



The End of Aesthetic Experience

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The End of Aesthetic Experience

I

Experience, quipped Oscar Wilde, is the name one gives to one's mistakes. Does aesthetic experience then name the central blunder of modern aesthetics? Though long considered the most essential of aesthetic concepts, as including but also surpassing the realm of art, aesthetic experience has in the last half-century come under increasing critique. Not only its value but its very existence has been questioned. How has this once vital concept lost its appeal? Does it still offer anything of value? The ambiguous title, "The End of Aesthetic Experience," suggests my two goals: a reasoned account of its demise, and an argument for reconceiving and thus redeeming its purpose.¹

Though briefly noting the continental critique of this concept, I shall mostly focus on its progressive decline in twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy. Not only because here its descent is most extreme, but because it is in this tradition—that of John Dewey, Monroe Beardsley, Nelson Goodman, and Arthur Danto—that I situate my own aesthetic work.² While Dewey celebrated aesthetic experience, making it the very center of his philosophy of art, Danto virtually shuns the concept, warning (after Duchamp) that its "aesthetic delectation is a danger to be avoided."³ The decline of aesthetic experience from Dewey to Danto reflects, I shall argue, deep confusion about this concept's diverse forms and theoretical functions. But it also reflects a growing preoccupation with the *anaesthetic* thrust of this century's artistic avant-garde, itself symptomatic of much larger transformations in our basic sensibility as we move increasingly from an experiential to an informational culture.

To appreciate the decline of the concept of aesthetic experience, we must first recall its

prime importance. Some see it as playing a major role, *avant la lettre* and in diverse guises, in premodern aesthetics (e.g., in Plato's, Aristotle's, and Aquinas's accounts of the experience of beauty, and in Alberti's and Gravina's concepts of *lentezza* and *delirio*).⁴ But there can be no doubt that its dominance was established in modernity, when the term "aesthetic" was officially established. Once modern science and philosophy had destroyed the classical, medieval, and Renaissance faith that properties like beauty were objective features of the world, modern aesthetics turned to subjective experience to explain and ground them. Even when seeking an intersubjective consensus or standard that would do the critical job of realist objectivism, philosophy typically identified the aesthetic not only *through*, but also *with* subjective experience.

"Beauty," said Hume in arguing for a standard of taste, "is no quality in things themselves; it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them," though some minds are, of course, more judicious and authoritative than others. Kant explicitly identified the subject's experience "of pleasure or displeasure" as "the determining ground" of aesthetic judgment.⁵ The notion of aesthetic experience moreover helped provide an umbrella concept for diverse qualities that were distinguished from beauty but still closely related to taste and art: concepts like the sublime and the picturesque.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, aesthetic experience gained still greater importance through the general celebration of experience by influential *Lebensphilosophies* aimed at combating the threat of mechanistic determinism (seen not merely in science but also in the ravages of industrialization). In these

philosophies, experience replaced atomistic sensation as the basic epistemological concept, and its link to vividly felt life is clear not only from the German term "*Erlebnis*" but also from the vitalistic experiential theories of Bergson, James, and Dewey. As art subsumed religion's role by providing a nonsupernatural spirituality in the material world, so experience emerged as the naturalistic yet nonmechanistic expression of mind. The union of art and experience engendered a notion of aesthetic experience that achieved, through the turn of the century's great aestheticist movement, enormous cultural importance and almost religious intensity.

Aesthetic experience became the island of freedom, beauty, and idealistic meaning in an otherwise coldly materialistic and law-determined world; it was not only the locus of the highest pleasures, but a means of spiritual conversion and transcendence; it accordingly became the central concept for explaining the distinctive nature and value of art, which had itself become increasingly autonomous and isolated from the mainstream of material life and praxis. The doctrine of *art for art's sake* could only mean that art was for the sake of its own experience. And seeking to expand art's dominion, its adherents argued that anything could be rendered art if it could engender the appropriate experience.

This hasty genealogy of aesthetic experience does not, of course, do justice to the complex development of this concept, nor to the variety of theories and conceptions it embraces. But it should at least highlight four features that are central to the tradition of aesthetic experience and whose interplay shapes yet confuses twentieth-century accounts of this concept. First, aesthetic experience is essentially valuable and enjoyable; call this its evaluative dimension. Second, it is something vividly felt and subjectively savored, affectively absorbing us and focusing our attention on its immediate presence and thus standing out from the ordinary flow of routine experience; call this its phenomenological dimension. Third, it is meaningful experience, not mere sensation; call this its semantic dimension. (Its affective power and meaning together explain how aesthetic experience can be so transfigurative.) Fourth, it is a distinctive experience closely identified with the distinction of fine art and representing art's essential aim; call this the demarcational-definitional dimension.

These features of aesthetic experience do not seem, *prima facie*, collectively inconsistent. Yet, as we shall see, they generate theoretical tensions that propel recent analytic philosophy toward growing marginalization of this concept and have even inspired some analysts (most notably George Dickie) to deny its very existence.⁶ Before concentrating on the Anglo-American scene, we would do well to note the major lines of recent continental critique. For only by comparison can we grasp the full measure of the analytic depreciation of aesthetic experience.

II

From critical theory and hermeneutics to deconstruction and genealogical analysis, the continental critique of aesthetic experience has mostly focused on challenging its phenomenological immediacy and its radical differentiation. Although Adorno rejects its claim to pleasure as the ideological contamination of bourgeois hedonism, he joins the virtually unanimous continental verdict that aesthetic experience is not only valuable and meaningful but that the concept of experience is crucial for the philosophy of art. Unlike facile pleasure of the subject, "real aesthetic experience," for Adorno, "requires self-abnegation" and submission to "the objective constitution of the artwork itself."⁷ This can transform the subject, thereby suggesting new avenues of emancipation and a renewed *promesse de bonheur* more potent than simple pleasure.

Here we see the transformational, passional aspect of aesthetic experience; it is something undergone or suffered. Though the experiencing subject is dynamic, not inert, she is far from a fully controlling agent and so remains captive and blind to the ideological features structuring the artwork she follows. Hence a proper, emancipatory understanding of art requires going beyond immediate experience, beyond immanent *Verstehen*, to external critique ("secondary reflection") of the work's ideological meaning and the socio-historical conditions which shaped it. "Experience is essential," Adorno dialectically concludes, "but so is thought, for no work in its immediate facticity portrays its meaning adequately or can be understood in itself" (AT, p. 479).

In the same dialectical manner, while affirm-

ing aesthetic experience's marked differentiation from "ungodly reality," he recognizes that such apparent autonomy is itself only the product of social forces which ultimately condition the nature of aesthetic experience by constraining both the structure of artworks and our mode of responding to them (AT, pp. 320–322, 478–479). Since changes in the nonaesthetic world affect our very sensibilities and capacity for experience, aesthetic experience cannot be a fixed natural kind.

This is a central theme in Walter Benjamin's critique of the immediate meaning of *Erlebnis* privileged by phenomenology. Through the fragmentation and shocks of modern life, the mechanical repetition of assembly-line labor, and the haphazardly juxtaposed information and raw sensationalism of the mass media, our immediate experience of things no longer forms a meaningful, coherent whole but is rather a welter of fragmentary, unintegrated sensations—something simply lived through (*erlebt*) rather than meaningfully experienced. Benjamin instead advocated a notion of experience (as *Erfahrung*) that requires the mediated, temporally cumulative accretion of coherent, transmittable wisdom, though he doubted whether it could still be achieved in modern society.⁸

Modernization and technology, Benjamin likewise argued, have eroded aesthetic experience's identification with the distinctive, transcendent autonomy of art. Such experience once had what Benjamin called *aura*, a cultic quality resulting from the artwork's uniqueness and distance from the ordinary world. But with the advent of mechanical modes of reproduction like photography, art's distinctive aura has been lost, and aesthetic experience comes to pervade the everyday world of popular culture and even politics. Aesthetic experience can no longer be used to define and delimit the realm of high art. Unlike Adorno, Benjamin saw this loss of aura and differentiation as potentially emancipatory (although he condemned its deadly results in the aesthetics of fascist politics). In any case, Benjamin's critique does not deny the continuing importance of aesthetic experience, only its romantic conceptualization as pure immediacy of meaning and isolation from the rest of life.

Clearly inspired by Heidegger's critique of aesthetic experience,⁹ Gadamer attacks the same two features of immediacy and differentiation,

which are even conceptually linked. By radically differentiating the artwork from the socio-historical world in which it is created and received, by treating it as an object purely of direct aesthetic delight, aesthetic consciousness reduces the work's meaning to what is immediately experienced. But, Gadamer argues, this attitude simply cannot do justice to art's meaning and lasting impact on our lives and world:

The pantheon of art is not a timeless presence which offers itself to pure aesthetic consciousness but the assembled achievements of the human mind as it has realized itself historically. ... Inasmuch as we encounter the work of art in the world, ... it is necessary to adopt an attitude to the beautiful and to art that does not lay claim to immediacy, but corresponds to the historical reality of man. The appeal to immediacy, to the genius of the moment, to the significance of the "experience," cannot withstand the claim of human existence to continuity and unity of self-understanding.¹⁰

To take the work as merely experienced immediacy is to rob it of enduring wholeness and cumulative meaning through communicative tradition, disintegrating "the unity of the aesthetic object into the multiplicity of experiences" (TM, p. 85) and ignoring art's relation to the world and its claims to truth.

Such critique of immediate, differentiated aesthetic consciousness does not, however, constitute a repudiation of the central importance of experience for aesthetics. Indeed, Gadamer claims it is undertaken "in order to do justice to the experience of art" by insisting that this experience "includes understanding," which must exceed the immediacy of pure presence (TM, pp. 89, 90).¹¹ Rather than identifying art with its objects as in typical analytic philosophy, Gadamer insists "that the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person experiencing it"; this experience "is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it, but the work itself" (TM, p. 92), which, as a game plays its players, submits those who wish to understand it to the rigors of its structures.

Although it rejects Gadamer's faith in experiential unity and stability, the deconstructionism of Derrida and Barthes takes a roughly similar stand: its radical critique of firm disciplinary

boundaries and the “myth of presence” challenges the radical differentiation and immediacy of aesthetic experience without dismissing its importance and power of *jouissance*. From a quite different perspective, that of sociologically informed genealogical critique, Pierre Bourdieu attacks the very same two targets. “The experience of the work of art as being immediately endowed with meaning and value” that are pure and autonomous is an essentialist fallacy. Aesthetic experience is “itself an institution which is the product of historical invention,” the result of the reciprocally reinforcing dimensions of art’s institutional field and inculcated habits of aesthetic contemplation.¹² Both take considerable time to get established, not only in the general social field but also in the course of each individual’s aesthetic apprenticeship. Moreover, their establishment in both cases depends on the wider social field that determines an institution’s conditions of possibility, power, and attraction, as well as the options of the individual’s involvement in it.

What shall we make of the two main thrusts of the continental critique? Aesthetic experience cannot be conceived as an unchanging concept narrowly identified with fine art’s purely autonomous reception. For not only is such reception impoverished, but aesthetic experience extends beyond fine art (to nature, for example). Moreover, aesthetic experience is conditioned by changes in the nonartistic world that affect not only the field of art but our very capacities for experience in general.

The second charge, that aesthetic experience requires more than mere phenomenological immediacy to achieve its full meaning, is equally convincing. Immediate reactions are often poor and mistaken, so interpretation is generally needed to enhance our experience. Moreover, prior assumptions and habits of perception, including prior acts of interpretation, are necessary for the shaping of appropriate responses that are experienced as immediate. This insistence on the interpretive is also the crux of the Goodman-Danto critique of aesthetic experience. So when Gadamer urges that “aesthetics must be absorbed into hermeneutics” (TM, p. 146), he is expressing precisely the dominant analytic line.

However, the claim that aesthetic experience must involve *more* than phenomenological im-

mediacy and vivid feeling does not entail that such immediate feeling is not crucial to aesthetic experience. Likewise, Bourdieu’s convincing claim that aesthetic experience requires cultural mediation does not entail that its content cannot be experienced as immediate. Though it surely took some time for English to become a language and for me to learn it, I can still experience its meanings as immediate, grasping them as immediately as the smell of a rose (which itself may require the mediation of gardening and complex cognitive processes of sense and individuation).¹³

The decline of aesthetic experience in analytic philosophy partly reflects such false inferences. But it also stems from confusions arising from the changing role of this concept in Anglo-American philosophy from Dewey to Danto, and especially from the fact that this diversity of roles has not been adequately recognized. Viewed as a univocal concept, aesthetic experience seems too confused to be redeemed as useful; so the first task is to articulate its contrasting conceptions.

III

The contrasting conceptions of aesthetic experience are best mapped in terms of three different axes of contrast whose opposing poles capture all four of its already noted dimensions. First, we can ask whether the concept of aesthetic experience is intrinsically honorific or instead descriptively neutral. Second, is it robustly phenomenological or simply semantic? In other words, are affect and subjective intentionality essential dimensions of this experience, or is it rather only a certain kind of meaning or style of symbolization that renders an experience aesthetic? Third, is this concept’s primary theoretical function transformational, aiming to revise or enlarge the aesthetic field, or is it instead demarcational, i.e., to define, delimit, and explain the aesthetic status quo?

My claim is that, since Dewey, Anglo-American theories of aesthetic experience have moved steadily from the former to the latter poles, resulting eventually in the concept’s loss of power and interest. In other words, Dewey’s essentially evaluative, phenomenological, and transformational notion of aesthetic experience has been gradually replaced by a purely descrip-

tive, semantic one whose chief purpose is to explain and thus support the established demarcation of art from other human domains. Such changes generate tensions that make the concept suspicious. Moreover, when aesthetic experience proves unable to supply this definition, as Danto concludes, the whole concept is abandoned for one that promises to do so—interpretation. That aesthetic experience may nonetheless be fruitful for other purposes is simply, but I think wrongly, ignored. To substantiate this line of narrative and argument, we must examine the theories of Dewey, Beardsley, Goodman, and Danto.

Dewey's prime use of aesthetic experience is aimed not at distinguishing art from the rest of life, but rather at "recovering the continuity of its esthetic experience with the normal processes of living," so that both art and life will be improved by their greater integration.¹⁴ His goal was to break the stifling hold of what he called "the museum conception of art," which compartmentalizes the aesthetic from real life, remitting it to a separate realm remote from the vital interests of ordinary men and women. This "esoteric idea of fine art" gains power from the sacralization of art objects sequestered in museums and private collections. Dewey therefore insisted on privileging dynamic aesthetic experience over the physical objects that conventional dogma identifies and then fetishizes as art. For Dewey, the essence and value of art are not in such artifacts per se but in the dynamic and developing experiential activity through which they are created and perceived. He therefore distinguished between the physical "art product" that, once created, can exist "apart from human experience" and "the actual work of art [which] is what the product does with and in experience" (AE, pp. 9, 167, 329). This primacy of aesthetic experience not only frees art from object fetishism but also from its confinement to the traditional domain of fine art. For aesthetic experience clearly exceeds the limits of fine art, as, for example, in the appreciation of nature.¹⁵

Dewey insisted that aesthetic experience could likewise occur in the pursuit of science and philosophy, in sport, and in *haute cuisine*, contributing much to the appeal of these practices. Indeed, it could be achieved in virtually any domain of action, since all experience, to be

coherent and meaningful, requires the germ of aesthetic unity and development. By rethinking art in terms of aesthetic experience, Dewey hoped we could radically enlarge and democratize the domain of art, integrating it more fully into the real world which would be greatly improved by the pursuit of such manifold arts of living.

Its potential pervasiveness did not mean that aesthetic experience could not be distinguished from ordinary experience. Its distinction, however, is essentially qualitative. From the humdrum flow of routine experience, it stands out, says Dewey, as a distinctly memorable, rewarding whole—as not just experience but "*an experience*"—because in it we feel "most alive" and fulfilled through the active, satisfying engagement of all our human faculties (sensual, emotive, and cognitive) that contribute to this integrated whole. Aesthetic experience is differentiated not by its unique possession of some specific element or its unique focus on some particular dimension, but by its more zestful integration of all the elements of ordinary experience into an absorbing, developing whole that provides "a satisfyingly emotional quality" of some sort and so exceeds the threshold of perception that it can be appreciated for its own sake (AE, pp. 42, 45, 63).¹⁶ An essential part of that appreciation is the immediate, phenomenological feel of aesthetic experience, whose sense of unity, affect, and value is "directly fulfilling" rather than deferred for some other time or end.

The transformational, phenomenological, and evaluative thrust of Deweyan aesthetic experience should now be clear. So should the usefulness of such a concept for provoking recognition of artistic potentialities and aesthetic satisfactions in pursuits previously considered nonaesthetic. It is further useful in reminding us that, even in fine art, directly fulfilling experience rather than collecting or scholarly criticism is the primary value. Nor does this emphasis on phenomenological immediacy and affect preclude the semantic dimension of aesthetic experience. Meaning is not incompatible with qualia and affect.

Unfortunately, Dewey does not confine himself to transformational provocation, but also proposes aesthetic experience as a theoretical definition of art. By standard philosophical criteria, this definition is hopelessly inadequate,

grossly misrepresenting our current concept of art. Much art, particularly bad art, fails to engender Deweyan aesthetic experience, which, on the other hand, often arises outside art's institutional limits. Moreover, though the concept of art (as an historically determined concept) can be somewhat reshaped, it cannot be convincingly defined in such a global way so as to be coextensive with aesthetic experience. No matter how powerful and universal is the aesthetic experience of sunsets, we are hardly going to reclassify them as art.¹⁷ By employing the concept of aesthetic experience both to define what art in fact is and to transform it into something quite different, Dewey creates considerable confusion. Hence analytic philosophers typically dismiss his whole idea of aesthetic experience as a disastrous muddle.

The major exception is Monroe Beardsley, who reconstructs this concept as the core of his analytic philosophy of art, which, like most analytic aesthetics, is preoccupied with projects of differentiation. Instead of Dewey's quest to unite art to the rest of life, Beardsley's aim is to clearly distinguish art and the aesthetic from other practices. This means renouncing the transformational use of aesthetic experience. Instead, this concept serves to define what is distinctive of works of art and what is constitutive of their value (issuing in what Beardsley calls a "persuasive analysis of artistic goodness," APV, p. 79).

Beardsley's strategy is to argue that art can be defined as a distinctive function class if there is a particular function that works of art "can do that other things cannot do, or do as completely or fully" (A, p. 526). The production of aesthetic experience is claimed as this function, and so he explains both the general value of art and the differing value of its particular works through the basic value and intrinsic pleasure of that experience; better works, for Beardsley, are those capable of producing "aesthetic experiences of a greater magnitude" (A, p. 531). Beardsley thus retains the Deweyan evaluative, affective, and phenomenological features of aesthetic experience. It is, he says, an "intrinsically enjoyable" "experience of some intensity" where "attention" and "the succession of one's mental states" is focused on and directed by some phenomenal field in a way that generates a satisfying "feeling" of coherence or "wholeness" and "a sense

of actively exercising constructive powers of the mind" (A, p. 527; APV, pp. 287–289). And he clarifies such defining characteristics of this experience in considerable detail.¹⁸

After careful scrutiny, analytic aesthetics has rejected Beardsley's theory on three major grounds. One is skepticism about its phenomenological validity. George Dickie, an influential advocate of this line of critique, offers two principal arguments.¹⁹ First, Beardsley must be wrong to describe the aesthetic experience as unified, coherent, etc., because doing so is simply a category mistake—treating the term "experience" as if it denoted a real thing that could bear such descriptions instead of recognizing that it is merely an empty term denoting nothing real. Talk about aesthetic experience is just a roundabout and ontologically inflationary way of talking about the aesthetic object as perceived or experienced. Beardsley's claim of the "unity of experience" is simply a misleading way of describing the experienced, phenomenal unity of the artwork. It alone can have such properties of coherence or wholeness. Particular subjective affects resulting from the work cannot have these properties, and the global aesthetic experience that purports to have them is just a linguistically constructed metaphysical phantom. Secondly, Dickie argues, even what is wrongly identified as aesthetic experience does not always have the affective content that Beardsley claims; and this critique can be extended to traditional claims that aesthetic experience is always pleasurable or unified.

What should one make of these two arguments? To the first, we can reply that empirical psychologists *do* accept the reality of experiences (including aesthetic ones) and the validity of describing them in terms of predicates (like unity, intensity, etc.) that, admittedly, are more often used to describe the objects of such experiences.²⁰ Of course, one could challenge this response by dismissing it as confused folk psychology and adopting philosophy of mind's once fashionable trend of dismissing the role of consciousness or first-person experience. For many reasons (including aesthetic ones), I think this trend should be resisted, and consciousness is indeed making a comeback in recent philosophy of mind.²¹

The argument that Beardsley's phenomenological ascriptions of affect, unity, and pleasure

are in fact phenomenologically incorrect can be considered along with the second major criticism of his theory: that (the capacity to produce) aesthetic experience just cannot serve to identify and individuate works of art. Here the standard strategy is to show that such a definition would be both too wide and too narrow. It has been charged, for instance, that by Beardsley's criteria of aesthetic experience, good sexual experience would be falsely included as art, a conclusion Dewey would have welcomed but which runs against Beardsley's analytic aim of explaining established classifications.²²

However, Beardsley's definition is most often attacked for being too narrow. It wrongly excludes the many artworks that are not capable of producing enjoyable experiences of unity and affect. Certain good works neither produce nor even try to produce such experiences, but clearly the problem is most severe with bad works of art. Since Beardsley's concept of aesthetic experience is essentially honorific and definitional, it cannot accommodate bad works as aesthetic objects or art, and yet clearly this is how we analytic philosophers think they must be classified. The concepts of art and aesthetic must allow for bad instances. Being a work of art cannot entail being a good work of art, otherwise negative evaluations of artworks would be impossible.

This leads to the third major difficulty: the inadequacy of Beardsley's theory of aesthetic experience to explain our judgments of value. Because this experience is by definition enjoyable or positive, it can in no way account for strongly negative aesthetic judgments (e.g., of hideousness, repulsion, etc.), which cannot be explained by the mere absence of a positive aesthetic experience. Yet negative verdicts are central to the field of aesthetics, and any concept which claims to define this field must be able to account for bad as well as good art.²³

Two conclusions emerge from all this critique. If aesthetic experience is to do the job of demarcating the entire realm of art, then its essentially evaluative content must be abandoned. Moreover, if one is suspicious of subjectivity and immediate feeling, then one must find a notion of aesthetic experience not centered on first-person phenomenology but rather on non-subjective accounts of meaning. These two inferences determine the new semantic direction

of Nelson Goodman's theory of aesthetic experience. Though he shares Beardsley's analytic goal of demarcational definition, of "distinguishing in general between aesthetic and non-aesthetic objects and experience" (LA, p. 243), he insists that such distinction must be "independent of all consideration of aesthetic value," since the existence of bad art means "being aesthetic does not exclude being ... aesthetically bad" (LA, pp. 244, 255). Aesthetic experience must also be defined independently of phenomenological accounts of mental states or immediate feelings and meanings. For Goodman rejects intentional entities, explaining all meaning in terms of varieties of reference, just as he renounces the very idea of an immediate given before or apart from its symbolic representation.

Nor can aesthetic experience be distinguished by its peculiarly emotive character, since "some works of art have little or no emotive content." Even when emotion is present, its role, Goodman argues, is simply the cognitive one "of discerning what properties a work has and expresses" by providing "a mode of sensitivity" to it (LA, pp. 248, 250, 251). But such cognitive use of emotion (as Dewey also tirelessly urged) is equally present in science. Goodman concludes that while emotion is not an aesthetic constant, cognition of some sort is. He therefore defines aesthetic experience as "cognitive experience distinguished [from science and other domains] by the dominance of certain symbolic characteristics" (LA, p. 262).²⁴

Goodman calls these features "symptoms of the aesthetic" and individuates five of them:

(1) syntactic density, where the finest differences in certain respects constitute a difference between symbols—for example, an ungraded mercury thermometer as contrasted with an electronic digital-read-out instrument; (2) semantic density, where symbols are provided for things distinguished by the finest differences in certain respects (not only the ungraduated thermometer again but also ordinary English, though it is not syntactically dense); (3) relative repleteness, where comparatively many aspects of a symbol are significant—for example a single-line drawing of a mountain by Hokusai where every feature of shape, line, thickness, etc. counts, in contrast with perhaps the same line as a chart of daily stock market averages, where all that counts is the height of the line above the base; (4) exemplification, where a symbol,

whether or not it denotes, symbolizes by serving as a sample of properties it literally or metaphorically possesses; and finally (5) multiple and complex reference, where a symbol performs several integrated and interacting referential functions, some direct and some mediated through other symbols. (WW, pp. 67–68)

If an object's "functioning exhibits all these symptoms," Goodman claims, "then very likely the object is a work of art. If it shows almost none, then it probably isn't" (OMM, p. 199). Although these symptoms may fall short of being disjunctively necessary and conjunctively sufficient conditions for defining our concept of art, Goodman blames this on the fact that ordinary usage of this concept is too "vague and vagrant" to allow any clear definition and thus requires reform (WW, p. 69). His symptoms are therefore offered provisionally in the "search for a definition" (OMM, p. 135) that will achieve this clarification.

Rather than focusing on provisional symptoms, criticism of Goodman's theory should be directed at the underlying premises that generate their proposal. Three problems seem most central. First is the premise of radical aesthetic differentiation, with its consequent presumption that the function of the concept of aesthetic experience is to explain art's compartmentalized distinction. Goodman's theory, like Beardsley's, is haunted by this goal of clearly defining art from all other realms, of seeking (in his words) "a way of distinguishing aesthetic from all other experience" (LA, p. 251). Thus, though keen to emphasize the great affinities between art and science, he feels compelled to seek a definition that will clearly mark off aesthetic from scientific experience. Invoking his symbolic symptoms to achieve this, he rightly worries that they cannot adequately do the job by providing necessary and sufficient conditions.

Yet such worries only arise by presuming that the concept of aesthetic experience should be co-extensive with art, that aesthetic experience cannot occur in science and other standardly nonartistic pursuits, but must apply in all art no matter how bad. There is ample testimony to challenge this presumption, but Goodman must ignore it. Methodologically wedded to the project of demarcating art by aesthetic experience, he cannot recognize a concept of aesthetic experience

that cuts across disciplinary boundaries while maintaining its evaluative sense as enjoyably heightened, affective, and meaningful experience. Yet such a concept is fruitfully employed in common usage, not only in Dewey.

A second problem with Goodman's definition of aesthetic experience is that it seems to render the very notion of experience—the conscious, phenomenological feel of things—entirely superfluous. If the aesthetic is defined entirely in terms of the dominance of certain modes of symbolization, with no essential reference to sentience, immediate feeling, and affect, then what is the point of speaking about aesthetic experience at all? We might as well just talk about the semantic symptoms of art and aesthetics, and simply drop the term "experience" (as Goodman indeed does in his most recent discussions). But apart from the once chic suspicion of consciousness, is there any reason why the concept of aesthetic experience must omit this phenomenological dimension with its immediacy of quality and affect? Goodman's discussion suggests (though never fully articulates) the following argument: aesthetic experience is essentially meaningful and cognitive through its use of symbols. Use of symbols implies mediation and dynamic processing of information, while phenomenological feeling and affect imply passivity and immediacy that cannot account for meaning. Hence, aesthetic experience cannot be essentially phenomenological, immediate, or affective.

This argument is very problematic. First, even assuming all its premises, what follows is only that aesthetic experience requires *more* than these phenomenological features, not that they are not central to such experience. Secondly, we can challenge the premises by arguing that phenomenological consciousness *can* include immediate perceptions of meaning, even if such immediate understandings on the conscious level require unconscious mediated processing, or rely on a background of past conscious mediation. Further, one can argue that phenomenological feeling involves more than immediacy, just as affect (on both psychological and physiological levels) involves more than passivity. Moreover, if Goodman brings the argument that affect is not central to aesthetic experience because it is not always present in the experience of artworks, we can counter by chal-

lenging the presumption that aesthetic experience can only be understood as an artistically demarcational concept, applying necessarily to our encounter with all (and only) artworks, no matter how feeble the encounter and the works may be.

Finally, Goodman's semiotic theory of aesthetic experience has a third grave problem. Not only does it neglect the phenomenology and nonartistic extension of that experience, it is also wholly inadequate for its designated role of demarcating the realm of art. For its use in this role requires that we already know whether or not we are dealing with artworks. Here is the argument. According to Goodman an object is an artwork when its symbolic functioning saliently employs the symptomatically aesthetic modes of symbolization. But an object does not wear its symbolic use on its sleeve; a visually identical sign may function differently in different symbolic systems. For instance, as Goodman remarks, the same drawn line may be a "replete" character artistically representing a mountain or instead a nonreplete character merely representing profits in a chart. But we do not know which symbolic functioning the object has until we know whether the object is an artwork or just a chart. Hence symbolic functioning (and thus aesthetic experience as symbolic functioning) cannot be the basis for defining the artistic status of an object.

This argument is, of course, a variation of the argument from indiscernibles employed by Arthur Danto to argue that perceptual properties alone, including those involved in aesthetic experience, are insufficient for distinguishing between artworks and nonart, between Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* and their nonartistic counterparts. Our experience should differ, Danto says, "depending upon whether the response is to an artwork or to a mere real thing that cannot be told apart from it." But "we cannot appeal to [such differences] ... in order to get our definition of art, inasmuch as we [first] need the definition of art in order to identify the sorts of aesthetic responses appropriate to works of art in contrast with mere real things" (T, pp. 94–95). Aesthetic experience has the further problem, Danto notes, of being traditionally defined as inherently positive, while many artworks, being bad, induce negative responses (T, p. 92).

Since aesthetic experience cannot adequately

demarcate art, Danto virtually ignores it, subordinating it to another concept that he thinks can do the definitional job (and do it with the same semantic emphasis that Goodman advocated). This concept is interpretation. "There is," he says "no appreciation without interpretation," since "interpretations are what constitute works"; and "interpretation consists in determining the relationship between a work of art and its material counterpart" (TC, p. 113; PD, p. 45). As I argue in "Beneath Interpretation,"²⁵ I think these claims are problematic. But even granting them does not nullify the idea of aesthetic experience. Its failure to provide a nonevaluative definition of our current concept of art does not entail that it has no important role to play in aesthetics, though we need, of course, to specify what role this could be.

Danto, however, suggests a further argument. The concept of aesthetic experience is not only useless but a "danger," because the very notion of the aesthetic intrinsically trivializes art by seeing it as "fit only for pleasure," rather than for meaning and truth (PD, pp. xiv, 13). This argument not only falsely equates the aesthetic *per se* with a caricature of the narrowest of Kantian formalisms, it also wrongly suggests a divide between pleasure and meaning, feeling and cognition, enjoyment and understanding, when instead, they tend, in art, to constitute each other. As T. S. Eliot remarked, "To understand a poem comes to the same thing as to enjoy it for the right reasons."²⁶

We can reinforce this point and the centrality of aesthetic feeling by adopting Danto's argument from indiscernibles, but applying it this time not to objects but to subjects. Imagine two visually identical art viewers who offer identical interpretations of the very powerful paintings and poems before them. One is a human being who thrills to what he sees and interprets. The other, however, is only a cyborg who, experiencing no qualia, feels no pleasure, indeed no emotion at all, but merely mechanically processes the perceptual and artworld data to deliver his interpretive propositions. We would surely say here that the cyborg, in an important sense, doesn't really understand these works. He doesn't, in a big way, get the point of such art, even if he recognizes that some feeling he cannot feel is somehow appropriate. For much of the point is precisely to feel or savor art's qualia and mean-

ing, not just compute an interpretive output from the work's signs and artworld context.

For this reason, even if the cyborg's interpretive propositions were descriptively more accurate than the human being's, we would still say that the human's general response to art was superior and that the cyborg, since he feels absolutely nothing, does not really grasp what art is all about. Now imagine further that aesthetic experience was entirely expunged from our civilization, since we were all transformed into such cyborgs or exterminated by them. Art might linger on a bit through inertia, but could it continue to flourish and robustly survive? What would be the point of creating and attending to it, if it promised no enriching phenomenological feeling or pleasure?

The uncertainty of art's future in such a sci-fi scenario implies the centrality of aesthetic experience—in its evaluative and phenomenological sense—for the concept of art. Though surely neither a necessary or sufficient condition for application of this concept, it might be regarded as a more general background condition for art. In other words, though many artworks fail to produce aesthetic experience—in the sense of satisfyingly heightened, absorbing, meaningful, and affective experience—if such experience could never be had and never had through the production of works, art could probably never have existed.²⁷ If artworks universally flouted this interest (and not just on occasion to make a radical point), art, as we know it, would disappear. In contrast to necessary and sufficient conditions that aim at mapping art's demarcational limits, such a background condition concerns the *point* rather than the *extension* of the concept of art. In naming and so marking this point, aesthetic experience is not a useless concept.²⁸

My futuristic cyborg parables are not so hard to imagine because they reflect real developments in recent aesthetics and contemporary life. Rejecting what he calls the traditional "strong and cold" "grip of aestheticism on the philosophy of art" (PD, p. 33), Danto joins Goodman and many others in what might be termed a radical anaestheticization of aesthetics. Felt experience is virtually ignored and entirely subordinated to third-person semantic theories of artistic symbolization and its interpretation. Once a potent embodiment of art's sense and value, aesthetic experience is now "hermeneutered."

Forsaking such experience for semiotic definitions of art should not be seen as merely the arbitrary preference of linguistic philosophers addicted to semantic theory. Goodman and Danto were sensitively reflecting developments in the artworld, which required ever more interpretation as art became more cerebrally conceptual in pursuing what Danto describes as its Hegelian quest to become its own philosophy: art as theory of art. Goodman and Danto were also responsive to artworld realities in claiming against Beardsley and Dewey that much contemporary art neither evokes nor aims to evoke powerful experiences having enjoyable affect and coherent meaning.

So much the worse, one might say, for contemporary art, which, having completed its philosophical transformation and lost the financial prop of eighties speculation, now finds it has lost an experiential point and a public to fall back on. For the public retains a deep need for aesthetic experiences, and as these became artistically *dépassé*, it learned to satisfy this need outside the official realm of contemporary art, beyond the white cube of gallery space. So aesthetic interest is increasingly directed toward popular art, which has not yet learned to eschew the experiential goals of pleasure, affect, and meaningful coherence, even if it often fails to achieve them. Mourning the artworld's loss of a public, the prominent artists Komar and Melamid, together with *The Nation*, engaged a scientific marketing-survey of popular aesthetic taste in the (perhaps ironic) quest to develop a new plastic art that would engage people as broadly and as powerfully as popular music does. One point emerging from the polling statistics is the demand that art provide positive affective experience through coherence.²⁹

Branding this demand as stifflingly conservative, we may insist that art should *not* be confined to supplying agreeable unities or emotions. We may rightly claim that today some of our most exciting, rewarding artistic encounters involve unpleasant shock and fragmentation. But can we make sense of art as a whole without admitting the traditional and still formative centrality of vivid, meaningful, phenomenological experience that is directly felt as valuable, even if not always as pleasant and unified?

Of course, the presence of such experience does not entail the presence of art; so it cannot

in itself legitimize popular art as true art, just as it cannot alone justify the claim that a given work is good art. In all these cases, since experience itself is mute, critical discourse is needed. Still, the power of aesthetic experience impels one to undertake such legitimating discourse through its felt value, just as it impels the public toward the arts wherein it can be found. If the experience has this power, then the concept of such experience has value in reminding us of it and directing us toward its use.

If art is *in extremis*, deprived (through completion) of its sustaining narrative of progress and thus groping without direction in what Danto calls its “posthistory,” where anything goes; if art’s groping is as lonely as it is aimless, cut off from the popular currents of taste in a democratic culture, then the concept of aesthetic experience is worth recalling: not for formal definition but for art’s reorientation toward values and populations that could restore its vitality and sense of purpose.³⁰

Art’s turn from the aesthetic experience of enjoyable affective unities is no more an act of perverse willfulness than Danto and Goodman’s semantic anaesthetics. Like them, contemporary artists are simply responding to changes in our lifeworld, as we move from a more unified experiential culture to an increasingly modular, informational one. This results in art that highlights fragmentation and complexities of information-flow that are often too helter-skelter to provide the coherence needed for traditional aesthetic experience’s pleasurable sense of focused, funded affect. Already in the 1930s Walter Benjamin drew a stark contrast between experience and information, expressing the fear that through the fragmentation of modern life and the disjointed sensationalism of the newspapers, we were losing the capacity for deep experience and feeling. We have since undergone a far more extensive series of informational revolutions—from television and facsimile to the Internet and newer interactive systems of cyberspace and virtual reality.

Given this informational overload, it is not surprising that “the waning of affect” (in Fredric Jameson’s phrase) is diagnosed as a prime symptom of our postmodern condition.³¹ There is growing concern, far beyond the academy, that we are being so thoroughly reshaped by our informational technology that our experi-

ential, affective capacities are wearing thin, so thin that we risk assimilation to the mechanical information processors that are already our most intimate companions in work and play. This worry is expressed nowhere more clearly than in cyborg fiction. The only way of distinguishing human beings from their physically identical cyborg Terminators or Replicants is the human capacity to feel, which itself is continuously buffeted and jeopardized by the unmanageable flux and grind of futuristic living. In the story *Blade Runner* (though not in the film) there is even a crucial device to reinforce these affective experiential capacities—an “empathy box” that produces through virtual reality a powerful aesthetico-religious experience of empathetic fusion with others likewise plugged in.³²

It may seem very “retro” to suggest that aesthetic experience can function something like an empathy box, restoring both our ability and inclination for the sorts of vivid, moving, shared experience that one once sought in art. Perhaps our informational evolution has already gone too far, so that an evening of beauty at the Met can do nothing to counter a life on Wall Street’s chaotic trading floor. Perhaps aesthetic experience, and not just the philosophical value of its concept, has almost reached its end. How could philosophy do anything to forestall its total loss?

First, it can remind us of the variety this concept still embraces as heightened, meaningful, and valuable phenomenological experience. So the threatened loss of one traditional form does not entail its utter extinction. Second, in any of its rewarding forms, aesthetic experience will be strengthened and preserved the more it is experienced; it will be more experienced the more we are directed to such experience; and one good way of directing us to such experience is fuller recognition of its importance and richness through greater attention to the concept of aesthetic experience. We thus find at least one good use for philosophical recognition of this concept: its orientation toward having the experience it names. Rather than defining art or justifying critical verdicts, the concept is directional, reminding us of what is worth seeking in art and elsewhere in life. Wittgenstein said: “The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.”³³ If the same

holds for philosophical concepts, that of aesthetic experience should not go unemployed.

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1. One reason for my interest in this concept is its important role in my pragmatist aesthetics. See Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), especially chap. 2.

2. I also see Joseph Margolis and Richard Rorty as major figures in the aesthetic tradition that shapes my work, but their theories are not so central to the topic of this paper.

3. See Arthur C. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 13; henceforth referred to as PD. I shall also be using the following abbreviations in referring to other works of Danto, Beardsley, Dewey, and Goodman: Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981): TC; Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958): A, and *The Aesthetic Point of View*, (Cornell University Press, 1982): APV; John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1987): AE; Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968): LA, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978): WW, and *Of Mind and Other Matters* (Harvard University Press, 1984): OMM.

4. See, for example, the account by the renowned Polish historian of aesthetics, W. Tatarkiewicz in his *A History of Six Ideas* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1980), pp. 310–338.

5. See David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 234; and Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 41–42.

6. See George Dickie, "Beardsley's Phantom Aesthetic Experience," *Journal of Philosophy* 62 (1965): 129–136. Eddy Zemach also argues that there is no such thing as the aesthetic experience in his (Hebrew) book, *Aesthetics* (Tel Aviv University Press, 1976), pp. 42–53.

7. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 474, 476; henceforth AT.

8. Though he advocates *Erfahrung* over *Erlebnis*, Benjamin is critical of the neo-Kantian and positivist notion of *Erfahrung* as being too narrowly rationalistic and thin. My compressed account of Benjamin is based on his essays "The Storyteller," "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." All these texts are found in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1968). Fuller discussions of Benjamin's theme of experience can be found in Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (Columbia University Press, 1982), and in Martin Jay, "Experience

Without a Subject: Walter Benjamin and the Novel," *New Formations* 20 (1993): 145–155.

9. Challenging the idea that art is something for detached, immediate "appreciation and enjoyment," Heidegger insists that "art is by nature ... a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical." It therefore cannot be separated from the world of its truth-disclosure simply for the narrow goal of experienced pleasure. In this sense, Heidegger warns, "perhaps experience is the element in which art dies." See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 78, 79.

10. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 86–87; henceforth TM.

11. In highlighting the cognitive dimension of aesthetic experience, Gadamer writes: "What one experiences in a work of art and what one is directed towards is rather how true it is, i.e., to what extent one knows and recognizes something and oneself." The joy of aesthetic experience "is the joy of knowledge" (TM, pp. 101, 102).

12. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic," in *Analytic Aesthetics*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 147–160, citations from pp. 148, 150.

13. For more detailed argument of this point, see the chapter on "Beneath Interpretation" in *Pragmatist Aesthetics*. I develop the arguments further in *Sous l'interprétation* (Paris: L'éclat, 1994), and *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

14. Dewey thus sees aesthetic experience as central not only to art but to the philosophy of experience in general. "To esthetic experience," he therefore claims, "the philosopher must go to understand what experience is" (AE, p. 11).

15. Although I think this is obvious, there is an argument that denies it, asserting that our appreciation of natural beauty is entirely dependent on and constrained by our modern concept of fine art, as indeed is all our aesthetic experience. For a critique of this argument and a fuller discussion of Dewey's views, see *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, chaps. 1 and 2.

16. As Dewey later adds, "The experience is marked by a greater inclusiveness of all psychological factors than occurs in ordinary experiences, not by reduction of them to a single response" (AE, p. 259).

17. Even if we could effect this reclassification, Dewey's definition of art as aesthetic experience would remain problematic. For this experience is itself never clearly defined but instead asserted to be ultimately indefinable because of its essential immediacy; "it can," he says, "only be felt, that is, immediately experienced" (AE, p. 196). For more detailed critique of Dewey's definition of art as experience, see *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, chaps. 1 and 2.

18. Beardsley's precise list of defining characteristics of aesthetic experience changes slightly over the years, but almost all his accounts insist on the features I mention. Apart from his book *Aesthetics*, his most detailed treatments of aesthetic experience can be found in "Aesthetic Experience Regained" and "Aesthetic Experience," both reprinted in APV (pp. 77–92, 285–297).

19. See Dickie's "Beardsley's Phantom Aesthetic Experience," and his *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Cornell University Press, 1974).

20. Beardsley himself cites Maslow's psychological re-

search into peak experiences (APV, p. 85). See A. H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Princeton University Press, 1962). Use of the notion of experience and its characterization in terms of coherence and intensity is also found in more contemporary experimental psychology. For one example, see the influential work of Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

21. For a vigorous defense of the centrality of consciousness, see John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (MIT Press, 1992). More specifically, I defend the notion of immediate experience against charges that it is cognitively empty and entails commitment to foundationalism's myth of the given; see Richard Shusterman, "Dewey on Experience," *Philosophical Forum* 26 (1994): 127–148; and the chapter on somatic experience in *Practicing Philosophy*, chap. 6.

22. See Joel Kupperman, "Art and Aesthetic Experience," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975), and Beardsley's response in APV, p. 296.

23. There is also the problem that aesthetic experience in itself is too elusive, ineffable, subjectively variable, and immeasurable in magnitude to provide sufficient grounds for justifying particular evaluative verdicts. Thus, when it came to actual critical practice, Beardsley recognized that one had to demonstrate the unity, complexity, and intensity of the actual work, not of its experience. However, he held that demonstration of the former could allow inference of capacity for the latter, and it was the latter (i.e., experience) that constituted actual aesthetic value.

24. Since these characteristics make no reference to phenomenological consciousness, Goodman's concept of aesthetic experience can be characterized as semantic rather than phenomenological. Like Dewey and Beardsley, Goodman insists on the dynamic nature of aesthetic experience, but he does not emphasize, as they do, the passive aspect in which one surrenders oneself to the work. This idea may be too suggestive of subjectivity and affect for Goodman. But the etymology of "experience" suggests the peril of undergoing something, and it is perhaps not too fanciful to note that some notion of submission is even hinted at by the "under" in the word "understanding." For more on this, see note 30.

25. See *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, chap. 5.

26. T. S. Eliot, "The Frontiers of Poetry," in *Of Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber, 1957), p. 115. Eliot adds that this means "enjoying it to the right degree and in the right way, relative to other poems. ... It should hardly be necessary to add that this implies one *shouldn't* enjoy bad poems—unless their badness is of a sort that appeals to our sense of humour." For a detailed account of Eliot's theory of literary understanding, see Richard Shusterman, *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (Columbia University Press, 1988), chaps. 5 and 6.

27. A growing number of sociobiologists further maintain that the gratifications of aesthetic experience not only explain art's emergence and staying power but also help ac-

count for the survival of humanity itself. Such experiences, says the Oxford anatomist J. Z. Young, "have the most central of biological functions—of insisting that life be worthwhile, which, after all, is the final guarantee of its continuance." J. Z. Young, *An Introduction to the Study of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 38. A more recent and detailed case for the evolutionary value of art and its affective experience can be found in Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (New York: Free Press, 1992). See also Nathan Kogan, "Aesthetics and Its Origins: Some Psychobiological and Evolutionary Considerations," *Social Research* 61 (1994): 139–165.

28. The idea that aesthetic experience fails miserably at formally defining art's extension but nonetheless is essential for understanding art's point and value is developed in more detail in my *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, chaps. 1 and 2. I emphasize there (and the point bears repeating) that art's valuable uses go far beyond the creation of aesthetic experience. I should also note that Richard Wollheim draws a somewhat similar distinction between a concept's "conditions of application" and its background "assumptions of applicability" in "Danto's Gallery of Indiscernibles," in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. Mark Rollins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 28–38.

29. See "Painting by Numbers: The Search for a People's Art," in *The Nation*, March 14, 1994, pp. 334–348, particularly questions 68 and 70, which relate to art's coherence and ability to "make us happy."

30. These values include not only heightened, positive affect but an enhanced appreciation of the nonconceptual and the sensual. Another possible value of aesthetic experience comes from its making us aware, through its power to transport us, of the benefits that can be derived by opening or submitting oneself to things typically seen as mere objects of our domination and use. This holds, of course, as much for the experience of nature as well as art, and it bespeaks of the transformational role of experience in which, as Dewey insisted, we are subjects as well as agents, undergoing as well as acting. Heidegger makes a similar point: "To undergo an experience of something ... means that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us." Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 57.

31. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 10–16. For a specific study of the problematics of embodied, affective aesthetic experience and the new media, see Richard Shusterman, "Soma und Medien," *Kunstforum International* 132 (1996): 210–215.

32. See Philip K. Dick, *Blade Runner* (originally, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*) (Ballantine: New York, 1982).

33. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), § 127.