



Tiago Sousa

Center for Humanities of the University of Minho, Braga

ORCID: [0000-0001-6693-7726](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6693-7726)

The Poverty of Exemplification and the Richness of Musical Expressiveness – A Response to Guerreiro

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Introduction

Vitor Guerreiro¹ has written an article critiquing a chapter authored by me² in a recently published book that pays tribute to the esteemed professor Carmo D'Orey. In which I delineate what appear to be three problems with Nelson Goodman's³ metaphorical exemplification when applied to purely instrumental music. Guerreiro addresses the three problems I put forth, but in this article, I will only address one of these issues. The remaining two are reconfigurations of problems previously identified by other authors, which may be scrutinized at another juncture. This issue pertains to Goodman's utilization of the concept of exemplification to account for musical expressiveness. I argue that the notion of

¹ V. Guerreiro, *On metaphorical exemplification in music: a reply to Sousa*, "Res Facta Nova" 25 (34) 2024.

² T. Sousa. *Três problemas na aplicação da exemplificação metafórica à música*, [in:] *Quando Há Arte! Ensaios de Homenagem a Maria do Carmo d'Orey*, eds. V. Guerreiro, C. J. Correia, & V. Moura, Lisboa 2023, p. 333–346.

³ N. Goodman, *Languages of art: an approach to a theory of symbols*, New York 1968.

exemplification is inadequate for explaining the musical expression found in purely instrumental works because such pieces possess a uniquely singular expressiveness that cannot be experienced except through these very works. In other words, I contend that there is an incongruity between the distinctly expressive nature of a musical work and the idea that such expressiveness can be satisfactorily explicated in terms of exemplification.

Before engaging in debate with Guerreiro, I want to emphasize my gratitude to him for the meticulous care he has taken in analyzing my arguments. Guerreiro's critiques appear relevant and fruitful for the discourse. However, I must say that I do not find them entirely convincing, and thus, I continue to believe that there is a serious issue in using the notion of exemplification, with the cognitive function it acquires within Nelson Goodman's theory, to explain the expressiveness of artistically valuable purely instrumental musical works, such as a Bach fugue or a Chopin nocturne. In what follows, I will endeavour to present the reasons that lead me to reaffirm my perspective.

I. Some Preliminary Points

Guerreiro frames the issue as follows:

Does the argument from expressive uniqueness show that exemplification plays no role in musical expressiveness?⁴

I must begin by stating that the question posed in this manner does not accurately reflect the objective of my chapter in the book under critique by Guerreiro. This is because the question I raise is not so much about whether exemplification plays any role in expressiveness, but rather if it is the notion that best explains it. Indeed, if it were to be proven that exemplification plays no role, then, of course, it cannot be at the core of its explanation. My intention, however, was not to outright dismiss the exemplification of expressiveness. It may be the case that expressiveness constitutes a phenomenon so complex that it involves – to some extent – exemplification. What I argue is that there are significant issues that arise when attempting to explain expressiveness primarily in terms of exemplification, or that exemplification is the main element in explaining expressiveness when dealing with purely instrumental musical works. Presumably, the expressiveness of a

⁴ V. Guerreiro, op. cit.

musical work is crucial to its artistic value. If expressiveness relies on exemplification, it must contribute significantly to explaining this value. However, I argue that this is not the case.

Before delving into the debate, I would like to offer some general considerations regarding the notion of exemplification and its role in art.

- 1) Let us consider, for instance, a fabric sample in a tailor shop. A fabric sample in a tailor shop serves as a sample while exemplifying certain properties of the fabrics available for sale in that shop – for instance, the colour pattern. That is, the samples provide us with some relevant information about these fabrics. These samples do not exemplify a series of other things, such as their (reduced) size or their shape. A rectangular sample or a circular sample will equally well exemplify a given colour pattern. Therefore, two samples exemplifying the same property can distinguish themselves from each other in infinite ways. Indeed, and while this may be too obvious to be pointed out, there are no two objects exactly and perfectly alike. Now, taking the example of a paint store, when it is said that a sample of a colour represents the sampled colour, it is not being stated that the sample has a colour exactly identical to the colour of the paint that we actually purchase and take home to paint the walls of our room. Similarly, my lamp on display in a store will not be exactly identical to any lamp for sale referenced by it. Therefore, every sample – like every object in the universe – is unique, singular, and different from the others. (Perhaps this is not true for the subatomic domain.) Hence, it is obviously possible for something to be a sample and have a unique shape or character. If this were not the case, nothing would be a sample. However, it is expected that in a sample, the characteristics that the sample possesses and that exemplify a given type of objects are within the (always somewhat diffuse) limits of a spectrum of divergence that allow those who appreciate the sample to obtain certain relevant information or knowledge about the type of objects that such a sample refers to. The RAL 3020 red that appears on a colour chart will not be exactly identical to the red of the paint on the walls of my room, but neither will it be substantially different. The red from the sample should provide me with sufficiently reliable information about the type of colour of the paint I am going to buy. Conversely, if I am not able to gather, through a supposed sample, any relevant information about the qualities of the object it

supposedly refers to, then it is not a true sample. This aspect is supremely important for the analysis of the notion of exemplification applied to art because, in the words of George Dickie:

Goodman [...] maintains that works of art are symbols, that art is essentially cognitive and is to be experienced as standing in cognitive relation to things outside itself. For Goodman, art is to be evaluated on the basis of its cognitive efficacy, that is, on how well it signifies what it signifies⁵.

- 2) Every sample functions as a sample within the framework of a specific communicational context (in more Goodmanian terms, within a "system" of habits and practices), and the qualities exemplified in that sample are determined by this communicational context or system. Thus, anything can function as a sample, and any sample can cease to function as such. For example, the lamp on my table is not, within its current context, a sample of anything. It merely serves its normal function of decorating and illuminating the room, nothing more. Just as my table serves as support for that same lamp and for my personal computer. None of these objects are functioning as samples – they are simply fulfilling their very normal function for which they were designed. However, this same lamp in a lamp store display acquires the function of being a sample because in that context it acquires the ability to refer to the set of lamps that are for sale. This lamp, in yet another context, may exemplify and refer to very different properties. Imagine the lamp in an exhibition of 20th-century European objects. Its function would be to refer to typical characteristics of that time and place – a certain technological stage, for example. An object with a given characteristic may exemplify types of characteristics with different degrees of generality. For instance, a red object may exemplify the very generic colour of "red" in one context (for example, if I want to explain to a child the difference between red and orange) and in another context exemplify a much more specific colour, such as "RAL 3020 red" (for example, in a paint store). Conversely, I can use a cut-out from a paint catalogue, which served as a sample panel of the paints for sale in a store, to decorate the wall of my living room simply because the chromatic arrangement of that catalogue seems interesting to me. Another example would be to take the

⁵ G. Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach*, New York 1997, p. 157.

scraps of fabric that a tailor used as samples of his fabrics to make a multicoloured scarf. This has the consequence that an object, before exemplifying (as Guerreiro also notes at the beginning of his article), must already *possess* the characteristic it exemplifies (literally or metaphorically). Depending on the context, it may exemplify that characteristic or not.

In summary: a sample exemplifies a characteristic it already (literally or metaphorically) possesses, within a specific context, and, through this reference, should provide information about the type of objects it refers to. With these preliminary considerations made, let us now examine Guerreiro's argumentation.

II. Discussion with Guerreiro

Guerreiro provides us with several examples to support his point. One of them is a bottle of wine that belongs to a batch of bottles. Guerreiro tells us:

[...] a bottle of wine from a particular batch is a sample of the batch's oenological properties, and yet the focus of any tasting experience are the individual samples at hand. This will be the case whether there are a thousand bottles left in the batch or just one, in which case the individual bottle is still a sample of the batch, and it will be *tasted as such*. It is not difficult to construct musical examples with the same structure as our oenological counterexample⁶.

I encounter a problem with this idea precisely where Guerreiro chooses to emphasize in italics "tasted as such." One thing is to enjoy the taste of the wine from a given bottle purely for the pleasure of savouring it, and consequently to assess the quality of the wine from that particular bottle. Another, quite different, is to appreciate the taste of the wine *as a sample of the wine from that batch*. These are entirely different appreciations: the wine may be delicious and perform poorly as a sample (that particular bottle happened to be much better than the others, and therefore does not adequately exemplify that type of wine), or the wine may be unpalatable and function perfectly well as a sample of the batch (the wine from the batch is, in fact, unpalatable). That is to say: appreciating the wine with a focus on

⁶ V. Guerreiro, *op. cit.*

its flavour and the gustatory experience itself is entirely different from appreciating the wine as a sample.

Another problem I find concerns the way Guerreiro applies this example to musical expression. Each of the bottles serves as a sample of the wine from the batch. It is a sampling of the wine, and not something that could be beyond that same wine and that the wine could eventually refer to. Now, the analogy does not serve for the analysis of the expressiveness of musical works because what is meant when one says that a musical work exemplifies a given emotion is certainly not that a given version, performance, or performative vision exemplifies a certain type of music. As if each of the performances were a "bottle" of the "musical batch," so to speak. That may be true (see below for some doubts about this), but it is not what is at issue. What is at issue is whether the musical content of the musical work – let's say the Prelude in E-flat Minor from the First Book of the Well-Tempered Clavier – shared by the performances and versions (however different they may be from each other) exemplifies the, let's say, "melancholic nostalgia" that we hear in Bach's work.

It is Guerreiro himself who speaks to us about the musical experiences of a given work and asserts:

Each of my listening experiences of a certain musical work (performances, recordings of the same or different performances, etc.) is itself a sample of a kind of aural experience, namely, the kind of experience I have with performances of that particular work, and works of that kind (e.g, works for piano solo in the early 20th century that employ whole tone scales). Each experience reveals some hitherto unnoticed detail about the work, making each experience unique but no less a sample. The generative aspect (more nuances each time) is compatible with uniqueness: each new episode in the series exemplifies „revealing performance“. It is in some respects like the sample in the colour chart, but also radically different in others. It would be odd, to say the least, if we went about savouring nuances across colour charts, though not at all in the oenological case. Clearly, the status of something qua sample is not affected by the rarity or availability of the qualities

exemplified⁷.

I have some doubts that each experience we have of a musical work, through its performances or recordings, can be appropriately conceived as a sample of a type of experience. When I listen to a performance of a Debussy prelude in my home for my enjoyment, through my sound system, is that moment of listening referring to a type of auditory experience – or is it simply an experience of a certain kind? For my experience to refer, much more demanding conditions than simply listening to music for personal enjoyment would have to be met. Well, in any case, regardless of the answer to this question, the most significant objection I have regarding this example is that, despite the differences from experience to experience, one cannot speak of true singularity or evoke the "heresy of separate experience"⁸ (I explain this notion below) in a more robust sense – as when we move from one musical work to another. The musical work – I argue – inaugurates a subtype of emotion substantially different from all existing emotions (a new type of sadness, for example), which should be instantiated in the different performances and versions of the work. Something important that performances and versions share is, therefore, the expression of the emotion that the created work inaugurates. Thus, if we are to accept that they are samples (which, as I said, seems doubtful to me), all experiences of the performances and versions refer to a fairly well-defined type of experience: the experience of a defined musical work, which has established normative properties and parameters that must be respected. Although works written in a score tolerate and even invite a certain margin of creative freedom on the part of performers, performances cannot stray so far from these parameters that the work becomes unrecognizable. In fact, one of the central and unavoidable objectives of each performance is precisely to do justice to the musical content of the work performed – to allow, in short, an adequate experience of its musical content – and one of the crucial elements of that content is its expressiveness. Each performance gives us a certain knowledge about an object that is prior and external to it: the performed work. There is, then, a prior and identifiable musical content to which performances are necessarily subordinate.

Something entirely different happens when we think about musical works themselves. The expressive content of high-value musical works, such as a Bach prelude,

⁷ V. Guerreiro, op. cit.

⁸ M. Budd, *Music and the Emotions. The Philosophical Theories*, London 1992, p. 125; 142; 152.

does not subordinate itself to normative parameters in any way similar to those governing the work-performance relationship, nor does it refer, from the outset, to anything remotely similar in terms of definition as a work (as in the case of performances). As I mentioned earlier, the experience of the essential content of the work may be present in the different experiences we have of different performances, but that same expressive content, I argue, has something substantially new, inaugural, and singular – which is not present in any other work. The performances each give us knowledge of the work, but what exactly does the work give us knowledge of? Guerreiro seems to acknowledge this difficulty:

The thrust of Sousa's intuition lies in this: while the sample in the colour chart is supposed to make you think only of surfaces covered in that shade of colour, the „fluttering“ passages of Debussy's Voiles are not supposed to make you think of other piano pieces that „flutter“ *just like that*; because only it flutters *like that*.⁹

I would go further: not only does it not make us think of other piano pieces, nor anything other than the work itself. Guerreiro adds:

A unique sequence of musical sounds arranged by Debussy uniquely expresses fluttering movement (among other things), *because it is that unique musical sequence expressing fluttering movement*, rather than: *a musical sequence expressing such-and-such-unique-fluttering*. It seems like a minute verbal detail, but it marks an important difference. Sousa's picture of things is the following: if exemplification played any role in expressiveness, then the expressive uniqueness of Debussy's Voiles would be due to the exemplification of a unique property, viz. Debussy's-Voiles-musical-fluttering, conceived non-relationally. Since Sousa thinks the consequent describes an inconsistent state of affairs, it would follow by modus tollens that the antecedent is false, and exemplification plays no role.¹⁰

Once again, as I stated at the beginning of this article, I did not say – I emphasize – that exemplification does not play "any role" in expressivity. What I am saying – against Goodman – is that exemplification is not sufficient or even the core of the explanation of expressiveness in purely instrumental musical works. If it is demonstrated that exemplification does not provide us with the core of the explanation of musical expression,

⁹ V. Guerreiro, op. cit.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

then since Goodman thinks it does, we have a problem with the use of this notion in this application.

In the previous quote, Guerreiro – and I hope to represent his point adequately - tells us that there are two possible ways to conceive the singular character of Debussy's work's expressiveness:

- 1) Debussy's work expresses, in an aesthetically singular way, a certain type of emotion, a certain characteristic, a certain type of movement (in this case, a certain idea of "fluttering movement").
- 2) Debussy's work expresses a state of affairs itself singular (a singular "fluttering movement" that only the work provides).

I want to argue that, for either of the hypotheses, Goodman's exemplification does not serve as a good explanation for expressivity. To begin with, I would like to point out a problem with Guerreiro's example: the prelude he chooses, although interesting, does not exactly fit the type of music I intended to address. The type of music for which the notion of exemplification becomes more problematic – I argue – is purely instrumental music, music without any explicit allusion to something extramusical. And Debussy's work chosen by Guerreiro has an allusive title (which can be translated as something close to "veils" or "sails"), which directly references something extramusical. Another difference is that in my article I discuss *emotional* expression, and it is more precisely this type of expression – expression that involves a certain emotion or state of mind – that is at stake in Malcolm Budd's "heresy of separate experience." Of course, we can legitimately include in the notion of expression things like types of movements or other types of realities. But, I believe, it would be important for Guerreiro to test the ideas he presents by focusing on the type of music that was at issue in my critique: 1) a clearly non-allusive work, such as the Bach prelude mentioned earlier, and 2) where what is expressed is some kind of recognizable emotion, such as sadness or melancholy. We will see that the extramusical allusion of Debussy's prelude may determine an important difference.

Let us return to Guerreiro's possibilities: Is X a singular exemplification of Y, or does X exemplify a singular Y? If we consider the first hypothesis (the hypothesis that Guerreiro presents as an alternative to mine), namely, that what is singular in the expressivity of a

work is how it exemplifies a certain type of emotion (or state of affairs, or type of movement, etc.), then we must ask what kind of emotion exactly is being exemplified. If it is a type of emotion so generic that it can easily be exemplified by multiple other works, then the informative or cognitive content of this exemplification is greatly reduced. What would make the work possess an expressively singular character would not lie in what it exemplifies, but rather in the aesthetic characteristics that this work does not exemplify.

Now, if in these cases exemplification is the primary source of the work's expressiveness, which in turn confers artistic value to the expressive work (which, according to Goodman, lies in its cognitive efficacy, or in the way it signifies what it is supposed to signify), and if its singularity does not lie in exemplification, then what the work has as singular contributes very little to its artistic value. Conversely, if we want to maintain that what makes it singular contributes to its value, then we must abandon the idea that its value lies in exemplification.

The other possibility is the one I explored more carefully in the chapter of the book under discussion – the one that Guerreiro rejects and that constitutes the core of his criticism. The expressed emotion, to avoid being a mere banality like generic "sadness" or "melancholy," should be a very peculiar emotion, associated with the specific formal material of the work. When Malcolm Budd speaks of the "heresy of separate experience," he does not mean that the emotion of an emotionally expressive work cannot be included in generic categories of emotions, such as "sadness" or "melancholy." It can, of course. The Bach prelude is – I believe – expressive of a certain sadness or melancholy, so the prelude "fits" within these generic categories. What Budd wants to emphasize is that the musical work does not serve as a mere vehicle for transmitting a generic emotion that the composer may have felt, or, more abstractly, for an emotion that could be experienced or thought independently of the sonic material of the work. However, once again, in a certain sense, if exemplification constitutes a philosophically useful notion, such a prelude could indeed exemplify sadness or melancholy – as Guerreiro rightly points out, exemplification is "compatible" with expressiveness. However, what is intended to be emphasized is that such extramusical references are too generic to do justice to the expressive power that underlies the artistic value of such works.

The "heresy of separate experience" applies to types of experience, and the boundaries that separate what is considered "separate" from what is not are always somewhat arbitrary. On the one hand, every experience, no matter how mundane, is irreplaceable; on the other hand, virtually every experience we can have is includable within a category and has something shareable. Therefore, the sadness of a Chopin prelude will have something in common with the sadness of losing a friend, allowing both to be included in the category of sadness. What is being said is that – once again – when Chopin created the Prelude in E Minor, he inaugurated a new subtype of sadness sufficiently distinct from all others, so that it is not possible to have a minimally satisfactory idea of what it is like to have this subtype of sadness without hearing an appropriate performance of that prelude.

It's interesting to note, in passing, that if we were to consider another influential theory of artistic expression, such as Tolstoy's ¹¹, the relevance of exemplification would be even more difficult to maintain. According to Tolstoy, the emotion that the artist must convey through their work should be a highly individualized emotion that the artist intends to clarify. Here we see that the aim is not so much to represent a generic emotion in a singular manner, but to adequately represent a singular emotion.

As I mentioned in my preliminary considerations, context is crucial. The red color RAL 3020 may exemplify in a children's book the colour "red" in a very generic sense. Just as any other shade of red could do. But in a paint store, we expect the samples to be much more precise than that - we want accurate information about the specific hue of red with which we can paint a given room in our house. In this way, the sample is informative. Similarly, in the domain of art, if we are discussing its cognitive value, we expect that such cognitive value does not amount to mere generality where nothing substantive is added to our knowledge about the type of objects in question. Now, what kind of information can we gather from the "melancholic nostalgia" of Bach's Prelude? I would say none. We recognize this nostalgia because we are – in some way – emotionally or cognitively predisposed (socially and biologically) to detect aspects in the musical movement related to these states of mind (which, let's agree, remains somewhat enigmatic). But the experience of such states of mind will not be in the least useful for us to better understand the feeling of sadness, melancholy, nostalgia, or anything else. It will not give us any information about the

¹¹ L. Tolstoy, L. *What is Art?*, transl. R. Pevear, & L. Volokhonsky, London 1995 [1897].

melancholy of another musical work, nor will it give us any additional information about the feeling of nostalgia that may be minimally useful for our broader emotional life. One can gain immensely from experiencing the sad music of Bach or Chopin, without those gains being cognitive in a robust sense. (We can draw on the idea of Aristotelian catharsis, for example, to construct a theory of the rewards of listening to emotionally expressive music.¹²) The subtype of sadness of Bach, Chopin, Liszt is, so to speak, self-contained in their performances and versions.

Certainly, in a particular context, Bach's Prelude may signal certain moods and thus be informative. For example, if a friend asks me how I'm feeling, sending them this prelude would indicate to them that my mood is not the best. But if I were to send them a Chopin Nocturne, the effect would be equivalent – precisely because the aesthetic nuances that distinguish them are not being considered. Now, in the appropriate context of appreciating these works – in a concert, for example, where such works should be appreciated for themselves – then the emotion to be appreciated and experienced will not be something so generic and interchangeable. It will be precisely what is distinctive in Bach, its subtleties, that should serve as the focus of our attention. Thus, the sadness of a Bach prelude will be substantially different from the sadness of a Chopin Nocturne.

Another point should be emphasized. Bach's prelude, if it eventually refers to the feeling of sadness, already possesses it (metaphorically, according to Goodman) before referring to it¹³. In a concert hall, we are primarily attentive to the properties that Bach's music already possesses – and the fact that Bach's prelude is already sad is independent of the prelude exemplifying (some aspect of) that characteristic. Guerreiro's example of Debussy's prelude may slightly confuse the analysis because its title already contributes to the representational content of the music. Debussy's music has "fluttering movement," and we easily conceive that it exemplifies, in some way, some aspect of that characteristic because the title itself establishes the appropriate context. However, the "fluttering" that Debussy possesses, regardless of what it exemplifies, will always be much richer than what can be referred to.

¹² See, eg, J. Levinson, *Music and Negative Emotion*, [in:] J. Levinson, *Music, Art, and Metaphysics*, New York 2011, pp. 306-335.

¹³ See A. Giovannelli, *Goodman's Aesthetics*, [in:] *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/goodman-aesthetics/>>.

III. Another Hypothesis

We could speak of singularity while maintaining Goodman's demand for the cognitive efficacy of artworks, proposing that such singularity results from a unique and singular combination of a set of elements, all of them with representational value – as opposed to singularity resulting from non-representational elements combined with representational characteristics. The 2001 film "The Son's Room," directed by Nanni Moretti, deals with the psychological drama of a father who suddenly and tragically loses his son. In the film, practically every moment contains something significant about the grief experienced by this man - all the elements help us understand this process of great suffering and inner struggle: the obsessive memories, the family disorder, the scenes of a life that has ceased to move forward. In other words, this film is unique, irreplaceable, and incomparable due to the way it peculiarly makes us perceive the drama of grief. Now, when we think about the singularity of the expressiveness of a Bach prelude, that is not what happens. What makes the melancholy of the prelude singularly expressive are non-representational formal elements that combine with elements that may, in a specific context, refer to the emotion of melancholy. "The Son's Room" exemplifies grief in a singular and cognitively effective manner. Bach's prelude, if it exemplifies melancholy in any way, does so in a cognitively impoverished manner.

IV. Transparency and opacity

Lastly, Guerreiro speaks to us about transparency and opacity.

Basically, Sousa argues that opaqueness cannot coexist with exemplification. But this is surely wrong: the coloured squares in Broadway Boogie-Woogie metaphorically exemplify energetic rhythmic sequences - not quite the same as the squares in Victory Boogie-Woogie (unfinished, 1944) but related, just like different types of „musical fluttering“ are related. If expression was as radically atomized as Sousa seems to conceive it, we wouldn't be able to grasp the relation between Mondrian's two paintings¹⁴.

¹⁴ V. Guerreiro, op. cit..

First and foremost, I must say that the (metaphorically) notion of "opacity" will always be problematic within a theory that emphasizes the artistic value of a work in its ability to refer to realities beyond itself. If opacity is meant to signify the power of the work to keep our attention on the richness of its characteristics, then I do not deny that opacity is incompatible with exemplification. What I deny is that the set of aesthetically interesting aspects that constitute the expressed value of a purely instrumental musical work can be reduced to exemplification. The work may exemplify some expressive aspects it possesses. However, 1) it does not possess them because it exemplifies them, but exemplifies them (in part) because it possesses them, and 2) part of what it possesses and contributes to its singular expressive value, and is the proper focus of our attention, may not necessarily be exemplified.

Final Thoughts

For Goodman, the value of a work of art lies in its cognitive value, in how it signifies what it signifies. Now, I have attempted to argue that if we accept exemplification as an explanation for expressiveness, then we must conclude that the value attributed to works commonly deemed of great value (such as a Bach prelude) may not have as much value after all. If we take the singular character of the work seriously, and if we accept that its expressive character is one of the elements of its singularity, then it becomes difficult to maintain the idea that exemplification plays a significant role in explaining the expressiveness of the work.

I may present the different possibilities as follows:

- 1) If we accept that exemplification explains expressiveness, and that the value of the work is cognitive, then we must accept that Bach's prelude does not have much value.
- 2) If we accept that exemplification explains expressiveness, and that the value of the work is not (solely or centrally) in its cognitive efficacy, then we can accept that Bach's work has much value, but we abandon Goodman's theory.
- 3) If we accept that expressiveness is more than exemplification – that is, that the work possesses richer expressive characteristics than those that are (potentially)

exemplified – then we can reconsider the expressive value of Bach's work in a different light. It is this latter path that I propose.

Before concluding, I want to reiterate my gratitude to Vítor Guerreiro for giving me the opportunity to rethink, in a deeper and more rigorous way, a problem that I consider extremely complex and that perhaps contains something irreparably mysterious: the emotional expressiveness of purely instrumental musical works.

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SUMMARY

Tiago Sousa

The Poverty of Exemplification and the Richness of Musical Expressiveness – A Response to Guerreiro

Vitor Guerreiro has offered a critique of an article of mine in which I seek to demonstrate that Nelson Goodman's notion of metaphorical exemplification presents serious problems when applied to purely instrumental music. Concerning one of the issues I raise (the idea that the notion of exemplification fails to capture the expressive singularity of a purely instrumental musical work of great artistic value), Guerreiro argues that exemplification is indeed compatible with musical expressiveness. I argue that although exemplification, in the Goodmanian sense, is not incompatible with expressiveness, such a notion is not satisfactory in explaining the expressive singularity of this type of work, nor the value we attribute to it. I conclude that if we wish to maintain that a Bach prelude possesses the expressive and artistic value that we recognize in it, then we must consider such value outside of Goodman's theory, abandoning also the explanatory character of the notion of exemplification as it arises within that theory.

Keywords: Goodman, expressiveness, exemplification, instrumental music