

---

# CONCEPTUAL CONTENT AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

Christopher Bartel  
King's College

---

## Abstract

Considering the recent debate over nonconceptual content, this paper will examine whether the notion nonconceptual content as understood by Evans, Peacocke and DeBellis is an adequate model for explaining aesthetic experience. The problem is in deciding to what extent perceptual experience should be taken as justifying a subject's aesthetic judgments, and whether the content of perceptual states that underwrite aesthetic experiences requires a notion of nonconceptual content. I will argue that there is a tension between the view that aesthetic experience is accountable entirely within the domain of perception and the view that aesthetic experience is somehow contextually constrained. Adjudicating between these by applying Peacocke's notion of a nonconceptual protopositional level of content, I argue that as this level of content's role is to offer a means of external individuation of representational states, then protopositional content requires a form of ontological realism. After examining musical cases presented by DeBellis, I then argue that this level of protopositional content is unhelpful when applied to aesthetic cases as the required aesthetic realism that it accompanies fails to provide a proper account of normativity or the possibility of disagreement.

## Keywords

Aesthetics, nonconceptual content, perception, Peacocke.

---

1. A problem that has received much recent attention in the philosophy of mind is the issue of whether the content of perceptual experience is best understood as being wholly conceptual or, at least in part, nonconceptual. In what way and to what extent are the mental representations of a subject's perceptual experience constrained by that subject's conceptual abilities? Though this debate has received wide attention from many, this paper will take the notion of nonconceptual content defended by Evans, Peacocke, and DeBellis as its focus. This debate centres on whether perceptual states that are doxastic for a subject must be described using only concepts that the subject does possess, and if not, whether those nonconceptual doxastic states are consciously accessible to the subject. The problem becomes most acute when applied to

aesthetic perception. The issue for aesthetics is to decide to what extent perceptual experience should be taken as justifying a subject's aesthetic judgments, and whether the notion of non-conceptual content offers any special insight in explaining aesthetic experience. The purpose of this paper will be, first, to shed light on the complexity of the problem of aesthetics, and second to voice my doubt over the possibility of a Peacocke-style nonconceptualism regarding aesthetic judgments. I will first very quickly run through the notion of nonconceptual content, then a presentation of the 'problem of aesthetic justification', which results from a tension when deciding between either experience or theory as the justificatory grounds of aesthetic judgment. Lastly, I will present a problem (that I believe is significant) for any nonconceptualist who takes the problem of aesthetics seriously.

2. The notion of nonconceptual content is intended to bridge a gap between two issues — the role that mental states of a particular kind are to play in a representational theory of mind, and the need for epistemic justification for ascribing beliefs on the content of those states. To take the first of these, one part of a representational theory of mind is to posit that a complete explanation of a subject's behaviour should make reference to the subject's mental states, such that a subject's mental representation of their perceptual experience becomes the basis upon which subjects make judgments of the external world. Perceptual experience provides a reason for the subject's behaving as they do. For example, part of the explanation of my behaviour of swatting at a fly would require that my action is accompanied (or, more accurately, preceded) by a mental representation on my part that there is a fly roughly in the area where I swat, and this can be represented by the propositional content that 'there is a fly here' (or some acceptable permutation thereof). Perception experience forms the content of that proposition, and it is in light of this content that I act. Thus the debate over representational content, as found in Evans, Peacocke and DeBellis, begins with the functionalist assumption that evidence for attributing some difference at the representational level can be found in behaviour, or to put it another way, differences in behaviour could be due to differences of representational content.

The second issue is that of justifying my believing the content of this proposition; more specifically of how we might be justified in ascribing beliefs to a subject on the basis of their perceptual experiences. Our beliefs might justifiably be about the world if some strong connection can be made between states of affairs and our perceptual experiences. The problem here is to establish what epistemic principles must hold for a subject to make transitions from perceiving to believing, and then to acting. This second issue I will largely pass over here, as my main concern is to establish what can be the content of a representational state.

In what sense can a representational state be nonconceptual? It seems reasonable enough to suppose that in order for some mental state to play a role in the description of a subject's behaviour, that subject's perceptual experiences must robustly represent the world in such a way that might accommodate the great variety of behavioural response. What is not clear is whether it is necessary that the subject's conceptual capacity should equal their ability to notice perceptual distinctions. Rather there seems to be much evidence to the contrary. It is a common starting point for nonconceptualists to claim that a subject's representational states might be more finely-grained than their conceptual abilities, and further that on the basis of this fine-grainedness, subjects might justifiably exhibit discriminative behaviours. A subject might behaviourally demonstrate some discriminative capacities between different shades of colour, say, shades of colour more finely-grained than that subject's conceptual capacities, and justify their behaviour by appealing to their experience as simply 'looking that way'. Or more interestingly, these discriminative behaviours could be demonstrated by animals, or human infants, who (presumably) possess

no concepts at all.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, a description of these discriminative abilities may require a notion of the content of a subject's mental states that does not attribute the possession of those concepts to the subject; that is to say, a notion of nonconceptual content of perceptual experience.

The motivation for Gareth Evans' notion of nonconceptual content is represented in his now famous rhetorical question — 'Do we really understand the proposal that we have as many colour concepts as there are shades of colour that we can sensibly discriminate?' (229) — arguing that perceptual states must be more fine-grained than a subject's conceptual abilities. The question for Evans lies in deciding when these nonconceptual representational states can be said to suitably feed in to our informational systems in such a way that presents a reason for the subject to behave as she does. It seems then that, for Evans, our perceptual systems are nonconceptual, but these states only become reason-giving experiences for a subject when they are conceptualised, presumably in some propositional attitude. Thus Evans claims that:

Such [perceptual] states are not *ipso facto* perceptual *experiences* — that is, states of a conscious subject. However addicted we may be to thinking of the links between auditory input and behavioural output in information-processing terms ... it seems abundantly clear that evolution could throw up an organism in which such advantageous links were established, long before it had provided us with a conscious subject of experience. (157-8)

Evans' use of nonconceptual content can be stated in roughly Dretskean terms, where the content of information received through the senses is just raw, analogue experience, opposed on the other hand to thought that embodies this content and is expressible in language, which implicitly requires concepts. Nonconceptual content plays into a subject's informational systems, but only becomes *an experience* for the subject under conceptualisation.

It is this constraint on experience that is rejected by Christopher Peacocke<sup>2</sup>, among others.<sup>3</sup> For Peacocke, an object can look square, for instance, without the subject's possession of the concept square, yet this experience is consciously accessible to the subject, as an object appearing a certain way (in this case, square). On this view, the fine-grained differences of shape or colour are represented to the perceiving subject as looking a certain way due to the subject's sensitivity to a perceptual level of content that does not make heavy constraints on the subject's conceptual capacities. This perceptual level of content is what Peacocke calls the *protopropositional*.<sup>4</sup> As a nonconceptual level of content, this provides the correctness conditions for representational states that do not require the subject's possession of the relevant concepts. For example, I don't need the concept of the *shape of England* to represent an object as being England-shaped, all I need is a perceptually robust information-processing system that correctly represents the object as being England-shaped. However, underwriting the commitment to this sort of epistemological externalism, it seems that Peacocke (or any nonconceptualist like him) is required to accept a form of

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this has so far been to avoid the question of what a concept is, which is the subject of some debate. Taking two stands of the debate, concepts could be identified as either Fregean senses, or, according to Evans, as abilities. While it is clear that non-linguistic creatures could possess no Fregean concepts, it seems plausible that they could possess abilities that might count towards their concept possession. For more, see Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), chapters 1 - 3; and Jose Luis Bermudez, *Thinking Without Words* (Oxford: Oxford, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *A Study of Concepts* (London: MIT, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> See for examples Jose Luis Bermudez, *The Paradox of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1998), and his *Thinking Without Words* (Oxford: Oxford, 2003); and Michael Tye, *Ten Problems of Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> See Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts*, Ch. 3, esp. 74 - 81. Peacocke defends two levels of nonconceptual content, of which the *protopropositional* comes second. Preceding this is his notion of 'scenario content', which, though interesting in its own right, does not concern me here.

realism regarding the properties that objects have. Consider the following from Peacocke:

For something to be perceived as square, the symmetry about the bisectors of its sides must be perceived, and this is a restriction at the level of protopositional content. When something is perceived as shaped like a regular diamond, the protopositional content of the experience includes the proposition that the object is symmetrical about a line that bisects the object's corners. The difference between perceiving something as a square and perceiving it as a regular diamond is a difference between the protopositional contents of the two perceptions. (79)

Peacocke's treatment of the difference between mental states that represent an object as being square and mental states that represent the same object as being regular-diamond shaped is constituted by a 'restriction at the level of protopositional content', and it is this content that we are directly representing in perceptual experience. Differences in the content of perceptual states correspond to differences in the protopositional content represented. For perceptual representational states to be veridical, objects must have those represented protopositional contents. This is a distinction reflected in the way the world really is, at the level of the physical nature of objects. (By this, I take it that protopositional contents can be understood as something like properties that are available at a subpersonal level, though they are not strictly speaking subpersonal as it is this content that underwrites the subject's reasons for acting as they do.) Thus the representational states of a subject who represents an object as being square differs from the representational states of a subject who represents the same object as being regular-diamond shaped — these subjects differ in their *mode of presentation*. Fortunately in this example both subjects are perceiving veridically as an equilateral and equiangular four-sided object possesses both protopositional contents 'being square' and 'being regular-diamond shaped'.

My claim is that Peacocke is committed to an ontological realism about these protopositional contents. If the content of perceptual states are to be individuated externally, as Peacocke seems to suggest, then the external features that play an individuating role cannot be in any way mind-dependent (which goes along with saying they are nonconceptual), and being mind-independent they must be real qualities of objects. This is the claim so far, that one cannot be both a nonconceptualist of Peacocke's sort and be an anti-realist about protopositional contents, or the perceived qualities of objects. We will then examine aesthetics cases to see whether this line of reasoning illuminates our understanding of that sort of perceptual experience as well.<sup>5</sup>

3. The nearest model for an aesthetic case that I will consider is Mark DeBellis' *Music and Conceptualization*.<sup>6</sup> DeBellis' project is to explain what he calls *hearing ascriptions*, where these are statements like 'The beginning of the second movement modulates to the dominant', or more schematically, where a subject hears a certain passage of music as sounding a certain way: S hears x as F. What interests DeBellis is that subjects who have had no musical training seem perfectly able to make judgments about their experience. Suppose a subject who has had no musical training but is an opera enthusiast reads a piece of music analysis that describes some work that she is very well familiar with. Reading that 'the beginning of the second movement modulates to the dominant', she could disagree believing that this analysis does not 'fit' with how she hears the music, or she could be pleased to find that this analysis does 'fit' with her experience such that it reveals an aspect

---

<sup>5</sup> Instead of taking the route of the ontological problem, another way of motivating this argument would be to draw out the debate between internalism and externalism. I proceed here with the ontological argument because I feel it brings out the problem more clearly, though the reader would be right in assuming my inclination towards externalism generally.

<sup>6</sup> DeBellis, *Music and Conceptualization* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1995).

of the music that she had never before considered. If both these scenarios are plausible, then in the first case it seems that the subject's experience allows her to weigh the analysis for its correctness, and in the second case the analysis has revealed something to the subject, or the analysis has provided some information that was previously lacking from experience alone. This way of presenting the case leads to an epistemological worry about how one's musical experience can both be treated as a standard of correctness for a piece of analysis and can also be revised by that analysis, which is a problem that DeBellis takes up in a later essay.<sup>7</sup> What is of immediate concern for us here is how all of this seems to be happening despite the subject's having any musical training. No doubt the subject would have to understand what the term 'dominant' refers to, and so would have to have a minimum knowledge of the reference of the terms used, but what the subject lacks is any formal training in the recognition of musical pitch, intervals or harmony, things one would expect a subject to understand in order for that subject to be justified in judging that 'x sounds dominant'.

To account for this, DeBellis argues that musical experience is in a weak sense nonconceptual — representational content of experience is weakly nonconceptual in DeBellis' sense when a subject is capable of having a perceptual belief (hearing x as F) without their being able to assent to the corresponding belief-statement that 'x is F'. For this nonconceptual model to work, a subject must be able to grasp the information presented in the mental representation while failing to exhibit any ability to either assent to or deny the corresponding belief-statement. His example is of a first-year ear-training student, this is a student being trained in the recognition of musical intervals but, being only a first-year, often gets it wrong and so does not trust their own judgment. The student is presented with an interval, a perfect fourth say, and is asked to identify the interval. The instructor playing the two notes in succession asks, 'Is this a perfect fourth?' to which the student is unable to reply. Giving neither their assent nor denial to the question, DeBellis argues that the student's hearing experience represents the interval as a perfect fourth, though they are incapable of forming this belief (or its negation). But why should we accept this? The most compelling reason DeBellis gives in support of this claim is what I call the *argument for perceptual learning*,<sup>8</sup> which goes like this: The ear training student is trying to learn to recognise intervals, thus we must assume that (a) the student already has a capacity to hear intervals, and (b) their learning is a genuine case of their acquiring some further ability they did not already have that is built upon a pre-theoretical capacity for hearing. It is not that the student learns to hear intervals, but learns to *recognise* them. If (b) were false, then the student would already have the ability to recognise intervals and learning should just be a simple matter of memorising, it would not be a difficult task where they often get things wrong. So (b) cannot be false as this would misrepresent how one learns to recognise intervals. On the other hand, if (a) were false, then the question would be from what information is the student expected to draw in order for their learning to be non-accidental. If a student simply could not hear intervals, then why should we expect that the situation would improve through repetition? Where both (a) and (b) are true, the subject lacks the ability to have a certain belief, but what they do not lack is the perceptual awareness of some information. What is important for DeBellis' argument is that the student *does hear it* as a perfect fourth, but that this hearing is epistemically insufficient for their forming the belief that 'that is a perfect fourth'. The student's hearing, then, is weakly non-conceptual in that their experience represents the sounds to them in some way though the student lacks the ability to describe that way of hearing.

How does this fit in with aesthetic cases? DeBellis' model is meant to explain *hearing ascriptions*, and not *aesthetic ascriptions*, which are not closely analogous cases, however by seeing how

<sup>7</sup> 'Music Analysis as Articulation', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60 (2), 2002: 119-135.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Music and Conceptualization*, chapter 2.

DeBellis' use of nonconceptual content works we can get a better idea of what would be expected for a theory of nonconceptual aesthetic content. The problem of aesthetic justification is motivated by a tension between two seemingly conflicting claims that are both central to contemporary aesthetics. It is the tension between what Malcolm Budd calls the Association Principle — like Mary the colour scientist, no physical description can stand in the place of subjective experience — and the widely held contextualist views of art — such as the view associated with Arthur Danto, who claims that aesthetic judgment always requires some point of view — cultural, historical, political, religious. The tension comes out when we attempt to explain some aesthetic attribution. To put it bluntly, when a subject judges that 'x is F', where F is some aesthetic quality like 'elegant', is it enough for that subject to appeal to their own experience in justifying that judgment, or must they take into account some wider context, whether historical, cultural, or religious?

Some background detail: Aesthetic attribution is notoriously resistant to rule-governed reasons, and yet many aestheticians still seek to lay claims to objectivity, or, at the very least, claim that aesthetic perception is more than some mere subjective liking. If we have reasons (purportedly normative ones) for rightly ascribing to the world perceivable evaluative qualities, and yet these reasons are not overtly law-like or rule-guided, then these reasons must lie at some level below cognition, in the perceptible features of the world, or in Kant's terms, the supersensible. Thus the Association Principle would say that, judging that the world is thus-and-so must be open to truth conditions if we expect others to agree with our findings, and yet no reasons can be given in advance of experience to support this expectation, therefore our reasons must be found in experience. This might be fine as it is, but the claim could be taken further: it is that nothing more would be needed — the perceptual exhausts the grounds of justification.

Take some more concrete examples, as when a subject judges that Dvorak's *Songs for the New World* is elegant; or that Rothko's painting *Black on Maroon* is unsettled; or that Hughes' poem 'Juke Box Love Song' is atmospheric: any aesthetician after Frank Sibley would remind us that there can be no single physical property (or fixed set of properties) that is solely responsible for, or denoted by, or referred to using the predicates 'elegant', or 'unsettled', or 'atmospheric'. It doesn't take long to notice that, if we were to compare other works that were judged to be elegant, no single physical feature might be recognisably identified in all elegant works.

The justification for an aesthetic judgment seems intuitively to be exhausted by experience — that is to say, experience looks to us as being a certain way and it is on the basis of this perceptual experience we have reason to apply some aesthetic predicate — and yet judgment is also essentially a contextual activity. The judgment that some object is elegant only makes sense when elegance is regarded as a relevant aesthetic quality: contexts where a certain aesthetic quality is held as relevant will produce a different evaluative content than in those contexts where that same quality is irrelevant. The claim of relevance is twofold: first, that aesthetic attributions only take their normative force where the aesthetic value appealed to is in that context an applicable criterion for success. For instance, it would be irrelevant to criticise ancient Egyptian paintings for their failure at realism, or lack of the use of foreshortening: it is irrelevant because Egyptian painters were not concerned with accurate depiction, thus realism is an inapplicable criterion for success. The second part of the claim is that even where a value is applicable, evaluative content is not reducible to any perceptible fact. It is entirely plausible to imagine a case where two subjects undergo perceptual experiences with indistinguishable content but who differ in their evaluative judgments; cases both where the descriptive content remains and the evaluative changes, and where the descriptive and evaluative both diverge.

For example imagine that I, a Western musician trained in the jazz tradition, accompany a Chinese friend to a Chinese opera. For this example, it is not necessary to imagine that my Chinese friend is a trained musician as well. It might just be enough to assume that she has heard Chinese opera in the past — perhaps her parents were opera enthusiasts, but also had no musical training

— and so my Chinese friend is at least able to judge when something sounds ‘right’ and when something sounds ‘wrong’ though she may not understand the music-theoretic reasons for why this is so. (Remember, on DeBellis’ account, she needn’t.) On the other hand, I, being a trained musician, could have music-theoretic reasons for my believing that something’s sounds ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ to me. When we attend the opera, I find the tone of the voices to be too shrill, and the harmony too discordant, though my friend finds the opera to be quite elegant and moving. Yet we are both listening to the same sounds, presumably representing the sounds in much the same way (or at least I find no plausible reason to assume that my Chinese friend and I process the sounds in such radically different ways resulting in my finding something discordant that she finds harmonious). One intuitive explanation for our divergent opinions on the opera might be that I am unfamiliar with Chinese harmony to appreciate it adequately; I am listening to the opera with distinctly ‘Western ears’. The common explanation is that I don’t ‘understand’ the music. Yet I am a trained musician, and can perfectly well make assertions like, ‘The voicing of the first chord in the second movement was a minor second and tritone (A-Bflat-E), which I heard as the source of the movement’s instability’. If my perceptual experience is the sole ground for my judgment, then it seems I cannot be wrong as I hear the second movement as sounding that way. To claim that there is some element for understanding the music that I am deficient in suggests that there is something over and above my perceptual experience that would make the music sound ‘right’ for me, and it is this extra bit that I am lacking. But what would this extra bit be if it were not to be found in my perceptual experience?

Attempting to resolve this problem by appealing to a perceptual level of nonconceptual content,<sup>9</sup> one might argue that two experiences could differ in evaluative content while remaining the same in descriptive content could be explained by each subject’s representing a different protopositional quality of the object. The temptation would be to follow Peacocke<sup>10</sup> in his handling of the differences in perceptual states that represent an object as being square from states that represent the same object as being regular-diamond shaped. To explain the musical case described above, the temptation would be to explain the difference in evaluation similarly as being a difference of the subjects/representing different protopositional content. Thus, my Chinese friend represents her experience as sounding harmonious, while I represent it as sounding discordant. However, following this route invites a very serious problem, one that would face any theorist seeking to explain this sort of perceptual experience nonconceptually. As I mentioned earlier on, Peacocke’s notion of nonconceptual content requires him to explain the correctness conditions for perceptual experience in term of its correctly or incorrectly possessing protopositional content. Without this level of content perceptual states could not be grounded in a mind-independent world. Protopositional contents, then, must be ontologically external and mind-independent. Thus, this view of nonconceptual content is committed to realism regarding this level of content. The problem is that realism about protopositional content seems unlikely to solve our problems in the aesthetics case, but rather would make matters worse.

Such a view would be committed to holding that aesthetic properties are mind-independently real — that perceptual differences in the content of an aesthetic experience would be explainable by differences that hold between objects independent of our perceptions of them. Nor could the

<sup>9</sup> It could be questioned here whether the experiences I have described are nonconceptual, to which I would remind the reader, that, in my example, my Chinese friend has had no musical training, and so has no music-theoretic reasons for believing that something sounds ‘right’, though she is perfectly capable of identifying ‘right’-sounding passages from ‘wrong’-sounding ones. Following DeBellis on this point, her ability would be nonconceptual in that she lacks the music-theoretic concepts required to explain her judgments.

<sup>10</sup> By invoking Peacocke here, I am not suggesting that this would be his answer to the problem. My point is merely to show that an aesthetician committed to explaining aesthetic experience in terms of its representing some nonconceptual content would be in trouble were they to follow this line of reasoning.

nonconceptualist deny commitment to aesthetic realism — on the one hand perceptual states are individuated by reference to their content, which requires that content to be mind-independent, and on the other hand to accept that aesthetic experience requires some cognitive component would be to admit some mental dependence, which seems to enter into the realm of the conceptual. What's worse, if these protopositional contents are real, and accepting that two subjects can disagree about the evaluative content of their aesthetic experience, then we would be committed to the highly implausible view that, e.g., Chinese opera possesses both the protopositional content 'discordant' and 'harmonious'. If protopositional contents represent real properties of objects that subjects are nonconceptually sensitive to in their perceptual experience, then either some subjects just do systematically misrepresent their experience, or, in order to explain aesthetic disagreements, objects must simultaneously possess both positive aesthetic qualities and their negation.

Lastly, it might be objected that the level of protopositional content is just the wrong place to go looking for aesthetic qualities. It could be argued that aesthetic qualities have more to do with the 'feel' of a perceptual state rather than its representational content, therefore aesthetic qualities are not grounded in protopositional content, but rather in sensational properties of the objects. However, this would not avoid the problem. If sensational properties are really had by objects in the way that objects really have protopositional contents, that is that perceptual states containing sensational contents are assessable as either correctly or incorrectly representing the object, then we still have the issue of an object's potentially being represented as both *p* and *not-p* by different subjects. Perhaps we could then just deny that sensational properties are assessable in this way, but to do this would be to reject any normativity or expectation that other subjects should agree with our aesthetic judgments. Incidentally, I cannot see any reason to believe that aesthetic perception is not representational in the way that colour perception is, except to avoid the problem that I have described. Experience is represented to subjects not only as 'being red' or as 'being square', but also as 'being harmonious' or as 'being pleasing', and this seems to say as much about the object represented as colour or shape perception does, so the distinction between representational and sensational seems unnecessary.

In conclusion, my suggestion is that the difference between my Chinese friend and I is not *what* we are hearing, but *how* we are hearing — it is a difference in how we conceptualise our musical experience. The way I imagine this happen is something like this: during early childhood we become habituated to certain harmonic and tonal patterns by developing expectations about our musical experience. The expectations form the groundwork for our musical concepts, which may be rather coarse-grained, like 'sounding good' or 'sounding bad'. Having developed our musical sensitivity in very different musical traditions, my Chinese friend and I have very different expectations, where the use of tritones and minor seconds is what she has come to expect, and I have come to find startling. This is not to say that *perceptual experience* is conceptual, only that *aesthetic experience* is. It may still be the case that hearing and recognising pitch is grounded at some nonconceptual level, but that higher-order hearing, hearing at the level of musical or aesthetic qualities, requires conceptualisation. The idea that evaluative content changes across contextual boundaries suggests to me that the difference between these representational states is not perceptual, but cognitive. While aesthetic concepts, like elegant, unsettled or atmospheric, are not rule-governed, the differences in cognitive import seem to demand a conceptual background. The enormity of this problem leads me to consider abandoning the nonconceptualist's project in aesthetics in favour of a conceptualist view, which would hold that the evaluative content of perceptual experience must be described using the concepts possessed by the subject. Following this project to the end, we may conclude that the best way of understanding aesthetic cases is to hold some mixed-view about perception: while the nonconceptual view of perception certainly does seem appealing in many regards, we may find that aesthetic perception is a bracketed-off area of the phenomenon of perception that is largely conceptual.