setting it apart and keeping it special. However, for decades whether aesthetic appreciation is a sign of respect has been contested. Some Indigenous groups have rejected the category of art because the practice of aesthetic appreciation, in their view, is an inappropriate response to their cultural objects (see Phillips [2004]; Clifford [1988]). For example, the Grand Council of Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Confederacy, has argued that 'The exhibition of masks by museums does not serve to enlighten the public regarding the culture of Haudenosaunee, as such an exhibition violates the intended purpose of the mask and contributes to the desecration of the sacred image' [Phillips 2004: 75].¹ Similarly, the Zuni people of New

Mexico have sought repatriation of their war gods, or Ahauutas, from museums around the world because they reject the art classification for their sacred figures [Clifford 1988: 209].

The aesthetic appreciation of the cultures of Indigenous peoples is further problematised through objections to cultural appropriation. The term 'cultural appropriation' is now used broadly to cover practices which could be explained as the result of cultural influence such as braiding hair or playing jazz, to more problematic cultural infringements such as the use without permission of traditional Indigenous objects, motifs and designs, including their collection and display in museums and galleries. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as interest in Indigenous art forms increased, these forms were appropriated more frequently, in world music as well as visual art. Generally, such appropriation is accompanied by sincere admiration for the cultural forms appropriated, and a mistaken belief that there can be no rights in relation to them.

A significant feature of the late twentieth century was that the category of 'Fine Art' was politicised as cultural rights and values were asserted and debated. Fine Art had become disconnected from everyday experience, and was reconceptualised by artists and theorists as the product of a culturally bound institution. This led to aesthetic appreciation itself coming under attack as a mode of conduct that was designed to create class distinction and difference. From within the institution, artists challenged the dogmas of art, such as originality, the concept of art, and beauty. The result was that the goal of art was now associated with transgression and shock. Yet, there remains a 'yearning to reunite art with life' [Shiner 2001: 3]. This in part may help to explain the extraordinarily positive reception of Indigenous art across the Western world since the late twentieth century. Among other things, Indigenous art provided a model for integrating the arts within the community, the potential of which is still to be realised within art-world practices. As Larry Shiner suggested at the beginning of this century,

Instead of simply assimilating the arts of traditional . . . cultures to European norms in the patronising belief that we pay them a compliment, we need to learn from their very different understanding of the arts and their place in society.

[Shiner 2001: 7]

To achieve this, we need a better understanding of what is involved in cross-cultural aesthetic appreciation.

It is an obvious point to say that in different cultures there are different aesthetic ideals or notions of beauty, yet the meaning of 'cross-cultural aesthetics' is ambiguous. It may mean an inquiry into the different kinds of value expressed by different cultures or instead, the ascription of one's own culture's values to the artefacts in question. As an example

of the former, anthropology studies the value and meaning ascribed to relationships between physical, temporal and formal qualities. These values might involve very different kinds of engagement to what we find in an art gallery. The context of the art gallery might suggest such ethnographic information is a distraction. Accordingly, another meaning of cross-cultural aesthetics has been to appreciate cultural artefacts from the perspective of one's own value system. My purpose in this chapter is to enlarge upon what we think aesthetic appreciation of artefacts from other cultures involves. I propose that cross-cultural aesthetic appreciation should take us beyond our own cultural values and that this requires an understanding of, and participation in, the etiquette associated with those objects.

A dictionary defines etiquette as conventional requirements of social behaviour, involving proprieties of conduct as established by any class or community for particular occasions. This might include a prescribed or accepted code of behaviour in matters of ceremony, as at a court or in official or other formal observances. However, as Shirley Yeung [2010] has suggested, etiquette also concerns proper conduct in everyday encounters. In this chapter, I follow Erving Goffman's [1956] conception of etiquette as a body of ceremonial rules which display a concern for others, and ritualised forms of respect and value. Accordingly, the concept of etiquette is closely connected with civility and ethics. The novelty of employing the term 'etiquette' in this context is that etiquette is also a form of social aesthetics. Etiquette is 'social', based on shared or conventional codes, and concerned with interpersonal relations. It is 'aesthetic' in that the ceremonies and everyday rituals of etiquette have aesthetic qualities and aims. The concept of etiquette allows a reunification of art and life, but also, engagement with the relevant concerns of other cultures.

My analysis proceeds in three parts. First, I outline some of the consequences of the classification of indigenous objects as art. I show that the classification of 'art' is associated with a set of norms that we call aesthetic appreciation, and that these norms involve a bundle of rights and behaviours regarding the use of and reception to objects. Then I identify the different set of rights and behaviours regarding the use of indigenous objects and I analyse the relationship these behaviours have to the aesthetic appreciation of the objects. In my final section, I address the ethical and aesthetic characteristics of etiquette as a mode of relating to others, and apply this to the possibility of developing an aesthetic community across cultures.

2. The Consequences of the Classification 'Art'

Before we can understand how we may learn from other cultures about the relationship between art and life through etiquette, we need to recognise the cultural specificity of our own practices of art and aesthetics.

In this section I argue that rather than being descriptive, the category art is normative. As pointed out by Nelson Goodman, not all words refer. Labels, for instance, may be used to record or to prescribe—"strawberry", "raspberry", "lemon", and "lime" may tell us what *is* in or what *to put* in different containers [Goodman 1968: 61]. My claim is that the label 'art' has a similar function. It prescribes a cluster of culturally bound social practices and behaviours.

Aesthetic appreciation is sometimes, even often, written about, and engaged in, as a normative ideal. These norms seem obvious. First, any judgment about a work of art must be based on direct acquaintance with the work. Secondly, the work must be appropriated aesthetically rather than in terms of some other value. 'To appreciate a work of art', Clive Bell wrote, 'we need bring nothing with us from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions' [Bell 1916: 25]. Indeed, a spectator who attempts to apply such knowledge or engages their moral concerns displays a 'defective sensibility' [Bell 1916: 28], and an inability to recognise value:

Instead of going out on the stream of art into a new world of aesthetic experience, they [spectators] turn a sharp corner and come straight back home to the world of human interest . . . A good work of visual art carries a person who is capable of appreciating it out of life into ecstasy: [in contrast] to use art as a means to the emotions of life is to use a telescope for reading the news.

[Bell 1916: 29-30]

A consequence of this separation of art from life in aesthetic appreciation is that there is understood to be a difference between the emotions of life and aesthetic emotions. John Hospers suggests that a person who responds to a work of art with real emotions, as opposed to a special kind of aesthetic emotion, has failed to develop an appropriate aesthetic attitude:

Those who respond to a drama or a novel with tears have not yet developed aesthetic distance; they are responding to the work of art as they would real life; they are still in the position of a yokel in the gallery who shoots the villain on stage as he is about to capture the heroine.

[Hospers 1969: 152]

As shown earlier, descriptions of what 'appreciation' involves often include instructions for a specific kind of distancing from other concerns. Jerome Stolnitz defined the appropriate form of appreciation of an artwork as an 'aesthetic attitude'. The aesthetic attitude involves 'disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of

awareness whatever, for its own sake alone'. To achieve this, we must set anything aside that may make us feel a kind of prejudice towards an object. Stolnitz continues,

A devout Mohammedan may not be able to bring himself to look for very long at a painting of the Holy Family, because of his animus against the Christian religion. Closer to home, any of us might reject a novel because it seems to conflict with our moral beliefs . . .

Furthermore:

When we do so, we should be clear as to what we are doing. We have *not* read the book aesthetically, for we have interposed moral or other responses of our own which are alien to it. This disrupts the aesthetic attitude. We cannot then say that the novel is *aesthetically* bad, for we have not permitted ourselves to consider it aesthetically.
[Stolnitz 1969: 21]

The aesthetic attitude was thus considered distinct from religious or moral concerns, as well as a concern for everyday life.²

The creation of a distance between art and life which emerged in the West in the eighteenth century also involved the development of institutions to support that distance. Art galleries arose at the same time as the notion of aesthetic pleasure; apart from their stated aims, they served to facilitate a distance between artworks and everyday life. Consider that entering the gallery involves a withdrawal from everyday concerns, a time and space within which the business of life is suspended, creating the secular equivalent of a spiritual liminality [Duncan 1995: 14]. Institutions of art cultivated a set of behaviours towards art. In museums and galleries, action and speech are subdued. Attention must be directed to the work, which should be contemplated in order to reveal itself through sight and in some cases, sound, but not typically by touch. Conversation should not be boisterous, in order not to disturb the contemplation of others. Similarly, within performance spaces, silence and stillness are observed. These conventions took time to develop. Goethe famously demanded that theatre audiences stop shouting and hissing during performances, and instead display their appreciation with applause at the end. It was only over time that symphony orchestra houses became 'museums to musical works' [Shiner 2001: 218]. Accordingly, one might say that, as a consequence of our institutionalised practices that aimed to achieve a contemplative distance between the artwork and its audience, aesthetic appreciation was associated with the practice of a specific kind of decorum. Regardless of the controversies which have subsequently grown up around this understanding of aesthetic emotion, the concept of art which it engendered, remains. Art constitutes a distinct realm from the other elements of life.

This conception of aesthetic appreciation is expressed as a dominant social practice in relation to works of fine art. It informs, for instance, the contemporary behaviour of audiences at concerts and the theatre, as well as the manner in which art is engaged within museums. It also informs our political and ethical judgments about the limits of expression. This kind of approach to aesthetic appreciation is used to justify excluding different kinds of claims from consideration in public debate. For instance, in 2005, the BBC argued that the considerations that were relevant to its decision to broadcast *Jerry Springer: the Opera*, which Christian groups felt was blasphemous and should not be shown, were aesthetic [Tryhorn 2005].³ In this case, the emotions of Christians were discounted as not being 'aesthetic' responses, the further implication being that their response was backward or uneducated. Similarly, the cultural assumptions we have about art may lead us to reject claims regarding the treatment of Indigenous cultural objects, such as those of the Zuni or Iroquois, as political or moral, rather than aesthetic. While museums and galleries are now far more sensitive to such claims, another set of issues confronts us in relation to the control and use of symbols and non-material creations. The category 'art', and the associated privileging of creativity and self-expression, licenses appropriation of Indigenous culture and sacred symbols.

This process may be illustrated with the example of debates around bionicles (see Coombe and Herman [2004: 62–66]). In 2001, the Lego Corporation launched the bionicle, a children's toy representing the fictional Toa people, who inhabit the fictional island of Mata Nui, with an associated film and games. These represented the clan system of the Toa, tribal alliances, and ritual practices of storytelling concerning their cosmology and origin myths. The creation of this fictional world, however, involved an appropriation of Māori and Polynesian mythology and cosmology, and of the Māori language. Māori groups objected to the appropriation and use of their culture in this way. A hoped-for agreement with the Lego Corporation was not found, and in protest, the Māori groups began a cyber war with fan sites, including confrontation with the fans regarding their right to use their symbols in that fashion. For the fans, Māori symbols and words were 'mere' symbols—arbitrary marks that they had a right to use in any fashion. In contrast, some Māori assumed a different metaphysical relationship between the symbols and the gods they represented, and cultural rights to control their use. The rhetoric of fans was framed around copyright law and the First Amendment of the US Constitution. However, the purpose of copyright was to provide an income for fine artists. This legal construct emphasised that creativity and originality was protected and in contrast, deemed traditional cultural expressions such as those linked to the Māori, common property. As in the case of debates regarding the use of sacred symbols outside their original contexts, the offense taken by Māori in this case was dismissed

by the Lego Corporation and their fan base. Arguably Lego and the fans felt justified in this due to the concept of art into which they believed their creation fell. It is to the proprietary stance that this concept afforded them that I now turn as it demonstrates the bundle of rights and behaviours associated with art.

In their analysis of the debates concerning the appropriation of bionicles, Rosemary J Coombe and Andrew Herman argued that the concept of property operated as a meme structuring the arguments and behaviour of the fans. They define a meme as 'an idea or rhetorical construct—a "packet" of coherent information that is passed from generation to generation' [Coombe and Herman 2004: 560]. As such, memes may be understood as schemata or constructs that structure cultures, 'a social and material practice of the pragmatics of power that punctuates the world with meaning and makes social action possible' [Coombe and Herman 2004: 560]. Property, as they point out, is not a relationship between a person and a thing but rather establishes relationships between people over things.⁴ Consequently, they argue, property rights establish a standard of appropriate relations and right behaviour [Coombe and Herman 2004: 567].

The concept of art appears to entail its own assumptions of property and propriety. These include privileges in relation to what may be owned or used, by whom. Furthermore, as shown previously, art entails propriety regarding how something should be responded to emotionally and is associated with a set of physical behaviours that might be termed 'decorum'. These norms separate art from life, and blunt our willingness to engage with claims about art that introduce an alternative set of rights or obligations, as in the Lego case. Yet it is in these contexts, those that introduce an alternative set of rights or obligations to those which dominate the Western tradition, where we find a way to understand how art and aesthetics are connected with life-worlds.

3. Indigenous Arts and Etiquette

In the previous section I argued that the category 'art' is associated with a cluster of prescriptions regarding how something should be appreciated, the context of appreciation, and rights in relation to a thing's use. In this section, I turn to the relationship between aesthetics and propriety in different cultural contexts. I argue that a different sense of propriety is invoked by many indigenous arts because of the contexts in which they are produced and used. These contexts constitute many Indigenous artefacts as 'inalienable property': objects that are symbolically dense and closely associated with identity, and circulate within what has been called a gift economy. As I will show, it is not just the objects that have significant aesthetic features. The etiquette of ceremonial exchange has both ethical and aesthetic properties. My aim here is to make the connection between the ethical and aesthetic explicit.

Ivan Gaskell (this volume) argues that the transfer of objects in cross-cultural settings generally concerns an aesthetic judgment about objects. Aesthetic evaluation in such exchanges involves the desirability of the object, as well as playing a role in determining how the new user will employ an item. Gaskell argues that the exchange will generally follow one of three patterns, which he calls 'supersession', 'translation', and 'assumption'. 'Supersession' occurs when 'the new users employ and interpret the thing that changes hands solely on their own terms without regard to the uses and interpretations of its earlier users' [173]. 'Translation' is a process through which the values associated with a cultural artefact are interpreted through the values of another culture. The process of 'assumption' involves new users discerning familiar properties that they value which they assume earlier users also discerned and valued [174]. According to Gaskell, these categories are not concerned with the idiosyncratic behaviours of individuals, but concern generalised social attitudes or dispositions [173].

Gaskell describes the transfer of a cape from Māori custodians to Joseph Banks' friend and translator Tupaia and then to Banks as an example of 'assumption'. The cape was considered to have a high status, to be worn by those who were kings, and as such, it was recognised as a special gift, the exchange of which could not be taken lightly. The pattern of 'translation' Gaskell identifies in Joseph Bank's copies of Māori *patus*, the tear-shaped clubs that are worn by Māori leaders as symbols of military prowess, which they use in much the same manner as ceremonial swords. Banks had intended to present them to leaders on Cook's second voyage, as items of ritual exchange. The examples I raised in the Introduction of the display of the Zuni sun gods, or in the previous section of the appropriation of Māori social structure and cosmology for bionicles, would fit within Gaskell's category of 'supersession'. It seems to be this type of transfer that is particularly morally problematic.

Gaskell's argument that the aesthetic properties of objects play an important role in terms of whether they are appropriated, and the uses to which they are put, certainly has explanatory power. The fineness of objects, and how they are made, is an important consideration for whether they are collected by individuals and museums, but also by other cultures.

Yet we should be wary of thinking that supersession, translation and assumption have given or fixed moral features. For example, it might be thought that the use of Zuni sun gods as objects for display was wrong *because* it involved a supersession of values. Yet objects may be transferred across cultures for aesthetic reasons, and be differently valued in different cultural contexts without causing conflict. For example, John Clegg reports that beautiful objects appropriated from mundane contexts such as Kimberley spear points legitimately operate within several different contexts of exchange and value (Clegg 2004 cited in [Heyd 2007: 194]). These spear points were created in the nineteenth and twentieth

century from bottle (preferably champagne) glass and the insulators used for telegraph wires. Western museums and white collectors valued them highly, and paid good prices for them. Rodney Harrison has argued that the points, produced post colonisation on reserves, functioned as 'virtuoso tourist art' [Harrison 2006: 63]. At the same time, Clegg suggests they were traded across Aboriginal Australia, and took on a ritual and sacred role, including circumcision ceremonies. Supersession, then, is not necessarily unethical. Whether it is unethical is dependent on the context of the exchange. Similarly, one can think of appropriations in other categories involving assumption and translation that may be considered unethical. For instance, the appropriation of the cloak of a king may be for the same purposes, to show social status, but worn without the authority of history or ancestry. This would indicate that the processes or protocols of transfer are of significant concern ethically.

Another of the significant features of Gaskell's examples (this volume) is the extent to which they draw upon objects that are considered 'inalienable possessions'. Inalienable possessions are objects that are symbolically dense with cultural meanings and significance. Their density 'accrues from an object's association with its owner's fame, ancestral histories, secrecy, sacredness and aesthetic and economic values' [Weiner 1994: 394]. Such possessions are intimately associated with identity, the authority of the owner, and hierarchy within a society. Because of this, they do not circulate through commercial exchange, but in patterns that Marcel Mauss described as 'the gift' [Mauss 1924 (1966)]. Gift exchange occurs in both modern and what Mauss calls 'primitive' societies. Gifts are always related to obligations: there are obligations to give gifts, as well as to receive them, and to return them. Thus, they are inherently moral. This lays the foundation for a theory of reciprocity and social relations. While gifts in post-industrial or capitalist societies may simply be mementos, gift exchange involving inalienable possessions metonymically represent the structure of society.

Mauss called the propriety of gift exchange a variety of civility, to identify its ethical component. In addition, the contexts in which gift exchange occurs include 'an important aesthetic side' that Mauss felt he had previously left unexamined [Mauss 1924 (1966): 77]. For Mauss, the aesthetic side includes the objects, dances, songs, and dramatic presentations that occur in ceremony and the feasts associated with them. Yet these should not be thought of as separate considerations. The protocol or process of exchange that constitutes its propriety has aesthetic features in addition to its ethical quality. This can be seen clearly in Warren L. d'Azevedo's account of the presentation of a gift in an everyday context.

D'Azevedo suggests that social action is the primary unit for aesthetic reflection in Indigenous societies [D'Azevedo 1958: 712]. He develops this position from an experience in Western Liberia, where the head wife of the chief in whose village he was staying sent him a gift. It was a regular

occurrence for there to be an exchange of gifts between the chief's household and his own on a regular basis, as this was customary for a person in the status of guest-stranger, and he comments that these were generally straightforward affairs. However, on this occasion, a particular effort was made. D'Azevedo was at home talking to some informants regarding his research when the sister of the chief's wife arrived, with a gift of four papaya. Such a gift might be considered relatively modest, and in keeping with other gifts that had passed between them. However, the sister explained that these had been collected from a distant village only that day. There had been a large harvest, and these were the best of them. The sister went on to say that they were sent as a token of regard for d'Azevedo's family, and signified that there should be no day in which such tokens were not exchanged, as the excellent qualities of their households indicated a great and lasting friendship. She drew her speech to a conclusion by laying her hands on the papaya and blessing them. D'Azevedo reports thanking her rather clumsily, and her accepting his thanks as if he had made a delightful and eloquent response, before touching his feet and exiting the room backwards. The informants in the room then began to discuss the event. It was a fine gift, presented in the proper manner. The sister had spoken well and the papaya were excellent—without flaw, and uniform in colour, size, and shape. They were worth more than equivalent papayas that could be bought in the market because they were blessed [D'Azevedo 1958: 705–706].

D'Azevedo concluded that in this exchange, there were two distinct objects of aesthetic appreciation that had a significant form—that of the papaya, including mass, colour, and texture, and that of the speech, which included the formal arrangements of the ritual, the conceptual content, and language, voice, and gesture [D'Azevedo 1958: 707]. These distinct objects of appreciation are also found in other ceremonies and rituals. One more easily aligns with the Western concept of art, the other is the nature of the ceremony itself. What is important about these distinct objects of appreciation, however, is how they combine to create an event, and serve the objective of the ceremonial or ritual event. The relevant aesthetic qualities then, are of an event or ceremony, such as generosity, grandeur, elegance, dignity, or solemnity. The object of appreciation in ceremony is a complex relationship between the qualities of action (propriety and decorum), and those of the objects in that action.

In summary, many indigenous artefacts have particular importance for indigenous cultures because they are associated with identity, as they speak to one's place in the world. Because of this, there are specific codes of etiquette associated with their use and exchange. Etiquette involves both ethical and aesthetic considerations. For this reason, it is a mistake to think that aesthetic appreciation is disconnected from ethical appreciation. Furthermore, in these contexts, the role of the one who creates or directs the event is not that of the Western conception of artist but

rather involves service to the objective of the events in question. Aesthetic appreciation in such contexts is not divorced from life. In the next section, I draw upon the nature of aesthetic reception in ceremony, to carve out the broad outlines of what would constitute a cross-cultural aesthetic appreciation.

4. Etiquette, Aesthetics, and the Moral Community

It is obvious that there are different modes of exchange that predominate in different societies, and that implicate the norms by which cultures generally ascribe significance, value, and meaning to experience. While the idea is developed within linguistics and anthropology, I have argued elsewhere that the concept of inalienable possession is not only recognised in Indigenous cultures [Coleman 2011]. Nor should the ceremonial contexts in which such objects are used be considered unfamiliar. Ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, the sitting of parliament, graduations, coronations, and religious occasions are enriched with objects that have been made with particular care and might be considered art. In this section I explain how this alternative conception of aesthetics provides a possibility for an expanded understanding of cross-cultural aesthetic appreciation.

The ceremonial context provides a different structure or context for appreciation. For Hans-George Gadamer [1986], aesthetic appreciation is not a subjective experience but is communicative and communal, a claim he defends through the relationship between art and the concepts of play, symbol and festival. Play is the origin of religion and of art:

[I]t is only a step from ritual dance to ritual observances taking the form of representation. . . . And from there, to the liberation of representation in the theatre. . . . Or to the visual arts, whose decorative and expressive function arose out of the context of religious life.

[1986: 24]

Play is a non-purposive rationality that finds expression in repetition, and 'the self-representation of its own movement' [14] yet it is also communal and communicative. In imaginative play, 'something is *intended as something*' [24]. Moreover, play involves participation, or 'playing along with', even if one is a spectator. The root meaning of symbol, Gadamer argues, is a token of remembrance through which a person may be recognised [31]. 'The symbol is that other fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life' [32], and, Gadamer argues, in the encounter with beautiful art (as symbol), it is the knowing of an Idea of man's ontological place in the world [33]. In a festival or ceremony, the individual relates differently to others, we surpass ourselves as individuals and competitors to see ourselves as community [40]. For

Gadamer, therefore, art may be considered valuable because it expresses this relationship with other people. He developed this idea through the Greek concept of *kalon*, which finds its contemporary versions in German Idealism as *die schone Sittlichkeit*, or 'beautiful ethical life', and in the idea that the beautiful commands universal recognition, that which Immanuel Kant termed *sensus communis* [Kant 1790: 5:238–240] (see Jane Kneller, this volume). The beautiful ethical life finds its expression in communal life 'giving shape to the whole and so allowing men to recognise themselves in their own world' [Gadamer 1986: 14].

Gadamer's concept of aesthetic appreciation as communal is a productive way to reconceptualise appreciation. In festival, we are a participant, even as a spectator or observer. In addition, we recognise ourselves as relating to other people, and to the world around us. Yet while this might give us another avenue for conceptualising the value of art, the aim is to understand how we may achieve cross-cultural appreciation. To do so, we need to apply this participatory framework, the framework of ceremony, to our appreciation of the artwork of other cultures. This involves the observance of a decorum, or an etiquette of reception.

One of the few (if not only) academic articles concerning etiquette in relation to the appreciation of art is Thomas Heyd's discussion of the importance of etiquette in the appreciation of rock art [2007]. For Heyd, etiquette is a first step in the creation of a cross-cultural ethic that establishes a mode of approach that respects other cultural values. Drawing from Mark Kingwell's [1995] account of civility in conversation, Heyd observes that civility involves distancing oneself from one's own concerns to appreciate things from other points of view [2007: 195]. Ultimately, observance of etiquette displays good will in the participants of an interaction even in the absence of agreement about other values, and a respectful attitude towards difference. Such an approach, he thinks, would have the consequence that the value of cultural goods would more likely be understood, and less likely to be misappropriated. Etiquette would require observance of the protocols surrounding an object's use. In relation to the aesthetic appreciation of those goods, etiquette implies 'seeking out the aesthetic and artistic perspectives that may have contributed to the manifestations in question, and at the same time taking note that . . . we need to be cautious in our judgement as to the significance of the values found' [Heyd 2007: 196]. Heyd's example here is from Yolngu art (by Yolngu, indigenous Australian people from north-eastern Arnhem Land), in which the property of *bir'yun* (the optical flash created through cross hatching) is relevant by way of how it invokes or elicits ancestral power. This approach to cross-cultural aesthetics is attractive in that it creates the context for a common understanding, yet does not appear to be a significant progression from reading curator's commentaries in gallery contexts. Its implications, however, are more potent than those explored in Heyd's article.

In appreciating the means by which the objects of other cultures are expressive of a ceremonial or ritual goal, we open up the possibility of creating a common aesthetic sensibility across cultures. One element of this process is imaginative engagement. Martin Heidegger's [1950] description of the phenomenology of art is suggestive here. He discusses how art may open up a 'life world' through imaginative engagement. Similarly, if we were to allow the objects of other cultures to open up a life world, we would be looking at an alternative metaphysics, a world in which there has not been a disenchantment, and a world that is imbued with meaning. This might involve imaginatively engaging with a concept of purity and danger, or a chain of significance that are encoded in the ceremonies that relate to an object of display. Such an understanding contextualises the meaning of the aesthetic qualities of the objects created for ceremonial contexts.

To act according to the protocols of etiquette in such situations involves participation in an aesthetic and ethical drama that registers the participants' comprehension of the meaning of the object before them. Nods of agreement or dissent, salutes, and bows, also serve as labels (in Goodman's meaning of the word): they are prescribed or called forth by the object, and have a role in analysing, and registering meaning [Goodman 1968: 62]. A familiar example might concern the metaphysical relationship between an icon of Mary and the responses that are considered appropriate. As I have argued elsewhere,

An icon does not merely represent Mary; the image and the idea are considered inseparable. Because of this metaphysical relationship, the honour that is due to the icon is *hyerdulia*.⁵ The acknowledgment within a ritual or religious context is physical. A priest may kiss the icon in recognition. People light candles to the Virgin, cross themselves and genuflect.

[Coleman 2008: 42]

This example may hold for the protocols relating to the norms for responding to Indigenous religious objects. For example, the Māori may greet masks representing their ancestors while non-Māoris may not. And the masks of the Haudenosaunee should not be viewed except within certain contexts.

Such observance of etiquette by people from outside the culture, it might be argued, could only involve an empty, formal observance of rules. It is true that when we begin to learn codes of etiquette such as the expectations of politeness or decorum in a concert or theatre that we merely follow rules; however, not only do we learn such gestures, we need to practice them to become skilled. This feature is true of all codes of etiquette. Once mastered, such codes may be improvised to become highly expressive of our relationships and our response to the world around us [Coleman 2013].

Indeed, the cultivation of etiquette may assume 'a certain grace, when the participants delight in the skills involved and at the same time manage to introduce genuine human content' into ritual [Berleant 2005: 31].

If the appreciation of Indigenous objects involves both understanding their role in ceremony, as well as learning the appropriate responses, it seems that the art gallery is a poor environment for its appreciation. Yet this, to some extent, is possible through consulting Indigenous people, and with their guidance, reinterpreting their protocols for that context. This may require the creation of new ceremonies, and the adaptation of protocols. Etiquette aims to achieve 'appropriateness' or a kind of fit between the significance of context, the roles of the participants, and their behaviour. In participating in these protocols, we expand our aesthetic communities. Moreover, we address the yearning noted in the Introduction for reuniting art with life.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, concepts provide frames for understanding and at the same time prescribe responses. The traditional Western concept of art has led us to assume a relationship with the artefacts of other cultures that strips them of meaning, and justifies their appropriation. Such behaviour has led to the demands for greater recognition of the cultural values expressed in Indigenous arts. However, we should not consider these demands as if they were divorced from aesthetic appreciation. An artwork may open up an alternative lifeworld. But this does not involve the mere adoption of information instead of an intuitive aesthetic response. Rather, it involves imaginative engagement in contemplating how the attributes of the object and what it symbolises relates to a ceremonial engagement in that life world. To the extent that we are able to do this, we are able to engage in a shared understanding or common sense created through art in festival and ceremony. And to that extent we are able to develop cross-cultural understanding of the appreciation of ownership and etiquette required in a given situation; a matter of Gaskell's 'translation', rather than 'supersession'. Success in adapting the rules of etiquette are central to the appreciative behaviour that we recognise as not only good, but as beautiful—that is, as gracious.

Notes

1. The spelling of the name of this community has changed over time. The council now uses the alternative spelling 'Haudenosaunee'.
2. This understanding of aesthetic judgment is widely discredited in the aesthetics literature today. See, for example, Brady [1998] and Saito [2001].
3. A BBC spokeswoman said 'The BBC has to balance the potential offence such a programme might cause against the quality and artistic content of the programme and the needs of the whole audience' [Tryhorn 2005].

4. The etymology of the word 'property' is the Latin word *propius* which means (1) that which one owns and (2) a standard of behaviour that is 'proper' [Coombe and Herman 2004: 561].
5. Hyperdulia is a special veneration reserved for the holiest of creatures. Hyperdulia is greater than dulia (the homage and veneration due to the saints) but less than latria, or adoration, the form of praise and worship due to God alone [Merriam Webster Dictionary].

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