

Exemplification and Resemblance

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Pictorial representations represent. If so, how? One answer is that a pictorial representation represents an object if and only if that pictorial representation resembles that object. This is called the resemblance theory of pictorial representation. Its advocates have included Plato and Charles Peirce. In 1976, in his book *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman forcefully rejected this theory. He argued that resemblance was neither sufficient nor necessary to pictorial representations. Thus, on the one hand, a pictorial representation could resemble an object but not represent it. On the other hand, a pictorial representation could represent an object yet not resemble it. As an alternative, Goodman proposed his own theory. Goodman argued that pictorial representations represent as words represent, in an arbitrary and conventional manner. In filling out his theory of representation, Goodman also introduced and made use of another relation, exemplification. Exemplification was introduced as a reference relation. It was contrasted with another reference relation, denotation. Denotation is a relation that connects words to objects, words denote objects; but exemplification is a relation that connects objects to words, objects exemplify words. More specifically, exemplification is a relation that connects objects to predicates, objects exemplify predicates. To understand this exemplification is often understood as a relationship between examples and predicates. So, because the following shape ■ is an example of something that is square it exemplifies the predicate 'is square'. Goodman, however, did not just use the relation to understand how examples work. Goodman used exemplification to understand what pictorial representations express. For example, a painting exemplifying certain predicates, could be said to express sadness. In any case, the main point is that Goodman thought resemblance had nothing to do with what pictorial representations represent. In this paper, I will argue (a) that there is a sense in which exemplification is *equivalent* to resemblance, and (b) that there are contexts in which exemplification fixes the reference of pictorial representation. If both (a) and (b) are true, then Goodman's

introduction of exemplification to his theory undermines the claim that resemblance does not determine representation. This is not necessarily to reject Goodman's theory of pictorial representation. In what sense this might be true is also considered.