

Aesthetic Experience as the Transformation of Pleasure

By Damien Freeman

I

DOES MR. BANKS HAVE AN AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AT THE END OF THE FILM, *Mary Poppins*, when he takes his children kite-flying?¹ Flying a kite can involve the degree and kind of skill that often elevates an activity into an art; and whether or not one is highly skilled in kite-flying, flying a kite can still be pleasurable—even for an unskilled child. But do the Banks children have an aesthetic experience when they fly their kite, or is it merely a pleasurable experience? It has always seemed to me that any sensitive person, who values art, will insist that a philosophical account of the art of kite-flying is only satisfactory when it accounts for the special value that the experience of art—the aesthetic experience of art—has in our lives. And so I attach especial importance to revisiting the problem of aesthetic experience. I propose an analysis of aesthetic experience that draws on a concept that has historically been closely associated with art and aesthetics: pleasure. Aesthetic experience is pleasurable experience, but it is more than that: it is experience that *transforms* our capacity for pleasure. I argue as follows:

1. Despite a rich historical tradition concerning the subject, we lack a philosophically sound conception of aesthetic experience;
2. Experiencing pleasure is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience, but not a sufficient condition for aesthetic experience;
3. Some aesthetic experiences involve an unpleasant aspect in addition to being pleasurable, and this has been taken to be paradoxical;
4. Some experiences of painting involve a transformation of our capacity for pleasure;
5. There is a variety of ways in which the capacity for pleasure can be transformed (and such a transformation might involve an unpleasant aspect);

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6. Transformation of the capacity for pleasure is the necessary and sufficient condition for aesthetic experience;
7. Aesthetic experiences offer an opportunity for moral growth through the transformation of our capacity to take pleasure in new ways.

In a long tradition of attempting to characterize what distinguishes “aesthetic” experiences from “non-aesthetic,” “ordinary,” or “practical” experiences, much labor has been expended in attempts to link the difference between aesthetic and non-aesthetic experiences with a distinction between objective and subjective experiences.² Presented with a kitchen scene of fruit, vegetables, fish, and game carefully arranged in a casual—albeit appealing—way, I might take pleasure in the tasty array before me, on account of the delight that I take in thinking about eating these things. However, I might also take pleasure in the very way in which the objects have been arranged: their colors and shadows, contrasting forms and textures, and the relationship between the shapes of the components and the whole arrangement. To understand aesthetic and non-aesthetic experience in terms of disinterested and interested attention would be to deem the first experience non-aesthetic, and the second experience aesthetic. When I take pleasure in the tastiness of the objects, my attention is interested: I take pleasure in the value that the objects have for me. When I take pleasure in the formal properties of the objects, my attention is disinterested: I take pleasure in the value that the objects have in themselves, independently of their use for me. Both experiences of the still life are pleasurable; however the disinterested experience of the still life is aesthetic, whereas the interested experience is non-aesthetic.

Disinterestedness is not the only way of characterizing how aesthetic experience differs from ordinary experience. Returning to the kitchen still life, appealing though the visual impression is, the olfactory sensation is anything but appealing. The kitchen is heavy with the offending smell of stale cooking fat. It might seem that the only way to have an aesthetic experience of the kitchen scene is to eliminate both the offending smell and the appeal of the tasty-looking foodstuffs. But disgusting though the olfactory sensation is, it lends the air a heaviness that intensifies the visual impression of the still life. On one analysis, if the subject can change how he experiences the disgusting smell by putting it “out of gear”; if he can insert “psychical distance” between himself and his disgust in the stale smell, although it is still foul, he might find there is something strangely appealing about the mingling of pleasing visual sensation and the heaviness of the offending olfactory sensation. On such an analysis, an aesthetic experience is not an experience in which the subject eliminates his personal interest from the experience, but one in which he puts his personal concerns “out of gear,” by inserting “psychical distance” between himself and his personal interest.³

However, both of these attempts at distinguishing aesthetic experiences from other experiences have proven unsatisfactory. It seems that rather than identifying aesthetic and non-aesthetic ways in which the subject might experience the object, the theories draw a distinction between attention and inattention to the object (rather than distanced and over/under-distanced attention); or interested and disinterested motivations for attending to an object in the same way (rather than interested and disinterested attention to the object).⁴

An alternative approach would have us not distinguish aesthetic experience from ordinary experience, but explain the sense in which aesthetic experiences are perfected instances of ordinary experiences: aesthetic and non-aesthetic experiences are of the same kind, but aesthetic experiences are more “complete,” or more “unified” experiences of this kind.⁵ Imagine that a meal has been cooked in our kitchen for a dinner in an Edwardian country house. Upstairs, an appropriate selection of salon music is played discreetly; pre-dinner drinks are served; there is a patter of light conversation and anticipation for what the evening holds when the butler sounds the gong and the gentlemen escort the ladies in to table; there is a feeling of solemnity as grace is recited; a succession of succulent courses are served with complementary wines; the dinner guests feel increasingly jolly as they drink and develop a rapport with their dining companions; they feel sated after the meal. There is a succession of phenomenally objective features of the evening (the tastes, sounds, sights, and so forth) and phenomenally subjective features of the evening (the feeling of anticipation, jollity, satiation, and so forth). And all these features are presented in an order that lends a sense of unity or completeness to the evening: the taste sensations come in the right order, the music is appropriate at each point, the banter, and so forth. And we might compare this with what is happening downstairs: there is shouting, there are dirty pots and pans, smells from the different courses intermingling; it is not just that all of this is less pleasant than what is happening upstairs, but that there is no structure to the sequence of events that forms the experience of the downstairs servants’ evening that lends this experience a sense of unity or completeness. The structure of the sequence of events forming the guests’ experience of the evening has a unity or completeness and hence they might have something approaching an aesthetic experience, whereas the sequence of the servants’ experience lacks such structure and is anything but aesthetic. Again, objections are raised against such characterizations of aesthetic experience, notably that it is far from clear what it would mean for some experiences of objects to be more “complete” or “unified” than other experiences of the same objects, in the way that we more readily understand the objects themselves as being more or less complete or unified.⁶

In these circumstances, we might draw one of three conclusions: that there simply is no such thing as an aesthetic experience;⁷ that there are aesthetic experiences, but they are ineffable and their necessary and sufficient conditions defy characterization;⁸ or that aesthetic experience is a kind of “cluster-concept” for which we should seek flexible criteria rather than necessary and sufficient conditions.⁹ Indeed, all three conclusions are consistent with the trend in the twentieth century that shifts attention away from aesthetic experiences of subjects towards aesthetic properties of objects, and a renewed interest in taste.¹⁰ My suggestion, however, is that we ought not to abandon aesthetic experience. Rather, we should try to understand what is valuable about the special way in which aesthetic experience transforms our capacity for pleasure.

II

IT IS COMMONPLACE TO SAY THAT WE FIND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES IN SOME SENSE pleasurable. However, pleasure is not a sufficient condition for characterizing an experience as aesthetic. Even if the pleasure of aesthetic experiences is part

of their value, there are other experiences which we find pleasurable, but which we do not regard as aesthetic. The experience of a winning hand in poker, or the experience of lying down in one’s own bed after returning from an arduous—but successful—journey, is pleasurable without being aesthetic. The challenge for an account of aesthetic experience as pleasurable experience is to explain why some pleasurable experiences are aesthetic whilst others are not.

Typical cases of pleasurable experiences that are aesthetic are our experiences of works of art. The conceptual relationship between art and the aesthetic is an uncertain one, and the problem of which has conceptual priority is of direct relevance to any attempt to characterize either.¹¹ Intuitively, it is as natural to associate art with pleasure as it is to associate aesthetic experience with pleasure.¹² That art is a source of pleasure is central to the Abbe Batteux’s seminal account of the arts.¹³ It has been argued that Batteux’s is the first attempt, in the Western tradition, to provide a definition of the fine arts as a system.¹⁴ In doing so, Batteux builds on a tradition that has long associated art with imitation, and imitation with pleasure.¹⁵ For Batteux, all arts are concerned with the “imitation of beautiful nature.” What separates out the fine arts—music, sculpture, painting, poetry and the dance—from the other mechanical arts is that the fine arts all have pleasure as their end.¹⁶ The centrality of pleasure to the fine arts persists in the modern definition of art.¹⁷ Such an account seeks to explain art as that which is made to provoke, and which succeeds in provoking, some kind of non-instrumentally valuable experience (an experience that comes to be called the “aesthetic experience”).

An objection to Batteux’s definition of art in terms of pleasure might contend that there are things other than art that give us pleasure. The reply could be made, however, that such things are not imitations: art (or in Batteux’s terminology, fine art) is not just an object that is the source of pleasure, but an imitation that gives pleasure. Even so, is the pleasure derived from imitation different from the pleasure derived from non-imitative sources of pleasure? This concern need not be a problem for a theory of fine art in terms of pleasure and imitation, but it is a problem for a theory that defines aesthetic experience in terms of pleasure alone.

If aesthetic experience of art is a pleasurable experience similar to aesthetic experience of nature, but different from pleasurable non-aesthetic experience of art and nature, there must be something about the pleasure of aesthetic experience that is common to all aesthetic experiences, but different from other non-aesthetic pleasures.¹⁸ However, the situation is further complicated because, although there would have to be something in common between the pleasure of the aesthetic experience of art and nature, it would be a mistake to think that there are no significant differences between the aesthetic experience of art and the aesthetic experience of nature.¹⁹ A satisfactory account of aesthetic experience needs to accommodate the differences between the aesthetic appreciation of art and nature, whilst still providing the necessary and sufficient conditions common to aesthetic experience of either kind of object.

Pleasure is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience. (That is, pleasure, as distinct from pleasure derived from imitation.) Our experience and intuitions present difficulties for imagining an aesthetic experience that is not

pleasurable. We would say that a subject who fails to experience pleasure, when engaging with a work of art, fails to have an aesthetic experience of the work of art, even if the subject had the experience prescribed by the artist. Furthermore, to assert that pleasure is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience is not to say that every work of art offers an aesthetic experience; only that the aesthetic experience of art is pleasurable (even when it is also unpleasurable in some sense). The experience of art might be pleasurable in some sense without being aesthetic.

So it seems that pleasure is not a sufficient condition for aesthetic experience, even if it is a necessary condition. After a brief digression in the next section, I shall argue in the following two sections that there is a special sense in which our experience of pleasure in some experiences is not merely necessary for their counting as aesthetic experiences, but sufficient for it.

III

ALTHOUGH ALL AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES ARE PLEASURABLE, SOME ARE TINGED WITH AN element of "unpleasure."²⁰ Notable among these are aesthetic experiences of the tragic, the sublime, and the horrific. The unpleasure of aesthetic experience varies: the tragic distresses us, the sublime overwhelms us, and the horrific disgusts us. But in each case, at least since the eighteenth century, it has seemed paradoxical to theorists that we should seek out and enjoy aesthetic experiences which are distressing, overwhelming, or disgusting experiences, when we ordinarily avoid distressing, overwhelming, and disgusting experiences.

In Greek tragedy, the audience experiences the distressing emotions of fear and pity in response to the hero's suffering, and yet they seem to take pleasure in this experience.²¹ Why should they take pleasure in the fear and pity when normally these are emotions from which they would shy away? Aristotle accounts for the pleasure that the audience takes in their experience of fear and pity in terms of *καθαρσις*.²² Although fear and pity are unpleasant emotions, the *καθαρσις* of the same emotions is said to be pleasurable. Precisely what Aristotle means by *καθαρσις* remains uncertain, and this has given rise to much scholarly debate.²³ However, even if scholars could reach agreement about the meaning of Aristotle's term, this ancient account of tragedy still leaves us asking, What sort of creatures must we be for the peculiar combination of delight and distress characteristic of our experience of tragedy to be possible?

By the eighteenth century, it was this psychological problem that interested theorists rather than the technical problems faced by the ancient tragic poet.²⁴ Aristotle's account seems to suggest that our experience of tragedy is paradoxical, and that it assumes a paradoxical streak in our psychology that is unsavory to the enlightenment mind. Hume's solution is relatively simple. Whereas Aristotle's account has incompatible distressing states (fear and pity) and delight (*καθαρσις*) co-existing in the audience, Hume argues that, in tragedy, the distress is *converted* into the delight.²⁵ In this way, he can account for the delight of tragedy being commensurate with the distress of tragedy, and can achieve this without the paradox of the co-existence of seemingly incompatible emotional states.

The move from *καθαρσις* to conversion overcomes the theoretical problem of taking delight in being distressed, but it does so at the cost of

introducing the obscure concept of conversion. The obscurity aside, this still seems to be an unsatisfactory analysis because it suggests that, ultimately, the experience ceases to be distressing and becomes delightful, whereas it was meant to be an account of an experience that is simultaneously distressing and delightful. One way around this objection is to distinguish a direct response to the tragic suffering from a meta-response to the direct response: our direct response to the suffering is distressing; but our meta-response to the distressing direct response is one of delight.²⁶ Why should we delight in our having a distressing response? Two reasons are suggested: first, I take pleasure in my awareness that I have the appropriate moral response to the suffering of others; and, secondly, that we all share this response affirms our common humanity as a community of moral agents, and this awareness is also a source of pleasure. The analysis of the distress and delight of tragedy in terms of a direct response and meta-response meets with further objections.²⁷ However, the concept of the meta-response is at least clearer than *καθαρσις* or conversion, and so I shall treat it as the preferred analysis of the relationship between pleasure and distress in aesthetic experience.

The eighteenth century saw not only a resurgence of scholarly interest in antiquity's tragedy, but also in its theories of the sublime.²⁸ The sublime is an experience related to awe. God is both to be feared for His omnipotence and revered for His omni-benevolence, and the appropriate emotion to feel about God is a shot emotion that is pleasurable (reverence for His love) but also tinged with unpleasure (fear of His power). This attitude came to be transferred from the Creator to the most monumental of His creations. Looking at the starry heavens above and the tallest mountains beyond, or witnessing the fiercest hurricanes and storms at sea from a distance, we experience something that is pleasurable, but also uncomfortable. There is something overwhelming about such experiences which is a source of both pleasure and unpleasure, and an analysis is required of this peculiar experience.²⁹

The study of the sublime found in Kant's third *Critique* combines the eighteenth century's two prevalent traditions of the sublime as self-transcendence and the sublime as enthusiastic terror.³⁰ Kant distinguishes two forms of the sublime.³¹ In each case, the experience is threefold: I perceive some natural phenomenon whose size is too great for me to estimate, or whose force is so great that it is far beyond my own; I feel overwhelmed by my own insignificance compared with nature; but, I remember that despite being overwhelmed, the moral law within me makes me superior to the natural phenomenon, and this is a pleasant thought. Thus the experience is both overwhelming and comforting and gives rise to a peculiar fused emotion that is both pleasurable and unpleasurable. There is much about which to be critical at each stage of this account.³² However, for present purposes, what matters is the aim of the account, rather than its success or failure. It identifies a special kind of experience that is pleasurable. What makes this a distinctive kind of pleasurable experience is the unpleasurable element that is involved, the feeling of being overwhelmed by the object. And the relationship between the pleasure and the unpleasure is analyzed in terms of a fused emotion which is both pleasurable and unpleasurable rather than in terms of conversion or meta-response as in the case of tragedy.

The eighteenth century's paradox of tragedy finds a parallel in the

twentieth century's paradox of horror. As with tragedy, horror offers us an experience in which we derive both pleasure and unpleasure. However, whereas we find tragedy distressing, horror is disgusting. Horror does not involve the ethically serious *μίμησις* of tragedy. It is the pleasure that we might take in gratuitous gore, violence, and otherwise disgusting imagery that cinematic techniques achieve most effectively in the genre of the horror film. It is not just that the nature of the unpleasurable element is different in tragedy and horror. There is reason to think that relationship between the disgust and the pleasure of horror requires a different analysis from that required by the relationship between the distress and the pleasure of tragedy. Such an analysis is developed by Noel Carroll.³³

Carroll argues that horror audiences take pleasure in the form of the work of art, despite being disgusted by the content. But there is a special relationship between the form and content: the disgusting content is a necessary condition for experiencing the pleasure of the form.³⁴ The locus of pleasure is the narrative structure; the locus of unpleasure is the disgusting monster with which the narrative is concerned. So the locus of pleasure is distinct from the locus of unpleasure, although the unpleasant content is a necessary condition for experiencing the pleasure in the form: it is only because of our reaction to the disgusting monster that we become interested in the narrative structure in which we take pleasure. Such an analysis depends upon there being discrete loci of pleasure and unpleasure in horror, a claim that has been challenged.³⁵ If the analysis is correct, however, it suggests a further way in which pleasure and unpleasure might be related in an aesthetic experience. To the extent that one accepts Carroll's analysis, it seems that the solution to the paradox of horror is distinct from the paradox of tragedy.

Whereas the scholarship on tragedy is concerned with three different ways of analyzing how an aesthetic experience can involve both pleasure and distress, we can also compare the analysis of these distressing aesthetic experiences with potential analyses of overwhelming and disgusting aesthetic experiences. The correct analysis of how distress attends the pleasure of tragedy (be it *καθαρσις*, conversion, or meta-response) may well differ from the correct analysis of how disgust or being overwhelmed attends the pleasure of horror or the sublime (possibly a dual-aspect emotion in the sublime and responses to discrete loci, one response being a condition precedent for the other, in horror). The foregoing discussion is not intended to be conclusive as regards the discrete paradoxes. But it is enough to enable us to establish that different aesthetic experiences might demand different analyses because they involve different kinds of unpleasure. As there are different ways in which unpleasure can attend the pleasure of an aesthetic experience, what presently concerns us is not the paradox of aesthetic experience being at once pleasurable and unpleasurable, but the different ways in which the experience's unpleasure can be related to its pleasure. This prepares us for the claim that there might be a range of ways in which unpleasure can transform the capacity for pleasure.

IV

IF PLEASURE IS TO FEATURE IN AN ACCOUNT OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, WE SHALL HAVE

to be able to say something about the sense in which the pleasure of aesthetic experience is different from the pleasure of non-aesthetic experiences. In advancing such a claim, I shall make use of an idea found in Richard Wollheim's philosophy of painting: the possibility that some experiences involve a transformation of the capacity for taking pleasure.³⁶

In *Painting as an Art*, Wollheim provides an account of what it means to paint as an artist. In order to understand what the artist does, Wollheim claims that we must understand what the spectator sees: the artist exploits his awareness of the spectator's visual capacities as he marks his canvas, and he is able to do this because he assumes dual roles as artist and spectator throughout the painting process. Wollheim identifies three visual capacities: seeing-in, our capacity for perceiving three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional plane;³⁷ expressive perception, our capacity for perceiving emotion in a painted surface;³⁸ and visual delight, our capacity to take pleasure in our visual experience.³⁹ It is in the account of visual delight that Wollheim discusses the transformation of our capacity for pleasure, which I shall develop in this essay.

Wollheim draws our attention to Proust's account of the pleasure we take in the subject-matter of Chardin's paintings and Vasari's account of our experience of the loose brushwork in Titian's later paintings.⁴⁰ In both cases, Wollheim wants to claim that there is something special about the pleasure that we take in these pictures; something which is lacking in pleasurable experiences that do not involve visual delight.

One way of understanding such a claim would be to assert that there are different kinds of pleasure and that the pleasure of visual delight is somehow different from that of other pleasures. Such a distinction has been used in utilitarian ethics in an attempt to explain why some pleasures are more valuable than others, but the idea that we can readily distinguish qualitatively different kinds of pleasure has met with strong criticism.⁴¹ In claiming that the visual experience of paintings transforms our experience of pleasure, Wollheim does not assert that the phenomenology of the experience of pleasure changes. He wants to suggest that what is happening in Proust's experience of Chardin and Vasari's experience of Titian "does not mutilate [pleasure], or etherealize it. It retains, in other words, its sensuous, its sensual, character."⁴²

What then does painting as an art do to pleasure? "It transforms our capacity to experience pleasure."⁴³ It is the *capacity* for taking pleasure that is transformed, rather than the experience of pleasure itself. I shall consider first the sense in which Wollheim believes that Proust's experience of Chardin transforms our capacity for pleasure and then the sense in which Wollheim thinks that we can identify a related phenomenon in Vasari's experience of Titian.

Proust is concerned with the pleasure that we take in the subject-matter of Chardin's paintings.⁴⁴ I can enter a kitchen any number of times, look around, and not seem to take any particular pleasure in it. But then I might look at a picture of a kitchen by Chardin, and find myself taking pleasure in the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of its subject-matter. But more than that, Proust says that I might find that the picture is intimate, domestic, and lively *like a kitchen*. Yet, in my previous experience of kitchens, I never seemed to take any particular pleasure in their intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness. On Wollheim's reading, Proust claims that

Chardin's paintings have the ability to transform our capacity to take pleasure in intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness. I can take pleasure in the painting's intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness because Chardin took pleasure in painting his subject. He took pleasure in painting the kitchen because he took pleasure in the kitchen's intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness. However, neither Chardin nor I was conscious of the pleasure that we took in the kitchen's intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness. It is only when we engage with Chardin's representation that we become conscious of our previously unconscious pleasure. When we engage with Chardin's representation of his subject-matter, our capacity for taking pleasure in the subject-matter is transformed: although we always found the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of kitchens pleasurable, we were not aware of this until our experience of the representation transformed our capacity for taking pleasure in it by rousing our awareness of previously unconscious feelings.

There is a second way in which the experience of Chardin's painting transforms our capacity for pleasure. Not only does his treatment of the subject-matter enable us to become conscious of the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of his subject-matter, but his treatment of this subject-matter gives us a representation that we also find singular, grand, and beautiful. After experiencing this representation of a kitchen, when we subsequently return to an actual kitchen, we not only find that we are now conscious of the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of the kitchen in which we take pleasure, but also that the kitchen is singular, grand, and beautiful *like a Chardin*, just as we previously found the Chardin intimate, domestic, and alive *like a kitchen*. Now we can take pleasure in the Chardin-like singularity, grandeur, and beauty that we find in the kitchen. This is the second sense in which Chardin's painting transforms our capacity for taking pleasure.

Wollheim maintains that in addition to taking pleasure in the subject-matter of a painting, and having our capacity for pleasure transformed by our experience of the painting's subject-matter, we can also take pleasure in the sensuous quality of the *matière*, the painted surface itself. He writes:

Important loci in the tradition of art criticism are those passages where the critic's admiration for the representational skill of the artist he is considering takes the form of pointing out how what at one moment seems an image at the next moment dissolves into a paint surface without meaning. I am thinking of Vasari on Titian, Reynolds on Gainsborough, Zola on Manet's *Olympia*. These passages . . . can be taken as tributes to the power these pictures have to evoke visual delight – as well as offering a hypothesis about where the visual delight in *matière* is generated. It lies in the perception of what is apprehended as detail: detail relative to a more comprehensive, a more distanced, view of the marked surface.⁴⁵

The idea here seems to be that, although we might enjoy looking at any representation, there is something more that happens when we attend to certain pictures. The brushwork that the artist uses to execute the painting catches our attention. But it is not merely that we can attend to the brushwork, and take pleasure in that; or attend to the scene being depicted, and take pleasure in that. Rather, our experience of the brushwork can transform how we take pleasure in the picture. There is a new pleasure that is derived from moving between the brushwork and the scene being represented, and taking pleasure in the brushwork

as a detail of the over all image. This effect is what Vasari describes as the painting seeming 'alive' in his discussion of Titian's pictures of Prometheus, Sisyphus, Tityus, Venus and Adonis, Perseus and Andromeda, and Diana:

It is true that Titian's manner in these works is very different from his youthful style. His early work is careful and delicate and may be seen at a distance or examined closely. His later work is done in bold strokes and dashes and, if seen too near, the effect is confusing, but at a distance it is perfect. This manner has been widely imitated and is responsible for many wretched pictures. His imitators evidently labor under the delusion that it is easy to paint loosely. Actually, Titian's great expense of time and labor is most obvious. This method of his is a judicious, admirable, and beautiful one which makes the paintings seem alive and is done with a profound art, which is nevertheless concealed.⁴⁶

Whether or not Wollheim's is the best interpretation of Vasari, what concerns me is what Wollheim maintains is happening in Vasari's experience of Titian's pictures. When we engage with works by Titian's imitators, we can attend to the loose brushwork or the distanced view of the complete picture. But the pictures do not "seem alive." I suggest that the reason for this is that our experience of the *matière* does not transform the pleasure we take in these pictures. We do not find that there is a pleasure to be taken in the brushwork as details of the complete picture as we do when we look at Titian's pictures.

V

ALTHOUGH WOLLHEIM IS CONCERNED WITH INSTANCES IN WHICH SOME ASPECT OF THE experience of art transforms the subject's capacity to take pleasure in the work of art, it is also possible to show that some aspect of the experience of nature can transform the subject's capacity to take pleasure in the natural object. For this, I turn to the writing of Ronald Hepburn, whose work on the distinctiveness of our experience of natural beauty demonstrates the sense in which our aesthetic experience of nature differs from the experience of art.⁴⁷ One distinction concerns the sense in which we participate in nature whereas we are detached from works of art. The experience of feeling part of something is markedly different from the feeling of confronting it. Of our experience of being part of nature, Hepburn writes:

On occasion, [a spectator] may confront natural objects as a static, disengaged observer; but far more typically the objects envelop him on all sides. In a forest, trees surround him; he is ringed by hills, or he stands in the midst of a plain. If there is movement in the scene, the spectator may himself be in motion, and his motion may be an important element in his aesthetic experience. Think, for instance, of a glider-pilot, delighting in a sense of buoyancy, in the balancing of the air-currents that hold him aloft.⁴⁸

And on the effect that this has on the subject, he quotes Barbara Hepworth's remark:

What a different shape and "being" one becomes lying on the sand with the sea almost above from when standing against the wind on a sheer high cliff with seabirds circling patterns below one.⁴⁹

This involvement of the subject in the object—or more properly, in the environment—which he is experiencing, is central to our experience of nature

as opposed to art: “we are *in* nature and part *of* nature; we do not stand over against it as over against a painting on the wall.”⁵⁰ I would submit that one way in which we might understand Hepburn’s insight is to say that our capacity for participating in the natural environment around us can transform our capacity to take pleasure in that environment. Thus, the distinctiveness of how we experience nature (as opposed to art) can serve as a distinctive way in which our capacity for taking pleasure can be transformed.

Whilst Hepburn is at pains to emphasize the ways in which the aesthetic experience of nature differs from the aesthetic experience of art, he is also interested in the ways in which we can experience nature in the light of art. Again, he identifies a number of ways in which this might occur, but the most compelling case comes from our experience of impressionist painting. It is a commonplace to say that painters teach us how to look, and, in particular, that the impressionists have taught us to see light.⁵¹ But they can change how we see nature. A lifetime of looking at Pissarro landscapes might have the effect of enabling us to see daubs of paint *as foliage on a tree*; but more than that, Hepburn suggests that it might also have the effect (what Hepburn calls the “over-effect”) of enabling us to see the foliage on a tree *as daubs of paint*.⁵²

The experience of nature in the light of Pissarro is more than just a matter of discovering that we can see the Pissarro-like quality of foliage. It is a matter of taking pleasure in this. When we attend to a tree with our experience of Pissarro’s paintings in mind, it is not merely that our awareness that foliage can resemble daubs of paint is a component of the experience, whereas before we had looked at Pissarro’s pictures it is not a component of the experience. This awareness is an aspect of the experience which transforms our capacity to take pleasure in the tree. Surely, it is the pleasure that really matters to Hepburn in his experience of nature in the light of art; his ability to take pleasure in looking at a tree in a way that he was not previously able to take pleasure in it. Hence we should understand his insight as yet another instance of the way in which an aspect of our experience can transform our capacity for pleasure.

The discussion of Wollheim and Hepburn has not involved any claims about whether the experience of pleasure is the same in each of these natural and artistic examples. What I have tried to show is that each experience can be analyzed as involving a transformation in the subject’s capacity for taking pleasure. Furthermore, the examples illustrate different ways in which experience can transform our capacity for pleasure. In the experiences of Proust and Vasari, it is some feature of the visual experience of the painted surface—its representational or sensuous properties—that transforms the capacity for pleasure. In Hepburn’s experiences, it is the subject’s participation in the object, or his awareness of art history, that transforms the capacity for pleasure. Returning to the experiences discussed in §3, I would now suggest that a different aspect of each of those experiences also transforms the capacity for pleasure.

Whether or not we accept any of the previous analyses of tragedy, the sublime, or horror, each of the experiences submitted to analysis involves an element of unpleasure as well as pleasure. In each case, we might understand the analysis as attempting to offer an account of how the unpleasure transforms the capacity for pleasure in those experiences. In experiences of tragedy, distress

transforms our capacity for taking pleasure (and this might be analyzed in terms of *καθαρσις*, conversion, or a direct response and meta-response). In experiences of the sublime, the feeling of being overwhelmed transforms our capacity for taking pleasure (and this might be analyzed in terms of a fused emotion). In experiences of horror, disgust transforms our capacity for taking pleasure (and this might be analyzed in terms of discrete loci). Thus, although Wollheim introduces the idea of a transformation of pleasure in order to explain the special experience of visual delight that we take in the painted surface, we see that the idea can be developed in order to explain how distress, disgust, and being overwhelmed can transform our capacity for taking pleasure. This suggests that there might be a whole range of ways in which our capacity for taking pleasure can be transformed by some aspect of a pleasurable experience.

In the next section, I shall argue that the transformation of the capacity for pleasure is what characterizes an experience as aesthetic rather than as merely pleasurable. In doing so, I shall rely heavily on what I have said about experiences in which the capacity for pleasure is transformed. But you might object to this formulation. Why not just say that these are experiences in which we *discover* a source of pleasure, and then take pleasure in the new object in the way that we have always taken pleasure in other objects? What is the difference between “discovering a new pleasure” and “transforming the existing capacity to experience pleasure”? If my formulation is just a fancy way of saying that in some experiences we discover that an experience of an object can be pleasurable, it looks like this will not distinguish what is special about aesthetic experience as a distinctive way of experiencing an object. Three replies might be made to this objection.

First, there is a difference between finding a new object of pleasure and finding a new way of taking pleasure in an object. It is possible that, the first time I looked at a Kandinsky, I could not take much pleasure in it. Only later did I discover the pleasure of looking at abstract painting; that it is rewarding to look at a non-representational painting in a particular way. Having enjoyed looking at Kandinsky’s pictures in this way, I then discovered a Miró, in which I found I could also take pleasure in the same way. When I first discovered how to look at a Kandinsky, I found a new way of taking pleasure in a painting. When I discovered my first Miró, I found a new object in which I could take pleasure in an old way. Transformation of pleasure is a matter of finding new ways to take pleasure, not new objects of existing pleasures: it is more akin to the Kandinsky example than the Miró example.

Secondly, the transformation of pleasure is more than a cognitive discovery. It is not merely the discovery that there is another way of taking pleasure in an object, but actually experiencing the object in a new way. (The cognitive discovery that the object can be experienced in a new way might well be a consequence of experiencing it in this way.) The transformation of the capacity for pleasure is a matter of how the subject takes pleasure, not what the subject discovers about how he might take pleasure. It is one thing for Picasso to discover that he can engage with an African mask in a particular way; it is another thing for him to engage with it in that way. The transformation of pleasure is a way of experiencing an object. It is analogous to the experience Picasso has when he

engages with the mask in the same way that he engages with European art, rather than being like the cognitive discovery that the mask has certain experiential possibilities for him.

Thirdly, the transformation occurs when one capacity of the subject transforms another capacity (that is, the capacity to take pleasure): the subject's capacity for visual perception, his capacity for memory and association, his capacity to be distressed, disgusted, overwhelmed, his capacity for participating in an environment, his capacity for appreciating art history, and so forth. In each case, the subject's capacity to take pleasure in the object changes, and it changes through the interaction between the subject's capacity for pleasure and the other relevant capacity. It is the interaction between one of these capacities and the capacity for pleasure in Aristotle's experience of *Oedipus Rex*, in Kant's experience of the starry heavens above, and in Wollheim's experience of Chardin, that transforms their capacity to take pleasure in the experience rather than merely taking pleasure in the experience.

This much prepares our reply to a further objection. Even if you accept the idea that some experiences transform our capacity for pleasure, you might still argue that this only explains the significance of the first experience of a particular kind, and not of successive experiences of the same kind. Suppose that the first time Proust looks at a Chardin his capacity to take pleasure is transformed such that he can take pleasure in the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of a kitchen scene. But once this transformation is effected, what is special about his subsequent experiences of looking at Chardins? They cannot have any transformative value, because he has already acquired the capacity to take pleasure in the intimacy, domesticity, and liveliness of the kitchen.

To make such an objection, however, is to attend to a discovery about pleasure rather than a transformation of the capacity for pleasure. A cognitive discovery can only be made once (unless the agent forgets about it, and then "rediscovers" it). But the subject can continue to experience the object in the new way by ensuring that, in subsequent experiences, the capacity for pleasure interacts with the subject's other "transforming" capacity.

VI

IT REMAINS TO PROVIDE A CHARACTERIZATION OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF pleasure. Our intuitions suggest that plenty of pleasurable experiences ought not to be characterized as aesthetic experiences. This much tells us that experiencing pleasure, although perhaps necessary for aesthetic experience, is not sufficient for it. However, the previous section has demonstrated that sometimes we can say more about an experience than simply that it is a pleasurable experience: sometimes we can say that an experience transforms our capacity for taking pleasure. If one accepts the foregoing analysis, then we can distinguish between experiences that are simply pleasurable and experiences that are not just pleasurable, but which also involve a transformation of our capacity for pleasure. Now we have the basis for a characterization of aesthetic experience in terms of pleasure: aesthetic experiences are those experiences which are not merely pleasurable, but which transform our capacity for pleasure. Non-aesthetic experiences may be pleasurable, but they do not transform our capacity for pleasure.

The claim that an aesthetic experience is an experience that transforms our capacity for pleasure is compatible with the claim that there are pleasurable experiences which are not transformative. It is also compatible with the claim that there are transformative experiences which are not pleasurable. When King Lear goes mad in the storm scene and then recovers, he has a transformative experience, albeit one that is not pleasurable: the transformation concerns some capacity other than the capacity for taking pleasure. The experience of being mad in the storm is not an aesthetic experience. When the audience watches the storm scene in a performance of *King Lear*, however, they might take pleasure in this, and their capacity for pleasure might be transformed by some aspect of their experience of watching the play, in which case they will have an aesthetic experience of it. Transformative experiences are only aesthetic when it is the capacity for taking pleasure that is transformed by the experience.

We have seen that different constituents of an experience might transform the capacity for pleasure. These constituents might, however, be present in a pleasurable experience without transforming our capacity for pleasure. In such cases, the experience has two discrete components: we might take pleasure in the subject-matter of a painting and attend to the *matière* without our awareness of the painted surface transforming our capacity for pleasure (for example, pictures by Titian's imitators). Similarly, we might watch a tragedy and take pleasure in the form of the drama and be distressed by the content of the drama without our displeasure transforming our capacity for taking pleasure in the form. Thus, we can distinguish trivial (non-aesthetic) composite experiences from (aesthetic) transformative experiences in which one aspect of the experience transforms another aspect—our capacity for taking pleasure. That a potentially transformative component might be present in a pleasurable experience without transforming our capacity for pleasure is now understood as another way of saying that an experience can be pleasurable without being aesthetic.

It remains to consider whether this theory of aesthetic experience offers a principled basis for resolving the difficult cases. Do experiences involving the applied and decorative arts, the appetites for food and sex, interactions in ordinary life, and engagements with failed fine art ever count as aesthetic experiences? It might seem to count as a weakness of a theory of aesthetic experience if it cannot tell us which, if any, of these uncertain cases are aesthetic experiences. However, such an approach is misguided. Our intuitions are ambivalent about the aesthetic status of such experiences. A theory of aesthetic experience should not be expected to dispel such ambivalence, but rather to account for it. And the proposed theory does this. All of these difficult cases are pleasurable in some sense. This much they have in common with aesthetic experiences. But they may not transform our capacity for pleasure in the way that aesthetic experiences do. In each case, we must determine whether some aspect of the pleasurable experience transforms our capacity for taking pleasure.

That aesthetic experiences are experiences that transform our capacity for pleasure explains why we sometimes have difficulty in distinguishing aesthetic experience from merely pleasurable experience. The *Kama Sutra* lays claim to providing advice that elevates sexual intercourse into an art. One way of understanding such a claim might be to say that it enables its practitioners to

have experiences in which they not only experience sexual pleasure, but in which some aspect of the sexual experience transforms the practitioners' capacity for pleasure. If sexual experience, or experience of the decorative arts, or culinary experience succeeds not only in giving pleasure, but in transforming our capacity for pleasure, then it is accorded the status of aesthetic experience. We might find that in all cultures pleasure is taken in all of these things, but that, in some cultures, certain kinds of experience transform the capacity for pleasure, whereas different pleasurable experiences are transformative in other cultures. The English and the Japanese drink tea; both take pleasure in it; but only one has elevated it to an art. If tea-drinking is an aesthetic experience for some and a non-aesthetic pleasurable experience for others, it is because an aspect of the tea ceremony transforms some people's capacity for pleasure, whereas other people only take pleasure in drinking tea.

We now have a basis for determining whether Mr. Banks has an aesthetic experience when he flies a kite at the end of the movie. If it is merely that he discovers a new source of pleasure, it is not an aesthetic experience. Nor is it aesthetic if it affords him a cognitive discovery that there is a new way of taking pleasure. It is an aesthetic experience if some aspect of the experience of flying a kite transforms how he experiences. Perhaps the capacity for pleasure is transformed by the sense of vicarious flight and lightness that is felt by a kite-flyer who anchors, via a feeble string, an aircraft that soars high above between the air currents, and the experience of flying a kite is indeed an aesthetic experience. Perhaps, however, it is just jolly good fun: a pleasurable—but not aesthetic—experience.

VII

FINALLY, A WORD ABOUT THE MORAL GROWTH THAT IS POSSIBLE THROUGH AESTHETIC experience. Aesthetic experience is of ethical value because aesthetic experience is the transformation of the capacity for pleasure, and the transformation of pleasure can be of ethical significance. In making a claim about the ethical status of aesthetic experience, we need not enter into the established debate in analytic aesthetics about the relationship between aesthetic value and ethical value.⁵³ The kind of growth that occurs in aesthetic experience is of significance for the way we live our lives, although this might not be ethically valuable in the narrow sense in which such value is discussed in philosophy.⁵⁴

Aesthetic experience transforms the subject's capacity for pleasure. Such transformations are of significance because they might also be thought to transform the subject by equipping him with new psychological apparatus. There are at least three ways in which aesthetic experience's transformation might provide us with new psychological apparatus. First, aesthetic experience might be thought to transform the subject's existing capacities. For example, some aesthetic experiences might enable creatures that have an evolutionary need for univocal perception to take pleasure in non-univocal perception, although this is contrary to the natural function. Secondly, some aesthetic experiences might be thought to educate us about categories, including ethically relevant categories. Recent work on Aristotle's theory of *καθαρσις*, for example,

suggests that this experience might be understood as one in which we clarify our understanding of emotions such as fear and pity.⁵⁵ Thirdly, aesthetic experience might be thought to enable us to develop new capacities such as tolerating ambiguity, or the capacity to take pleasure in pain.⁵⁶ These are only mentioned as suggestions requiring further detailed consideration.

Philosophers have often preferred to give synchronic accounts of experiences such as perception.⁵⁷ In *The Thread of Life*, however, Wollheim argues that some of the most important experiences, those that are constitutive of who we are, cannot be understood synchronically, but require a diachronic account.⁵⁸ Such claims cannot be discussed fully here. Such a diachronic analysis of experience will also be important for understanding why we cannot approach aesthetic experiences discretely if we want to appreciate the transformative effect that they have on us over time. Thus, a proper account of the experiences discussed in §§3, 4, and 5 would require a diachronic analysis.

Such an analysis of aesthetic experience as the transformation of pleasure is offered as a contribution to the debate about the nature of aesthetic experience. But it is more than that. It offers an analysis that allows an explanation of the significance that aesthetic experience has for the way we live our lives. Such a project returns aesthetic experience to ordinary life, and affirms the importance of aesthetic experience for human flourishing in the way that Collingwood reaffirmed the importance of the practice of art for the practice of life.⁵⁹ φ

Notes

¹ *Mary Poppins* is a musical film produced by Walt Disney in 1964, and based on the Mary Poppins stories by P. L. Travers. At the end of the film, David Tomlinson (playing Mr. Banks) and the chorus sing the Sherman brothers' song, "Let's Go Fly A Kite."

² The classic treatment of this problem is I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, transl. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), although disinterestedness appears to have entered modern aesthetics from antiquity through the writing of the Earl of Shaftesbury. For a survey of the history of disinterestedness, see J. Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (1961): pp.131-143; and his *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960) for the role of disinterestedness in his own aesthetics.

³ See E. Bullough, "'Psychical Distance' As a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," *British Journal of Psychology* 5 (1912): pp. 87-98.

⁴ See G. Dickie, "All Aesthetic Attitude Theories Fail: The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1(1964): pp. 56-66.

⁵ For a monumental statement of this theory, see J. Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934); and for a briefer statement that develops the relevant ideas but which does not involve the idealist approach to art, see M. C. Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience Regained," in his *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 77-92.

⁶ See G. Dickey, "Beardsley's Phantom Aesthetic Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 62 (1958): pp. 129-36; and Beardsley's response in the work cited.

⁷ See Dickie, "All Aesthetic Attitude Theories Fail: The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude," above.

⁸ See R. Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), §§40-44.

⁹ See M.C. Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience," in his *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 285-297. For the classic statement of a related project which seeks to define art as a cluster-concept, see M. Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" in J. Margolis (ed.), *Philosophy Looks at the Arts* (New York: Schirer's Sons, 1956), pp. 48-60. For

a recent defense of this position, see B. Gaut, "The Cluster Account of Art," in N. Carroll (ed.), *Theories of Art Today* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp 25-45.

¹⁰ The classic paper that established the current debate is F. Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959): pp. 421-450. There is no shortage of literature on this paper, for example, T. Cohen, "Aesthetic/Non-Aesthetic and the Concept of Taste: A critique of Sibley's position," *Theoria* 39 (1973): pp. 113-252.

¹¹ Compare with Beardsley's approach which gives the concept of the aesthetic conceptual priority over art and Wollheim's approach which gives art conceptual priority over the aesthetic: M.C. Beardsley, *The Aesthetic Point of View* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982); and R. Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, 2nd ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), §§ 40-44.

¹² This intuition about art might change or come into conflict with twentieth century developments, notably Duchamp's readymades and Schoenberg's serialism. This has spawned a number of theoretical developments, including the institutional and subsequent historical theories of art: for institutional theory, see G. Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974); and A. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); and for the historical theory, J. Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): pp. 232-250.

¹³ The Abbé Batteux, an eighteenth century philosopher and member of both the Académie des Inscriptions and the Académie Française, was directly influenced by Rousseau and indirectly by Locke in writing his seminal work on art and aesthetics, *Les Beaux-Arts réduits à un même principe* (Paris, 1746).

¹⁴ P.O. Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A study in the history of aesthetics I and II," *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1951): pp. 496-527; 13 (1952): pp. 17-46.

¹⁵ See Plato, *Republic*, transl. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, Hackett: 1974), Books 2, 3, and 10 for an early discussion of art as μίμησις, and Aristotle, *Poetics*, transl. and ed. J. Barnes ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle: the revised Oxford translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Vol. 2, pp. 2316-40, for a discussion of the intellectual pleasure of μίμησις.

¹⁶ Kristeller, in the work cited, Pt. II, pp. 20-21.

¹⁷ Batteux's influence on the tradition is evident in the assumptions that subsequent theorists can take for granted about the pleasure of the fine arts: for example, D. Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London: Longman, Green, 1874-75), Vol. 3. Such assumptions change with the rise of the institutional and historical theories of art in the twentieth century which are mentioned above.

¹⁸ On the relationship between the aesthetic experience of art and nature, see A. Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2000); and more generally, M. Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

¹⁹ For the classic paper on this problem in contemporary analytic philosophy, see R.W. Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty" in B. Williams and A. Montefiore eds., *British Analytical Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1966), pp. 285-310; and Budd, in the work cited, for more recent development of these issues.

²⁰ It is customary to treat "pain" as the antonym for "pleasure" in the literature on the paradox of tragedy. However, I have preferred to contrast "pleasure" with "unpleasure." Although infelicitous, I regard "unpleasure" as preferable because it can encompass a range of different senses in which an experience might not be pleasurable.

²¹ Tragedy is a narrative of human suffering. It is a necessary feature of tragedy that the hero's suffering is not brought about through evil or wickedness, but through a certain fallibility or mistake on his part. In providing a μίμησις of such an ethically serious subject, Aristotle maintains that the tragic poet's task is to provide the audience with pleasure that derives from their experiencing pity and fear.

²² See Aristotle, in the work cited.

²³ See footnote to text in §7 below concerning the continuing debate about the meaning of kaqarsiV.

²⁴ Aristotle approaches the problem of tragedy from the practitioner's perspective: he provides a handbook for the budding tragic poet, and seeks to explain what the poet must do in order to

compose a successful tragedy. But the eighteenth century's concern is with psychological theory.

²⁵ D. Hume, "Of Tragedy" in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London: Longman, Green, 1874-75), Vol. 3.

²⁶ See S. Feagin, "The Pleasures of Tragedy," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1983): pp. 95-104.

²⁷ If the delightful response is the meta-response, and the object of the meta-response is the direct response, then on this analysis it seems that we are not taking pleasure in the tragedy at all, but in a response to the tragedy. Having sketched out three accounts of tragedy in the literature, it is beyond the scope of the present discussion to assess the critical literature on each.

²⁸ Addison extended the ancient conception of the sublime as self-transcendence found in Longinus: see J. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," *The Spectator*, No. 114 (1712). Whereas Longinus maintained that self-transcendence was possible through lofty thought and literature, Addison developed this by claiming that such transcendence was possible in the case of nature through visual perception alone.

²⁹ In contrast to Addison, Burke develops a different strain of sublime theory found in Dennis's *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, in which he discusses the enthusiastic terror that is experienced when the spectator enjoys the perception of some terrifying spectacle from a distance that allows him to maintain an awareness of his self-preservation in the face of the perceived threat: E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Routledge, 2008).

³⁰ Kant's achievement in his study of the sublime in the *Critique of Judgement* is to combine the two approaches to the sublime found in Addison and Burke: I. Kant above.

³¹ The two forms of the sublime are the mathematical sublime, in which the size of the object is too great for the subject to estimate (for example, starry heavens and lofty mountains), and the dynamical sublime, in which the magnitude of the natural force is so great that the subject is powerless in the face of it (for example, storms and hurricanes).

³² For an exposition and critical analysis of the weaknesses of Kant's account, see M. Budd in the work cited.

³³ See N. Carroll, "Why Horror?" in A. Neill and A. Ridley (eds), *Arguing about Art*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 275-94.

³⁴ According to Carroll, the horror genre very often involves a narrative structure that arouses and sustains our curiosity. More than anything else, we are caught up in the process of discovery: a puzzle is posed and then gradually solved, and we take pleasure in this. Questions of proof, explanation, and suspense all play an important role in sustaining our interest. So it is the feeling of participating in solving the mystery that gives us pleasure. Carroll asserts that this mystery invariably involves a monster. The nature of the monster disgusts us. The monster is a creature that challenges our natural categories in one way or another, for example, a werewolf is part man, part beast. Drawing on anthropological theory, Carroll argues that an important part of what disgusts is the very challenge to our natural categories that the monster represents. So we experience a pleasurable response to the form of the narrative structure and an unpleasurable response to the monster that forms part of the content. But Carroll argues for more than this: the curiosity we take in the narrative structure only gets going because of the way in which we are disgusted by the creature that challenges our natural categories.

³⁵ See B. Gaut, "The Paradox of Horror" in A. Neill and A. Ridley (eds), *Arguing about Art*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 295-308.

³⁶ Wollheim (1923-2003) was an Anglo-American philosopher who was an acknowledged expert both on the European painting tradition and on psychoanalysis, as well as holding the Grote Chair in Mind and Logic at University College, London, for many years. It is a notable feature of his writing that it merges the connoisseur's eye with the Kleinian's hypotheses of psychoanalysis and the philosopher's commitment to argument. For a biographical essay, see M. Budd, "Richard Arthur Wollheim, 1923-2003," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 130 (2005): pp. 227-246.

³⁷ For a critique of Wollheim's account of seeing-in in *Painting as an Art*, see M. Budd, "On Looking at a Picture" in J. Hopkins and A. Savile (eds), *Psychoanalysis, Mind and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 259-80; and also Wollheim's subsequent "On Pictorial

Representation" in R. van Gerwen (ed.), *Richard Wollheim on the Art of Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 13-27.

³⁸For Wollheim's final position on expressive perception, see R. Wollheim, "Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expression in the Arts" in his *The Mind and Its Depths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 144-58; and for a critique, see M. Budd, "Wollheim on Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expressive Perception," in R. van Gerwen (ed.), in the work cited, pp. 101-111.

³⁹Lecture II in R. Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), provides an account of the three capacities mentioned in this paragraph. In particular, note the discussion of visual delight at pp. 98-100.

⁴⁰Marcel Proust (1871-1922) was a Parisian author who wrote the semi-autobiographical seven-volume novel, *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699-1779) was a Parisian painter who specialized in still lifes and other intimate interiors. Giorgio Vasari (1511-74) was an Italian painter, architect, and distinguished biographer of the great renaissance artists. Titian (Tiziano Vecelli or Tiziano Vecellio, c. 1490-1576) was the highly versatile and influential Venetian painter who excelled in all aspects of renaissance painting.

⁴¹A discussion of this point is beyond the scope of the current discussion, but for Mill's theory of higher and lower pleasures, see J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963ff), Vol. 10, pp 203-59.

⁴²Above, 98.

⁴³In the same place.

⁴⁴M. Proust, "Chardin" in his *By Way of Sainte-Beuve: Contre Sainte-Beuve*, transl. S. Townsend Warner (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958), pp. 242-251.

⁴⁵Above, p. 100.

⁴⁶G. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, ed. B. Burroughs (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 254.

⁴⁷See R. Hepburn, in the work above. Hepburn notes at least four senses in which aesthetic experience of nature diverges from aesthetic experience of art: (1) In our experience of the landscape we are both actor and spectator; we are a part of—or surrounded by—the object of experience, whereas our experience of a work of art is an experience of a distinct object from which we might feel detached; (2) unlike art, nature is frameless: when we attend to the landscape, there is no obvious distinction between the object of our attention and its surrounds; (3) formalism is inappropriate in appreciation of the landscape: although the landscape can be experienced exclusively as uninterpreted shapes, colors, patterns, and movements, etc, it should not be limited to this; (4) the imaginative realization of the object of these experiences as natural forces and processes is an important cognitive part of the experience itself: we can acquire a better comprehension of nature through our aesthetic experience of it, and this is a principal activity in the experience.

⁴⁸In the same place, 289.

⁴⁹In the same place.

⁵⁰Ibid., 290. Architecture provides an interesting case: we are *in* a building but not part of it.

⁵¹Note that although the traditional interpretation of impressionism is in terms of light, T. J. Clark has argued for an alternative reading in terms of the speed of Parisian life: see T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁵²See R. W. Hepburn, "Nature in the Light of Art," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures: Philosophy and the Arts* 6 (1971-72): pp. 242-58. Hepburn takes his example of Pissarro from A. Forge, "Art/Nature" in the same volume: pp. 228-41.

⁵³For an influential argument about the sense in which the diminution of the ethical value of a work of art can diminish its aesthetic value, see B. Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art" in J. Levinson (ed.), *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 182-203; and B. Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a recent critique of this debate, see H. Lillehammer, "Values of Art and the Ethical Question," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 48 (2008): pp. 376-94.

⁵⁴This might not strictly be a contribution to philosophical ethics, but is a contribution to Williams's conception of ethics as distinguished from his narrower concept of "morality," or

Geuss's programme for an approach to practical life that lies outside philosophical ethics. See B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2006); R. Guess, "Outside Ethics" in his *Outside Ethics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005): pp. 40-66.

⁵⁵For an introduction to this debate, see M.C. Nussbaum, "Tragedy and Self-sufficiency: Plato and Aristotle on Fear and Pity" in A. Oksenberg Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 261-90; and Nehamas's assessment of Nussbaum in A. Nehamas, "Pity and Fear in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*" in A. Oksenberg Rorty, in the work above: pp. 291-314, at p. 307. For an alternative position, see J. Lear, "Katharsis," in A. Oksenberg Rorty, in the work above: pp. 315-40.

⁵⁶This suggestion is offered only in a very tentative form. However, I am mindful of Adorno's discussion of the appeal of Schönberg's music: see R. Guess, "Art and Theodicy" in his *Morality, Culture, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): pp. 78-115, at pp. 99-101.

⁵⁷For example, Locke's classic account of perception in J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1995).

⁵⁸R. Wollheim, *The Thread of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). For Wollheim, we can only understand mental phenomena such as emotions by understanding how they develop, and how this developmental process becomes central to what they are, see R. Wollheim, *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁵⁹R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. vii.