

## Book Reviews

**George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.**

The argument against George Steiner was given eloquent airing by James Woods back in 1996, written in response to the publication of *No Passion Spent*, Steiner's selected essays. (And since *Grammars of Creation* also serves as a condensed summation of Steiner's intellectual career, Woods's argument holds for both.) It was a stinging attack, in which Woods adopted a tone of wounded democratic pride in the face of Steiner's Eurocentricity (with its concomitant anti-Americanism and totalitarian flirtation). Woods was sprightly and fleet as he danced on the tracks of Steiner's juggernaut progress, quoting approvingly Nabokov's dismissal of Steiner's essays as 'built on solid abstractions and opaque generalisations'.

Then, I couldn't help but agree with Woods; now, I'm not so sure. *Grammars of Creation*, as the *summa* of Steiner's various provocations, reveals that his virtues have overgrown his vices. The 'melodrama of transcendence' that Woods isolates as Steiner's central sin has proven more remarkable and enduring than the performances of the post-structuralists whose decay has granted such weird, marvellous shape to Steiner's rhetorical armature.

A note, first, about the origin of these essays as the Gifford Lectures for 1990, delivered at the University of Glasgow: the diminution in expressive range occasioned by the movement from speech to text is as old as the book itself. Stylistic tics or eccentricities forgiven and even relished in the spoken word appear crude in print. Suspecting that the dour earnestness of ink on paper might be doing Steiner a disservice, I downloaded audio files culled from these lectures. They were immensely telling. His voice is incantatory, the vehicle of an adroit, consciously wielded irony, laid in as ballast against his wilder flights of recondite exuberance. A just reader would, I hope, listen for these mitigating tones of self-irony, whose presence the text can only suggest.

The Gifford lectureships were originally established to 'promote and diffuse the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term — in other words, the knowledge of God'. Steiner's lectures, on the other hand, form a theological negative: provisional, decentred, and fragmentary; primarily concerned with the rigours and

responsibilities attending on God's absence rather than with those duties imposed by Her presence. And yet he starts, biblically enough, with beginnings:

The 'Word' that was in the 'beginning', for the pre-Socratics as well as for St. John, comprised a generative, dynamic eternity out of which time could spring forward, a present indicative of 'to be' pregnant (in an almost material sense) with 'shall' and 'will'. Future tenses are an idiom of the messianic.

Steiner's diagnosis of the present will be familiar: that of an era suffering core tiredness — a time of ontological weariness inimical to the creation of art. If God is 'in the grammar', he submits, the grammatology of atheism lacks a future tense. This means the end of the concept we know as hope, anchored as it is in eschatology. The end result? A rupture in the stability of linguistic structures. 'Take away energising anticipation, the luminous imperative of waiting', he writes, 'and these tenses will be end-stopped':

'Life-expectancy' is, then, no longer messianic-utopian, but an actuarial statistic. Such pressures on the incipience of meaning and communication in the individual and communal sub-conscious, on the means of articulate speech, are gradual. . . . But just as the almost imperceptible tectonic movements in the depths of the earth sever and re-shape continents, so the forces emanating from the eclipse of the messianic will find manifest expression. Grammars of nihilism flicker, as it were, on the horizon.

Sobering stuff, this, with the lectures proceeding as variations upon the theme of creation; its theological roots, present decline, and latter prominence as the shared province of artist and God. This means covering some old ground. If the artwork constitutes a 'second' creation, then the artist is God at second-hand, or, in more ambitious guises, a pretender to the throne. Thus, the analogous link between artist and God that is our Platonic inheritance, an idea whose durability is reflected in its ongoing appeal, from Classical antiquity to the Renaissance — up to its present incarnation emerging from the nexus of Enlightenment aesthetics and full-blown Romanticism. Steiner also traces the crucial difference between classical and modern versions of this analogy. Where Plato's *Demiourgos* (the very word means 'craftsman') moulds, cuts, splices, forges the raw material spilling out of chaos', creating ideal forms from the flux, where the artist-creator mimes through the artwork the divine gesture of 'bodying forth', the Judeo-Christian God performs an act of unique extremity. More than

simply moulding the universe from prior material — mere cosmic flotsam and jetsam — the artist creates it *ex nihilo*. Here, 'no pre-existent materiality, be it the wild vacancy of chaos, is conceivable'.

We know the end of the story, also: from the Romantic era onward, this notion of emergence 'from nothing' was applied to the artwork as an aesthetic Genesis-myth. And as an explanation for the more splendid labours of the imagination it served as a justification, an imperative — a spur to greater creative ambitiousness. It was the means by which Romantic artists freed themselves from the bonds of classical models, too, with poets, rather than obeying those laws handed down from above, enacting their own legislation, for their own 'governments of the tongue'. This, Steiner concludes, was a brave, ingenious, and ultimately quixotic strategy. No artist is ever entirely free of the tug of the real or the weight of the past: 'In respect of impurity, of invasive realism, language is totally vulnerable. No immaculateness is possible'. Language, freighted as it is with historical meaning, inevitably defeats the poet's most heroic efforts to — in the Mallarméan formulation — 'cleanse the words of the tribe'.

Woods grudgingly admits that Steiner is more philosophically literate than most critics, 'competently dragging the heavy iron of the Germanic tradition into his corner whenever he can'. And certainly his ideas about poetry bear the imprint of Schopenhauer in holding that the purpose of art is to free us from the terrible drudgery of the mundane, the everyday. But such a vision of art presupposes hierarchy; a notion which might satisfy Steiner's taxonomical fetish but is anathema to the avowedly relativistic present. This difference is compounded by Steiner's restricting his interest to the upper rungs of the ladder, his exultation in lyric poetry, music and mathematics, emerging from a certainty that such higher efforts are a justification or apology for otherwise bestial humankind.

Steiner, to be sure, is never more vulgar than when asserting the primacy of the great over the merely good. I'm thinking of Auden again, when he suggested that only a minor talent could be a perfect gentleman; that a major talent was always a bit of a cad. 'Now and again' he suggested, 'an exquisite minor work can make a master feel thoroughly ashamed of himself'. In this refusal to countenance the existence of a permeable membrane between high and low, lies the better part of the frustration Steiner inspires in the reader. He sees no contradiction in subjecting the *Commedia* to a penetrating re-reading (during which he offers Dante on a silver platter as the greatest of all poets, a touchstone of Western literature) while the reader is aware, all along, that it is a work *De vulgari eloquentia*. It is intriguing to

imagine Steiner as Dante's contemporary: not to write in Latin! The horror!

'Great' literature has gained its bulk by feeding upon the plankton of popular culture. Acknowledging this in no way diminishes the value of the work. Think of *Lolita* without the advertising culture of mid-century America; *Don Quixote* without the romances of the day. But here, again, from vice has arisen an exemplary virtue: the drawing of new connections between disparate works. By wrenching the novel, poem, tragedy free from its social-historical context, Steiner isolates and makes manifest the raw materials of the creative act. This is a worthy task for any critic, and these lectures in their brevity reveal this intention with a greater topographical coherence than in his more discrete texts. What is it that this interrelation reveals? 'Absolute literature', a term defined with insight and precision by Roberto Calasso during his recent Weidenfeld lectures, comes closest to expressing Steiner's signal virtue:

it is precisely this process of osmotic transmission, from one work to the next, that, whenever the rash gesture that is absolute literature begins to take shape, renders every other connotation, whether of school, national tradition, or historical moment, inconsistent and secondary. The writers who in some way engage in that bold gesture will thus tend to form a sort of communion of saints, where the same fluid circulates from work to work, and each calls to the other from an affinity that is far stronger than any that might tie them to their time, or some trend — even to their own physiology and taste.

Woods writes of Steiner that he has 'sensations rather than arguments'. Perhaps this is true. But this supposed limitation has provided Professor Steiner with perfect literary pitch. He knows that literature is not to be identified by adherence to theory; it will be marked by a peculiar vibration, a luminous quality which resists appropriation. This kind of literature is sufficient unto itself, he has argued, rather than being merely, destructively, self-reverential.

GEORDIE WILLIAMSON

**Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*, The A.W.Mellon Lectures on the Fine Arts 1995, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.**

'concerning the end of art' (p. xiii)  
 'there is no longer a pale of history' (p. xiii)  
 'perfect aesthetic entropy' (p. 12).

*The subtitle.* For Hegel, whose Absolute Spirit gets some four or five mentions (pp. 29, 124, 188, 105, 195), the art of peoples without the pale of history (as seen from Jena) was not art. Now that since the late 1960s (cf. pp. 25, 26, & note the Kojève reference, pp. 32-33) there is no more [art-]history, all art — if there be any — is beyond the pale (cf. pp. xiii, 9; title of chapter 6).

*Beyond the Pale* was the title of the Aboriginal art exhibition at the last Adelaide Festival, so it is not only Sean Scully (*Irish-American*) who can relish the collapse of the Pale, but so can Australia's first international art movement. (See *Beyond the Pale*, A. G. South Australia 2000, and *Australia's First International Art Movement*, Boulter & Hodges, Utopia Art, Sydney, 1990.) And, if we don't watch out, this art we'll read as MoMA taught us (pp. 10, 111, 114, 202).

*The title.* The phrase 'the end of art', to which Danto himself refers as 'this doubtless incendiary expression' (p. xv), invokes the comparable phrase, 'the end of cookery'. After this, what? *crudités*? kickshaws at every meal? classic cuisine at only the *grand restaurants/musées*? Whether this joke hits off Danto's elegant set of essays, the reader of them must discover for herself.

Early on, Danto draws the sting of his key phrase about the 'end': 'I . . . in no sense [claim] that art [is] going to *stop being made*' (p. 25). The thesis of 'the end' does not entail THE END, but (as Cole Porter put it) 'anything goes'.

It's crucial that 'the end of art' (an expression which occurs upwards of seventeen times) declines by about p. 114 into 'the end of *art-history*', and might always have been so written, with hyphen. Not that art-history for Danto is what university departments teach, i.e. chronicle, workshop practice, provenancing etc. etc., but Art-History, where art has been governed by almost-Grand Narratives, notably two: Vasari's and Greenberg's. These have now run out of time; the perfection of mimetic representation, which Vasari did not live to see (see the 'brown walls' of the Art Gallery of NSW, or Melbourne's Chlõe) was over-accomplished by around 1880 and

modernism, as a consequence, began. Greenberg's *narrative* — in which 'the subject of painting is painting' and painters' 3D space is replaced by the flatness of a flat medium and only canvas staining remains legitimate — this is now over.

Greenberg could not deal with Pop Art and it dealt him the deadliest of blows, reducing him to sarcastic silence. Of *pop* Danto writes:

I subscribe to a narrative of history of modern art in which pop plays *the philosophically central role*. In my narrative, pop marked the end of the great narrative of Western art by *bringing to self-consciousness the truth of art* (p.122, italics added).

Danto, under Hegel's spell, sees art as not serving the Grand Narrative of *mimesis* (Pliny, Vasari, Academic Art), or the Greenbergian Narrative of an inexorable movement from mere abstraction to — ultimately — purity. Rather, Danto sees art as bound to the *telos* of uncovering 'philosophical truth' (p.122), i.e. the truth about itself. Danto, for reasons we cannot go into here, in his elegant account of Greenberg, fails to see the full tension between Greenberg's particular historicism and his Kantian notion of Art-as-Critical. Danto's own historicism — *à la* Hegel — leads him, beyond Greenberg's purism, to art's Sphinx riddle: 'What makes the difference between an artwork and something which is not an artwork *if in fact they look exactly alike?*' (p.125, italics added).

Danto's thought in *After the End* is haunted by Warhol's *Brillo Box*, and the illustration which leads off chapter 1 is *Not Andy Warhol (Brillo Box)*, by Mike Bidlo, which by being meta makes Danto's crucial question go meta. (Into this quasi-Duchampian 'meta' we need not go here.) See the Index under '*Brillo Box*'.) When Danto encountered Warhol's *Brillo Box*, this something-one-knows-not-what in the (then contested) field of works of art raised talk about art from the level of the two Grand Narratives which Danto privileges to the plane of the philosophy-seminar question above. Danto goes on, on the page just cited: 'It seems to me now that the philosophical problem of art had been clarified from within the history of art, *that history had come to an end*' (p.125, italics added; cf. also p.105; for a set of instants with Hegel, see pp. 14, 16, 31, [33 *freedom*, cf. also p.45] 36, 66, 68, 77, 95, 113, 122, 124, 135, 147-48, 169, 188, 194, 199, 217). In the spirit of a certain (pre-post-historical) Cambridge Positivist one comments, 'Say that if you want to, but smile as you do so'. Danto has already grinned at least, in a slightly different context:

Let me somewhat self-consciously and somewhat sheepishly invoke the heavy metaphysical conceit that Painting with a capital *P*, or Art with a capital *A* exists on a plane with Spirit or *Geist* in the old Hegelian narratives (p.105).

On the whole, Danto's use of Hegel lacks the full Teutonic heaviness, but one suspects a logically odd pun on *S*/spirit in at least one crux:

we can imagine two red squares, one executed in the spirit of Kierkegaardian jokes [about an all-over-red painting said to depict the . . . Red Sea after the Israelites had crossed, etc.], and one in the spirit of Suprematism, which look enough alike that the temptation would be to place them in the same position on the style matrix [see p.163], but which actually have very different stylistic attributes, not to speak of different interpretations and meanings (p.167).

The hovering *s*/Spirit word might delight Emponians while troubling logicians. There may be such a crux, too, at p. 5. This '*s*/*S*' thing is not a mere quibble since, if History has stopped, Absolute Spirit may for all one knows have abdicated, there being nothing left worth marching through. But — essentially — spirit (in one small-letter sense) remains.

But what is the difference between:

- (a) a Brillo Box in the supermarket, and
- (b) *Brillo Box*, in the art-market?

('The mind comes to ask', p.169; 'few works have meant as much to me as Warhol's *Brillo Box*', p.178.) The *spirit* in which (b) was made is the difference. Danto says (p. xviii) that he gave the eleven insightful and irritating lectures for the sake of the eleventh, 'The Modalities of History'. In this essay he reveals (among other things) his notion of the *essence* of art (*essentialism* — see, e.g., pp. 69, 95, and the second line of chapter 11). Danto claims to be at once an essentialist and an historicist. In chapter 10, Danto had observed, *à propos* a popular-art candyworkers' art show in which candy was manufactured, exhibited and contexted as art: 'A candy bar that is a work of art need not be some especially good candy bar. It just has to be a candy bar *produced with the intention that it be art*' (p.85, italics added). This intention is — sufficiently nuanced — the essence. And intention → intension. 'Art works are embodied meanings' (p.195), or intensions. The spirit for such embodiment is the necessary (if not

sufficient?) condition of *a*'s being an art work. Perhaps the meatiest part of Danto's book is this:

The difference, philosophically, between an institutionalist like Dickie and myself is not that I was essentialist and he was not, but that I felt that the decisions of the art world in constituting something a work of art, required a class of reasons to keep the decisions from being merely fiat or arbitrary will (p.195).

In this journal I have suggested that Duchamp (whom Danto does not treat as as central as Warhol) made 'art', not by 'fiat' but by performative utterance. However, Danto's pair — 'reasons' rather than 'fiats' — will do very well. He goes on:

And in truth I felt that according the status of art to *Brillo Box* and to *Fountain* was less a matter of declaration than of discovery. The experts really were experts in the same way in which astronomers are experts on whether something is a star. They saw that these works had meanings which their indiscernible counterparts lacked, and they saw as well the way these works embodied those meanings. These were works simply made for the end of art inasmuch as there was very little to them in terms of sensuous presentation, and a sufficient degree of what Hegel terms 'judgment' to license the admittedly somewhat reckless claim I sometimes made that art had nearly turned into philosophy.

There is a further consideration bearing on the institutional account, and which has played a considerable role in my thinking about art, namely, that an object precisely (or precisely enough) like one accorded the status of artwork in 1969 could not have been accorded that status in 1865 or 1765. The concept of art, as essentialist, is timeless. But the extension of the term is historically indexed — it really is as if the essence reveals itself through history, which is part of what Wölfflin may be taken to have implied in saying, 'Not everything is possible at all times, and certain thoughts can only be thought at certain stages of the development'. History belongs to the extension rather than the intention of the concept of art, and, again, with the notable exception of Hegel, virtually no philosophers have taken seriously the historical dimension of art (pp.195-96).

This is both insightful and useful, especially as 'reasons' entail 'experts'. The philosophical seminar has been fruitful. A little later Danto writes:

Had he not taken over his colleague Popper's scorn for Hegel, [Gombrich] might have seen that both content and means of



presentation are themselves historical concepts, though the faculty of the mind to which they answer is not perception but . . . 'judgment'. And in view of the historical constraints on the two, let us call them Hegelian conditions, *Fountain* (which in any case was epicyclical on the history of plumbing) and *Brillo Box* (which alludes to the history of manufacture not to mention the history of standards of domestic cleanliness) could not have been works of art at any earlier moment. (We might define their historical moment as any time in which they could have been works of art.) (p. 196).

The parenthesis has the look of circularity, but let that pass. A page later Danto writes:

The conjunction of essentialism and historicism helps define the present moment in the visual arts. As we seek to grasp the essence of art – or to speak less portentously of an adequate philosophical definition of art – our task is immensely facilitated by the recognition that the extension of the term 'work of art' is now altogether open, so that in effect we live in a time when everything is possible for artists, when in the phrase I have taken over from Hegel, there is no longer a 'pale of history'. What are we now to say in response to Heinrich Wölfflin's claim, cited more than once in this text, that not everything is possible at every time? 'Every artist', he specifies, 'finds certain visual possibilities before him, to which he is bound', so that 'even the most original talent cannot proceed beyond certain links which are fixed for it by the date of its birth'. Surely this must be as true of artists born into a pluralistic art world, and for whom everything is possible, as for artists born into the art world of Periclean Athens or the Florence of the Medicis. One does not escape the constraints of history by entering the post-historical period. So in whatever way it is true of the post-historical period in which we find ourselves that everything is possible, this must be consistent with Wölfflin's thought that not everything is possible. The gamey whiff of contradiction must be dispelled by making distinctions between the everything that is possible, and the everything that is not. And that in part is the task of this last chapter (p. 188).

The 'gamey whiff of contradiction' shares the perfumed air with the whiff of the possibility that all this — true and useful as it undoubtedly is — might be done with a lesser kind of History than Hegel's: that is, within a sense of 'one damn thing after another', tidied up a bit; or by the stuff in (mere) Art History departments (see pp. 69, 165, 172, 178-79, 197-98). Even post-historic art still needs its local history, and it may be that a lot of local history is all we have ever had, or can have.

The most exciting part of Danto's chapter 11 to a prehistoric, pre-post-historic Positivist like myself is his account of the 'form of life' (see pp. 200 ff.), and the form[s] of activity which generated *America's Most Wanted*, a kitsch-(but-why-not) landscape with a/historical figures, made by Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid (illus. p. 214), painted in response to questionnaires put to people in general about what they liked (expected?) in works of art. These enquiries went far beyond the 1970s 'The General Public Judges Modern Art' project of the Toronto Art Gallery, in which mimesis and Aristotle *Poetics 4* came out tops (*UNESCO Courier*, March 1971); and the Komar/Melamid enquiry issued, not in mere avowed preferences, but in preferences satisfied. *America's Most Wanted* is not 'a masterpiece', but the whole generative shebang was (p.116). The manipulation of the 'a priori aesthetic universal' (p. 213) thrown up by questionnaires supplies an example from which at least part of the essence of PoMo may be inferred. Danto writes *à propos* this and other (empirical) examples, 'The true heroes of the post-historical period [*period?*] are artists who are masters of every style without having a painterly style at all' (p. 217). They do not 'use' pre-post-historical styles, but 'mention' them (pp. 205 ff.). Nice (see, for example, Lot 89 in *26/08/2001 Christie's Contemporary Sydney* catalogue, Julia Ciccarone, *Struggle to Define*, a von Guérard waterfall 1/8 concealed by a red velvet curtain). Pop was — *perhaps* — that which showed that 'Anything can be art' and 'inaugurates the greatest era of freedom that art has ever known' (pp. 144, 122), is transfigurational (p. 125), and brings 'to self-consciousness the philosophical truth of art' (p. 122). Perhaps it's 'embodied' *Fay ce que voudras* (pp. xiv, 44-45, 123, 126, 107, etc.) — and now that this secret of freedom is out, PoMo is the realization of that earlier realization. But, as ever, 'what you see is what you get'. And if you don't get it, you need to 'see' behind the visual (to the questionnaire, catalogue, programme, and so on). It's not, now, to History that we must look, but to *Gerede*, which for all its ominous German capital, means 'gossip'. Vasari was as much a gossip, after all, as he was a Grand Narrator. Greenberg, in the few conversations I had with him, was an ardent historicist ('manifest destiny' stuff), but his history stopped before Danto says Hegel's did. Danto wins (but see pp. 165, 169, 187-89, 197-98, etc.).

Might not there be future Pretenders to the title of Grand Narrator? Danto reckons the future to be unimaginable (chapter 7), so *don't worry*. The Wicked Witch is *dead!* "We don't need another narrative" (Barbara Kruger, see p.132).

For all the irony of this review, the recommendation to *read this book!* is offered in utter sincerity. It's irritating, yes, but it is full of clear-sighted observation and deep reflection.

PATRICK HUTCHINGS

**Philip Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Pure Experiences*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1998.**

Since the late 'eighties, Philip Fisher has emerged as a distinctively American *kulturkritik*. Indeed, he has been claiming of late that it is the radical task of the United States to forge ever new modes of representation, be it culturally or socially, commercially or technologically. Nowhere, according to Fisher in *Still the New World* (1999), is the 'one permanent revolution, that of competitive technological capitalism' better demonstrated than in the poetry, painting, and novels of radical modernity that is America. At the same time, Fisher is mindful of the way in which our cultural institutions, particularly museums, remove art works from their original contexts not only from their place amongst objects with which they were initially grouped, but also from the multitude of attitudes and activities by means of which they were regarded. Instead, so Fisher contends in *Making and Effacing Art* (1991), past works are fundamentally re-assembled in order to locate them stylistically, if not temporally, with other works. By so doing, museums nowadays can be construed as the specific destination of contemporary and future artworks; a destination with which modern painting — notably that of Jasper Johns and Frank Stella — has engaged in a teasing dialogue.

However, the temptation to plot Fisher's revival of interest in the notion of the wondrous against this larger background of concerns shall be resisted in this critical review. Instead, let us depict something of the terrain of *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Pure Experiences*. Carefully focusing our attention upon the 'fragile' notion of making sense or becoming intelligible, as distinct from the nature of knowing or certainty itself, intimates that the work under review is, in its author's terms, an 'antiphilosophical project' (pp. 8, 9). Perhaps it is rhetorically 'antiphilosophical' in so far as Fisher preys upon traditional appeals to the sublime in aesthetic enquiry and, more pointedly, deletes Kant entirely from discussion.

Nonetheless, Fisher appears to begin conventionally enough when he seizes upon Socrates' assertion in the *Theaetetus* (155d1-5) that the feeling of wonder is the only point at which philosophy properly begins. But how are we to understand the concept of wonder? Is it applicable to states of astonishment or amazement, admiration or awe, fascination or sorcery, stupor or stupefaction, and so forth? Is our experience of it to be described as absorbed or enthralled, bewildered or flabbergasted, dumfounded or dazzled, startled or surprised, and so on? Should we construe 'wonder' adjectivally or nominally so to speak — as 'How wondrous!' or as 'What a wonder!' respectively? Or, would it be better countenanced as a verb — 'to wonder why' (or, presumably, 'whether . . . which . . . when . . . how . . . what . . . at' and so on)? Fisher deflects such questions by briefly glossing some of these possibilities with the observation that the English expression 'to wonder if' preserves both the exclamatory and the interrogative uses of the term (p. 11).

Experience of wonderment, we are urged, deserves as much attention as is traditionally given to experience of sublimity. It, too, functions as a test-case not only of the powerful role of the rare or the uncommon within aesthetic experience, but also of what might be called 'intellectual seeing', the intersection of sensation and thought. For Fisher, however, the sublime seems to function as an 'aestheticization of fear' which, 'with its epistemological companion, fixed attention or obsession', reached its historical peak in the 'fatigued' art of the 'old world' of Europe (pp. 2, 38-39, 5). By contrast, he contends, the wondrous functions as an 'aestheticization of delight' which dramatically emerged with the 'ever new continents of technique and materials' deployed by architecture and painting 'especially . . . since 1873, the founding moment of Impressionism' (pp. 2, 6, 3). Fisher contends that, ever since the advent of a Louis Sullivan and a Claude Monet, the wondrous effect of 'our first experiences of never before used materials is denied to writing' (p. 6), a point that begins, as we shall discover, a curious sub-theme of *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Pure Experiences*.

Yet, in seemingly disparate scientific, mathematical, and artistic cases of wonder lies the persistent characteristic of 'a slow unfolding of attention and questioning [which] takes place in the presence of the work' or phenomenon (pp. 6-7); a characteristic whose 'essence', in other words, 'is the play of the mind over the details of the object itself' (p. 39). Contrary to those upholding the 'romantic' conception that explanation abolishes wonderment, Fisher constantly maintains that there is a 'poetics of thought' which preserves wonder when explanation is found in successive geometric or visual

conceptualisations of a conundrum. For that reason, continues Fisher, 'memory and narrative are antagonistic to an aesthetics of wonder' (p. 6). Nor should wonderment be identified with the conception of estrangement, a conception along with that of sublimity that Fisher ties to the dominant, but misguided 'romantic' idiom of so much of European artistic practice.

Having thus mapped the conceptual territory of the wondrous, Fisher then pursues the history of that wonder of nature, the rainbow, largely in the work of Descartes; that wonder of mathematics, the doubled square, in Plato's *Meno*; and, finally, wonderment in the presence of two large, abstract artworks by Edwin Parker 'Cy' Twombly. Before sketching some salient points arising from his discussion of Twombly, it is worth noting a number of assumptions underlying Fisher's extensive account of the rainbow, 'a central instance of the aesthetics of wonder' (p. 33), predominantly drawn from that furnished by Carl Boyer in *The Rainbow* (1987). First of all, to enter a state of wonderment, its object must be sudden and unexpected; its occurrence only emerges with 'the moment of first seeing'; and its experience derives from 'the visual presence of the whole state or object' (p. 21). To that extent, anything which unfolds in time, which is sequentially or narratively conveyed, is, on Fisher's account, precluded from being an object of wonder. Secondly, the experience of wonder involves 'subjectivity in a unique way' (p. 36). Indeed, the very appearance of a rainbow is only possible because of the angle between rays of light, water droplets, and the observer to the point that, were there no human observers, there would be no rainbows. To recognise the convergence of angles and points of view involved in diagrammatic forms of its visual representation is dependent upon our imaginative capacity to 'step out of ourselves and picture ourselves having an experience' (p. 123). Thirdly, to account for the psychology of wonder and its interaction with thought or cognition, we ought to adhere to Descartes' later conception of psychology in *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649).

Readers may recall how wonder (*l'admiration*) is declared by Descartes to be 'the first of all the passions' (part 2, art. 53). Being 'a sudden surprise of the soul' causes wonder 'to consider with attention the objects which seem to it rare and extraordinary' (part 2, art. 70). It is the peculiar function of wonder to intensify our other primitive passions or the subspecies of them since, without such an interaction, wonder alone 'prevents our perceiving more of the object than the first face which is presented' and thereby precludes us from 'acquiring a more particular knowledge of it' (part 2, art. 73). Wonder, in this Cartesian scheme, 'causes us to learn and retain in our memory things

of which we were formerly ignorant' (part 2, art. 74). Conversely expressed, without wonder we would be condemned to ignorance, though, with an excess of wonder, we might equally and indiscriminately condemn ourselves to its diminution or simply fail to acquire further knowledge of the object that once arrested us (part 2, art. 78). Like Descartes, Fisher aligns this 'first of all passions' with sensation and imagination, that is, with the perceptual faculties of the mind that arise in response to the external world; unlike Descartes, however, Fisher is not pre-occupied with the interplay and control of wonder and the other passions, with the moral role the passions play. Whereas wonder without 'excess' does not have 'good or evil as its object', the end served by the passions as a whole 'consists alone in their fortifying and perpetuating in the soul thoughts which it is good it should preserve' (part 2, art. 73, 71 & 74). Perhaps it is for this kind of reason that Fisher concentrates upon the pleasurable effects of wonder at the expense of its terrifying ones.

After attempting to dissuade us of the efficacy of memory and recognition in encounters with new works of art, Fisher's concluding, seventh chapter centres upon how they involve 'the process of intelligibility, the path from wonder, surprise, a feeling of newness and attention-seizing freshness to curiosity, prolonged attention, satisfaction' (p. 149), the very process said to be evident in encounters with the geometric resolution of the rainbow and the doubling of the square. Two large canvases by Cy Twombly, *Untitled* (1970) and *Il Parnasso* (1964), act as Fisher's test-cases of 'radically new works . . . with which we are unfamiliar, which we cannot place in genres or patterns of knowledge' (p. 140). Again, as in the *mutatis mutandis* case of the rainbow and of the doubled square, Fisher portrays in mesmerising detail a first encounter at the New York Museum of Modern Art (unnamed) with the massive 1970 canvas — 405 x 640.3 cm of house paint and crayon — as follows:

To look at the work we have to think out the collision of two recognitions: what a painting is and what writing on a blackboard with chalk is. By opening gaps or unexpected features within these two recognitions the work directs us, after our initial surprise and wonder, to a controlled set of questions and details. We begin . . . from a classic state of wonder. We have never seen anything like this before. Its scale, simplicity, and loveliness, the elegance of the looping lines, its colorless beauty, strike us all at once. Its every detail is present for our first glance when we come across the work for the first time in a museum. Twombly's painting solicits a very precise and ordered attention, now to this, now to that, and it gives us a very clear path to intelligibility. . . . An inference pattern is set off

between the pair of recognitions, along with their details, that opens up the path to intelligibility (pp. 151-152).

For all its absorbing detail, his eloquent account from his 'horizon as a teacher' (p. 157) of the artistically 'innocent' or decontextualised individual making sense of Twombly seems to work at cross-purposes with some of the contentions of his previous chapters. The initial tension arises with the acknowledgement that contemporary art,

instead of renouncing the act of recognition, has redirected it away from tradition, the stock of art and genres of art that make up our past, and toward the immediate surrounding culture itself, which can, in the work of art, be alluded to, mentioned, mocked, celebrated, or even transfigured. These varieties of reference and recognition lead back to the familiar, but we find them now directed toward some shared memory from our everyday experience, not our knowledge of the history of art. Instead of a conversation with the tradition, we find a kind of intertextuality with everyday life (pp. 149-150).

Indeed, Fisher confesses that he rejected dealing with the work in the context of 'American art in the generation after Jackson Pollock' (p. 157). Two overt reasons are given. Firstly, Fisher wants to emphasize 'the primary and very democratic recognition on which this work is founded', namely, 'each person's memory of how a blackboard works in a schoolroom' (p. 157). Secondly, he believes that Twombly's painting 'does not depend on our creating a . . . type of history into which it neatly fits: use of line after Pollock' (p. 157).

Curiously, Fisher does not take any other kinds of context or response into account. Anecdotally, this reviewer's young daughter began to laugh on first sighting Twombly, convinced that it was drawn by an elephant. His wife immediately wondered, if it were not untitled or if it contained names, numbers or even fragmented utterances in the manner of other works by Twombly, whether we would change the way we look at and think of it or whether it would ever figure in the Museum in the first place. To the reviewer, though struck by the gigantic scale, two contexts were immediately foregrounded: that of other paintings and drawings by Twombly himself and those by his contemporaries and colleagues, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Indeed, for many readers of this journal let alone Fisher's book, encounters with Twombly may well be initially shaped by having seen photographic reproductions of works. Or again, some viewers may approach Twombly for the first time after having read the seminal essays, 'Non multa sed multum' and 'Sagesse de l'Art', published in 1979 by his most illustrious supporter, Roland

Barthes, but ignored here by Fisher. In sum, Fisher comes rather close to a purity of context and response that brute and institutional facts would seem to deny.

At the same time, much energy is devoted to re-assigning recognition and recollection, noting its apparent non-availability when first facing new or alien artistic practices for which 'we have no anecdote, no allegory, no clue to social purpose, subject, or proper aesthetic comportment' (p. 142). Fisher, whilst articulating what it is like to immerse oneself in the diversity of detail in Twombly's *Il Parnasso* (1964), asks, 'Does every act of seemingly naive description smuggle recognitions back in without admitting it?' (p. 168). His affirmative answer, however, is directed at opposing the rigidities of historically, psychologically, or even theologically weighted responses to artworks 'in which any set of traces or marks can be allegorized into our favorite narrative of the moment' (p. 169). In its place, we need 'more varied currents of implication' than the analogical or the allegorical tend to provide since what the path towards 'partial' intelligibility gives us is 'more like a feeling, after a period of time, of what we call knowing our way around the work, as we know our way around a city' (pp. 169, 175). It is for this reason that Fisher rejects any attempt at directly correlating Twombly with *Parnassus* (1510), one of Raphael's four wall frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican. It is not as if one were a 'coded translation' of the other because, Fisher believes, treating the Raphael as a 'source' ends in 'distracting explanation' (pp. 176 & 178). Rather, Fisher finds the two, for all their independence of materials and techniques, probing much the same theme, namely, 'the technical, physical mystery of his own art, painting, by means of a tribute to the rival art of poetry with its great masters Homer, Sappho, and Dante' (p. 178).

Why, to return to the theme of the contrast between the verbal and the visual arts, should Fisher take such pains with the matter of memory? From the onset, he argues that 'memory and narrative are antagonistic to an aesthetics of wonder' (p. 6). In terms of his Cartesian aesthetic, Fisher distinguishes memory and its attendant expectations from wonder in terms of the former being subject to the will and the latter being dependent upon 'the complete absence of expectation' (p. 21). Furthermore, memory is intrinsic to the 'arts of time--narration, dance, and music', none of which are 'present as a whole in an instant of time', so that wonder is at best 'replaced . . . by mere surprise, as in a twist of plot' and, at worst, 'ruled out' (p. 21). To those who would accuse Fisher of ignoring the narrative dimension of the visual arts, his concession is to claim that 'control over it has passed from the artist to the viewer' (p. 23). To those who would



accuse Fisher of ignoring the non-narrative verbal arts as found in the lyric genre, his counterclaim is to point at the 'syntactic and grammatical expectations' basic to lyric and narrative alike (p. 22).

Cast in slightly different terms, Fisher regards the visual as having a 'paratactic structure' — a listing of elements ('and . . . and . . . and . . .') — whereas the verbal is possessed of a 'hypotactic structure': a logical or causal connection amongst elements ('if . . . then . . .', 'because . . .', 'unless . . .', and so forth) which he identifies with narrative if not memory (p. 98). Only when writing approximates the visual in the form of an algebraic equation, a diagram, or a list of notes does it 'transfer the successive into the simultaneous' and do we 'push ourselves toward a more and more simultaneous presence of what had to be in the memory a successive series of facts' (pp. 131-132). Whilst memory, rooted in time, only allows two elements to be 'directly adjacent to each other', the visual enables a multiplicity of elements to bear this relationship (p. 132). The consequences of such an argument verge upon the bizarre. For example, how are we to construe Cy Twombly's *Discourses on Commodus* (1963)? In so far as this abstract work comprises nine large canvas panels — 204 x 134 cm each — which cannot be viewed simultaneously, are we to treat it narratively or sequentially and thus never wondrously? Conversely, how are we to construe Twombly's drawing, *Orpheus* (1975), with its four pencilled lines scrawled across the bottom:

Be ever dead in Eurydice, mount more singingly  
Mount more praisingly back into the pure relation  
fire, among the warning, he in the realm of [decline?],  
be a ringing glass that shivers even as it rings?

Can we only experience wonder with the non-verbal portion of the drawing, and only a modicum of mere surprise with the verbal? For those of us with more literary inclinations, the writings of a William Blake in *Songs of Experience* (1794) or a Guillaume Apollinaire in *Calligrammes* (1918) would raise much the same puzzlement. Nor can we so uncritically presume, as does Fisher, that reading is purely reducible to the sequential, let alone organised paratactically. Whether taken from the individual perspective of reader-response developed by a Wolfgang Iser in, say, *The Implied Reader* (1974) or from the communal perspective of contrastive rhetoric developed by a Robert Kaplan in, say, *The Anatomy of Rhetoric* (1972), the dynamics of reading literal and non-literal texts has been long understood to be as finely nuanced as Fisher suggests is the case with coming to know our way around a painting.

In so far as Fisher can be said to have resurrected a Cartesian aesthetic by which to capture the experience of natural and human artefacts and their transformation into objects of intelligibility, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Pure Experiences* constitutes a significant contribution to aesthetic enquiry. Yet nagging doubts remain over and above those already outlined. Perhaps they can be summarised in terms of the lack of engagement with aesthetic debate. To characterise wonderment as the gradual 'unfolding of attention and questioning' in the presence of an object, as 'the play of the mind over the details of the object itself' (pp. 6, 39), fails to differentiate it from Kant's conception of the beautiful. Indeed, Fisher's encounter with the paintings of Twombly comprising the last sixth of his book could arguably be interpreted as a practical exposition of the very tradition he scorns. So the suspicion remains: is this encounter not one which ultimately rehearses the fourfold characterisation of the aesthetic experience of beauty with which Kant concludes the first part of his *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (1793)?

R. A. GOODRICH

**Richard Harland, *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History*, London: Macmillan, 1999.**

'It must be a very big book', responded my mother when I told her I had a history of two and a half thousand years of Western literary theory to review. It's not, as it happens. Indeed, 240-odd pages of text (there are three pages of time charts and a glossary) seems barely enough space in which to name the names — all of them, incidentally, predictable in a way that, thanks to the cultural recuperations of the last twenty years, a history of literature itself could no longer afford to be. Conspectuses of any kind prove annoying to the specialist because they are bound to appear inadequate on the subject of his or her specialty, and that inadequacy has a way of looking like misrepresentation. A conspectus as summary as Harland's can be especially annoying. No theorist discussed (with one or two exceptions amongst the twentieth-century thinkers) can be allowed to change his or her mind; none has the space to allow for developments through trial or debate. And this is only exacerbated by the fact that, no matter how encyclopædic the aspiration, some individuals and periods and schools will be granted no recognition at all and some will be granted more than others. Classical literary theory (the Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, Demetrius, Cicero, Quintillian, Horace, Plotinus, Proclus,

Longinus) and Romantic literary theory (Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Kant, the Schlegels, Wordsworth, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Coleridge, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Keats, Shelley, Saint-Beuve, Emerson, Poe) are allowed twenty pages each, but so is structuralism and narratology (Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss, Propp, Greimas, Bremond, Todorov, Barthes). Putting aside the author's particular interests — 'No doubt my understanding is also affected by my career as a writer of SF/fantasy fiction', Harland warns in his Preface (p. xii) — in all, only ninety pages are dedicated to 'telling the story' (p. xi) of literary theory until the mid nineteenth century, with 150 pages given over to the last 150-odd years.

The ordering throughout is roughly chronological — with the single, unexplained exception of a discussion of Mme de Staël in the context of early twentieth-century feminist theory, itself a footnote to a chapter on twentieth-century phenomenology — and Harland's chapters are as unsurprising as his choice of individual critics: 'Literary Theory in Classical Times'; 'Literary Theory in the Middle Ages'; 'The Rise and Fall of Neoclassicism'; 'Romantic Literary Theory'; 'Social Theories of the Nineteenth Century'; 'Naturalism, Symbolism and Modernism'; 'New Developments in Theory [Nietzsche; Freud; Saussure; Marxism]'; '20th-Century Russian Theory'; 'Anglo-American Theory, 1900-60'; 'Phenomenological Criticism in France and Germany'; 'French Structuralism' — with an 'Epilogue: Into the Postmodernist Period'. Some theories are characterized according to period, you will note, some according to period and place, others according to a prevailing style or an artistic movement; some are discussed as 'apologies' for the poetry that prevailed in a particular period, others as manifestos designed to disrupt and reorient prevailing taste, creating the taste by which innovative poetry is to be understood and enjoyed. If this labelling appears arbitrary and the different genres in which the various theories are expounded appear only occasionally and perfunctorily acknowledged, that is a legacy of the older academic tradition within which Harland is working, and working (it has to be said) uncritically — for it is never Harland's business to challenge that tradition or to revise and reconfigure it any way.

Nor is it Harland's business critically to challenge the individual theories themselves. Nowhere are the literary and non-literary assumptions upon which the selected theories are based subject to more than cursory analysis. There simply isn't the space. Very occasionally, a theory will be characterized as failing to deliver the explanation or interpretative facility to which it aspires. 'Such practical disappointments are not uncommon with the narratologists generally' (p. 231) is Harland's polite way of saying that the

theoretically rigorous anatomizations of narrative offered by Greimas and others prove inadequate for the critical analysis of individual texts and offer little if any insight into the nature and function of literature.

A history it may be, moreover, but the whole issue of the historical or historicist dimension of theory, as of literature itself — while raised with regard to the thinking of Vico and Taine and Marx, of Gadamer and Jauss and (belatedly and unconnectedly) of de Staël — is never addressed independently or adopted in his accounts of the different theories. Or if it is adopted, as in the case of Modernism and some of the post-Romantic French theories that wear their ideology on their sleeves, it is never applied either rigorously or critically. In short, not only are we given no indication of the immediate culture wars out of which grew the many, many theories that began as acts of aggression and/or defence, but there is no attempt at the sort of historical and ideological accounting that we find in, say, Terry Eagleton's critical surveys of many of the same writers — in his *Literary Theory* (1983; 1996), in *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), *The Function of Criticism* (1984), and elsewhere. 'I have tried to avoid making personal judgements on the trends presented', writes Harland (p. xii). Again, even if he wanted to, there isn't the space. However conflicted the history of literary theory, neither conflict nor competition features in his account.

As it happens, Harland's own heritage is made apparent in his dedication to Jonathan Culler. The tradition in which he works is an entrepreneurial rather than a critical one; it is the tradition of making voluminous and/or abstruse material readily available to the undergraduate and non-specialist. It is a tradition of cultural midwifery that (with scholarly journals like this one) dates back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and can include texts like *Freud in 90 Minutes* or *Derrida for Beginners* along with many insightful, comprehensive, and sometimes creatively organized surveys. Judged in this tradition, Harland's 'introductory history' of Western literary theory is a useful text. He has, in short, Culler's art of making accessible and relevant what might strike the uninformed reader as impossibly difficult or remote and, though seriously inhibited by his determination to trawl through all of those he takes to be the major theorists, is a skilled expositor. And a lively one: only during his comparatively detailed paraphrase of Structuralism's intricate systematizing did I find his account start to drag.

One other thing worth remarking is the extent to which, just in the two years since the book was published, the sense of importance, not to say urgency, attaching to literary theory has disappeared — and with it the conviction that addressing literary theory directly and

comprehensively is the only honest way of dealing with something we are going to be doing anyway. As a survey of literary *theory* — of the attempt systematically to account for the nature and function of literature — it necessarily excludes some of the most interesting things that have been said about literature, but it also excludes some of the most interesting things that have been said against literary theory itself. Harland's account doesn't attempt to bring the story up to date for the simple reason that he has dealt with later theories at more length elsewhere — in *Superstructuralism* (1987) and *Beyond Superstructuralism* (1993). It is telling, however, that it is not only in this latest survey of literary theory that he has dealt only cautiously with historicist theories. He doesn't deal with them at any length in his earlier studies either. And yet few things are more susceptible to historicization than the whole phenomenon of 'Literary Theory' itself, the embattled rage for the evolution and teaching of literary theory within the academy in the closing years of the twentieth century. (Though perhaps I should add that, within the broad category of Literary Theory, no one theory is more susceptible to historicization than the New Historicism!)

WILLIAM CHRISTIE

**Richard Wollheim, *On The Emotions*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999.**

This book will be mined and criticized for years to come. I know of nothing of such scope and depth on the topic written by any philosopher. While Wollheim's view assumes a lot of psychoanalytic theory along the way, it is only some diminution of the interest of his view if you imagine it without that support. On the other hand, Wollheim distrusts the Russellian doctrine defining mental states as 'propositional attitudes' because it renders the unconscious implausible. His delinguisticizing of psychology in favour of its repsychologizing may be welcome for all sorts of reasons, not least of which being that the unconscious may have less articulate denizens, whose expression, if we imagine it as verbal, may be more like the language we find in some of Samuel Beckett. Indeed, the primary inhabitants of the unconscious may just be emotions. That is a view that some contemporary psychoanalysts have arrived at in their own ways.

Wollheim seeks a comprehensive theory of what emotions are. His enterprise is not a matter of conceptual analysis of the kind infused

with commitment to considerations of what we do and do not say or even of what it makes sense to say using the going vocabulary of our emotions. Nor does Wollheim defer to cognitive science or evolutionary psychology as an enterprise we must wait upon to resolve our concerns. Emotion is such a major component of our mental lives that reflection and philosophical argument is a good enough methodology. Not only that but philosophy ('applied', Wollheim calls it in this connection) is what has to be done if theses and discoveries arising out of more (supposedly scientific) approaches are to be assessed.

Wollheim does, as I indicated above, adhere to psychoanalysis, especially to the post-Freudian developments of that theory in the work of Melanie Klein. Elsewhere, Wollheim has commended Klein as the proper continuator of psychoanalysis. Wollheim is himself well known for his writing on psychoanalysis. In that writing, in sharp contrast to Wittgenstein's reading of Freud as a deviser of radically new concepts for talking about the mind, Wollheim reads Freud and psychoanalysis as (may one say 'only'?) an extension and deepening of common sense psychology.

Wollheim's philosophical psychology, following David Hume's, takes belief and desire as dual pillars of the edifice of the human mind. Emotion comes ('rides piggyback', as Wollheim puts it) into our lives via the satisfaction and frustration of desire. The reason for this privileging of belief and desire is simple enough. Our actions have to be explained by an appropriate mix of desire with instrumental belief as to how doing this or that will bring about the change in the world which desire aims for. Belief and desire join to produce intentional action.

Wollheim gives us an image to cling to as we work through the latest exposition of the theory of mind that he has offered us before, especially in *The Thread of Life* (Cambridge, Mass.; 1984). Our beliefs provide us with our map, desires with our targets and emotions with our orientation. Orientation is a matter of regions of the map (and the territory) being tinted or highlighted more or less than other regions. It helps the analogy for the reader to reflect on the experiences of looking at one of those maps with a 'you are here' on it and then studying the surroundings and where you seek to go. It helps further to keep in mind that we carry with us a plethora of aims, desires and purposes, some more or less in the forefront of consciousness, but some (who knows for sure which ones) hidden in the recesses of our unconscious (assuming there is such a place and that it is pretty much what psychoanalysis says it is).

Our minds are made up of mental states — the ingredients of our streams of consciousness — and of mental dispositions, which underlie the states and, one might say, cause the waves, eddies and swirls of the stream. Beliefs, desires and emotions should be understood primarily as dispositions. Feelings (which are states) such as pangs of grief or remorse, surges of anger or delight, are among the manifestations of emotion, not emotion itself. There are non-contingent relations between the disposition and some of its manifestations. Wollheim has a convincing set of views about the expression of emotion and the ties between emotions and certain of their manifestations. These ties are logical or internal, and not merely contingently causal. He follows and develops Wittgenstein's view (*Philosophical Investigations*, 536) on this matter, a view whereby the difficulty is sharply brought out of such a feat as supposing cogently that smiling should come to be related to anger as scowling is, and scowling come to be related to joy as smiling is.

While expressions are logically, not merely causally related to emotions, desires and actions are not constitutive of emotions in this way, as many theories have maintained. Wollheim accepts that the established usage of the idioms of fear connect fear with flight and avoidance. And he accepts that many emotions are thus semantically related to behavioural language. He holds that this is due to the frequency with which fear causes a desire to be elsewhere or to take protective steps, which has led to our language containing a word 'fear' that has such meanings. The relation is not like that between joy and smiling or anger and scowling; flight is not an expression of fear, it is action caused by fear, which often causes a desire to be safe from harm which, combined with a belief about what will lead to that, causes an act of flight or protection. But such a desire and belief may not occur. We can be paralysed with fear, our practical reasoning stymied completely.

It is worth a bit more here about just how striking a view this is. Wollheim is claiming, in effect, that many words in the language have meanings with a built-in contingent causal relation. Consider how a word like 'puncture' means not just the making of a hole in a tire or balloon, but a making of a hole that is the cause of deflation. It is a contingent regularity that the two distinct events of hole-producing and deflation are regularly conjoined. But our interest in tires and balloons remaining inflated in order that they behave as we want them to has led in the language to the convenience of a single word for this common conjunction of events. Hume observed this a long time ago and he observed as well that it misleads philosophers into thinking they have

discerned necessary connections in nature instead of thinking, as they should, that the necessity is merely linguistic.

According to Wollheim, while emotion can cause desire which, joined with instrumental belief, causes action, emotion itself, the dispositional condition that an emotion really is, need not cause desire, nor need any emotion cause a desire in the range of desires that we may associate with an emotion. If we do not confuse expression with manifestation in general, this thought will not be so hard to swallow. It is easier to accept this view if one accepts that it is a mistake to think that even something as provocative to action as pain is still only contingently related to the desire to have the pain cease or to get out of harm's way.

While such behaviour is widespread, it can be inhibited. If we appreciate that having a pain is having a reason to act to stop it or avoid more of it, we can see that there may well be other reasons, in a given case, to abide the pain, even occasions for rejoicing that one feels pain. Severe pain on coming out of an anaesthetic may be a sign that the operation was a success; you will live; no pain and you would have been doomed. Many people insist that the effect of nitrous oxide does not lessen pain but only renders them unconcerned about it. It is a common tale (perhaps a myth) in philosophy of mind classes that people with lobotomies say that a pain is still there, hurts just as much, but that it doesn't matter. The story is so widespread that a student is as likely to bring it up as a teacher is.

We are also offered another variety of expression of emotion, one that Wollheim has often explored and exploited in his writing about art. Emotion is expressed in how some bit of the world strikes one, as shown elegantly by Hamlet's 'How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world'. This characterising of the world in some way or other is a matter of projecting an emotion onto or into the world. When it is the natural world, and a scene we witness together strikes me as foreboding and you as merely sombre, there is no question of getting it right. Nature — no doubt within some limits stemming from our psychology and culture — lets itself be responded to in myriad ways, ways that involve feelings not likely to be housed in one mind at the same time. But when it is art to which we respond, a competent artist is trying to elicit or compel a response from us that sees his work as he intends. He may fail, and a critic's job is, in large part, to discern what he was up to and explain how the work exhibits a failed, instead of a fulfilled intention.

It is not a long journey from this way of thinking about emotion to the idea that value and emotion are intimately related. Wollheim has quite a lot to say about this. He does so, as I read him, without



commitment to either the view that emotion is perception of value (a view foolhardily endorsed by some philosophers) or the view that value is a projection of emotion — and this view's companion: that ethical and aesthetic judgement are expressions of emotion, not statements of fact.

I need to give now what ought to have begun this review, a description of what, according to Wollheim, an emotion is and how emotions come to be and how they endure or pass away. The experience of frustration of desire and of the satisfaction of desire is the route by which emotion enters our lives. It is vital that Wollheim speaks of experiences here. The satisfaction or frustration of, e.g., my desire that Labor win the next election may be understood as consisting in the result of the forthcoming election. My desire may, on such an understanding, be satisfied or frustrated even if I die before the election.

With a notion of satisfaction and frustration of this merely logico-semantic variety, there is no way that desire can be seen as the engine which generates our emotions. It is Wollheim's theory that it is the experience of frustrated or satisfied desire which brings emotion in its train. Well, not quite. For he holds that it is not only such experience that can do it, but also the experience of anticipated satisfaction or frustration; and this can work regardless of the beliefs involved being true or false. I can be as downcast by a false belief that my team has lost or by confident expert forecast that they will lose as I can be through the experience of witnessing or learning of the actual loss. Wollheim does not add to this list the imagining of the loss, though as far as I can see, this may also cast me down a bit, just as fantasizing their glorious victory may buoy me up.

There will be differences in these cases with regard to what sort of a history the emotion will have, differences as to its durability and termination. As Wollheim sees it, there is nothing that must terminate an emotion in the way that taking in evidence can terminate a belief by replacing it with its contradiction, or an apprehended fact can terminate a desire by fulfilling it. A corrected belief may stop the formation of an emotion, but it may just alter the fact or object that the emotion takes as precipitating it. You are angry at the barking dog next door, for it is interfering with your reading and your sleeping; you learn it is a video recording of your neighbour's dead dog and your anger latches on to him for his bizarre and annoying taste. You learn that he is old, terribly lonely, and the dog long dead; so he plays a recording of it now and then. Your anger does not dissipate, but shifts toward a society where lives can become so empty as to let pets mean so much. It is worth noting here how an apology, no matter how sincere, can

exacerbate the resentment of its recipient or at least fail to bring the turbulence of resentment and (perhaps) self-pity to rest. The resentment now seems to be focused on the apology (or its giver) for having deprived one of a legitimate grievance.

Emotions have origins and histories and narrative is vital to the existence and nature of an emotion. Emotion is mnemonic; a fright I get today from seeing a snake may be a manifestation of a fear of mine that has persisted since childhood (or is perhaps even innate). Wollheim gives an example of fear of frogs inaugurated when a youth awakes on a summer's day to the croak and sight of a large frog on his chest. The youth's subsequent encounters (or prospective ones) with frogs may be troubled all his life and other scares and frights may evoke dreadful memories of that frog back then; and the memories reinforce the tenacity of the fear. It is this property of emotion, as I understand Wollheim, that we must acknowledge if we are to accept the views of psychoanalysis about phantasy (as Melanie Klein used that notion) and our unconscious minds. What happens in childhood, especially early childhood, lays down emotions whose course may run all one's life long.

This point is vital to what may be the most radical and controversial part of this book. Wollheim's last chapter is about the 'so-called' (Wollheim's words) moral emotions. He discusses guilt and shame in detail. With the other emotions, as said above, the key is the frustration or satisfaction of desire. Frustration is replaced in the cases of guilt and shame with what Wollheim speaks of as a lowering of one's sense of self. Presumably, things like self-esteem and pride are risings of this sense of oneself. This is reminiscent of Spinoza, with his talk of increase and decrease of power.

Wollheim thinks that guilt (the reproaching voices of others) and shame (the reproaching eyes of others) are emotions inaugurated in childhood (my word, not Wollheim's) and central to our acquisition of, or inculcation into morality. But contrary to the majority of philosophers (even Nietzsche is not pellucid about this), Wollheim does not see it as a good thing, but rather as baneful (a word he likes) that we remain so vulnerable to reproach, real or imagined, reasonable or unreasonable, as an outcome of the vicissitudes of the superego, which may be modified by love, given and received, into the less oppressive ego ideal. Wollheim sees morality, especially morality achieved with obligation as its core, as an unhappy outcome of the internalisation of terrifying and powerful figures from early life. Love may bring us through this without too much crippling guilt and shame as the price we cannot but pay, on most views of the matter,

for developing some degree of moral conscientiousness. Guilt and shame are products, as Freud (and Nietzsche) said, of our aggressiveness, with good people being those who have turned a good deal of this aggressiveness onto themselves in the form of self-punishing guilt and shame. I rather think Wollheim is more convinced of the banefulness of all this than were either Nietzsche or Freud, who sometimes seem to be suggesting that the wonders as well as the woes of civilisation and culture stem from the same source.

Wollheim demurs on the supposed value of rational guilt as opposed to irrational guilt (or shame). Guilt and shame like any emotions, are doubtfully to be assessed as rational or irrational. Wollheim inclines to the view that while our actions, our beliefs and our desires are rational or irrational, our emotions are neither. We are misled by the fact that many emotions involve irrational beliefs, are precipitated by false and irrational beliefs. In some such cases — though not always — reason's effect will be to wither the emotion more or less on the vine. This most obviously happens when the emotion involves a false but rational belief which is corrected. Irrationality in forming beliefs may, after all, itself be caused by emotions and those causes may keep an emotion going right through the availability of correction, even hinder such correction. Othello's jealousy helps his unreason which intensifies his jealousy, which . . .

Othello is not left out of Wollheim's discussion, enriching it along with other glowing spots of literary erudition, all of which illuminate and surprise. If Wollheim had time, a philosophy of literature to match his philosophy of painting would no doubt deploy the understanding and insight displayed in this book. In the absence of that, this book's attraction and force as philosophical psychology, and especially as moral psychology, make it valuable for reflection about literature in any event.

LLOYD REINHARDT