OF ART AND WORK:

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WORK FEELINGS

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates a broad class of work feelings that has not yet received adequate consideration in the literature. These are feelings associated with aesthetic experience. Based on a study of art, the nature of these feelings and the conditions of their occurrence in work are proposed. The paper concludes with a discussion of how study of aesthetic experiences of work can contribute to a broader understanding of the psychology of feelings of work.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a lot to learn about work feelings. Despite a reconnaissance by literally thousands of studies (see Locke, 1976, for a representative review), the territory of work feelings remains largely uncharted, beyond the frontier. Questions about why people feel as they do when working find superficial answers. It is said that the work is interesting, or challenging, or stressful, or dehumanizing. Or it is said that the match between worker and work is a good or a bad one. Such answers betray little of the subtle texture and dynamisms of the work itself, and even less of the intricate psychology of its apprehension and appreciation.

What is missing is a conceptual vocabulary adequate to describe the psychology of work feelings. Although there are good reasons for this, they are small comfort. One is that the study of feelings has not gone on for long. It is only since the industrial revolution, with its coincident regard for the efficiency of work and disregard for the humanity of workers, that the question of how work feels has drawn considered attention. More important, the research thus far has been limited almost exclusively to studies of worker feelings *about* their work (i.e., global satisfaction with the job). Few studies have considered worker feelings *of* their work (i.e., how the worker feels on the job). Yet, the latter question speaks more directly to the core issue of work feeling (Sandelands, 1988).[1] Finally, studies of work satisfaction have relied almost exclusively on worker self-reports. While this practice is appealing in its directness, it restricts inquiry to feelings about which workers are willing and able to speak (thereby excluding those below the limen of awareness or too vague or fleeting to be captured in the pale of discursive report).[2]

The purpose of this paper is to begin to describe a broad class of work feelings that are *of* work, not *about* work. These are the feelings associated with the aesthetic in work, with its beauty and good. Although aesthetic feelings typically are associated with art, it is argued that they are an important basis of feeling in work as well. Investigation of these feelings promises a rare glimpse into the ongoing emotionality of work. It promises also progress toward a conceptual vocabulary better suited to describe the psychology of work feelings.

The paper starts by making an oblique approach to the topic. It begins with a study of aesthetic experience in art. Art is examined because its activities (of art making and appreciation) are uniquely revealing of the psychology of aesthetic experience. Four questions are examined: (1) Does the concept of "aesthetic experience" make sense theoretically? (2) How does aesthetic experience feel, and why? (3) What characteristics of art works make aesthetic experience possible? and (4) What is the role of the perceiver in aesthetic experience? The answers to these four questions establish a general backdrop against which the aesthetics of work can be considered. The paper continues with a discussion of the place of aesthetic experience in work—arguing against the idea that work cannot be aes-

thetic because it is practical. This argument is supported by examples of aesthetic experiences of work drawn both from academic writers and from the popular business press. The paper ends with a discussion of how study of aesthetic experiences can contribute to an understanding of the psychology of feeling at work.

AN APPEAL TO ART

Any turn to art confronts the inveterate doubt that art has anything to teach psychology. Supposedly art can offer little to psychology because its aims and methods are so unlike those of science. As Bronowski (1978) points out, whereas the scientist seeks to mean the same thing to everybody who listens, the artist is content to say something universal and yet mean different things to everybody who listens.[3] This doubt about art, however, is irrelevant to the concerns of this paper, which are more substantive than methodological. We appeal to art because its activities (of art making and art appreciation) are especially indicative of the psychology of aesthetic experience. Works of art are created expressly to engage the beholder in this experience. Art works are unique also in that the conditions of their success are made objective in the work itself.

The Concept of Aesthetic Experience

For the concept of aesthetic experience to be of scientific value, the adjective *aesthetic* must mark its predicate as unique and theoretically important. To paraphrase James, it must be a difference that makes a difference.

Usually the aesthetic experience is identified by its contents or consequences. Bronowski (1978), for example, describes the aesthetic experience as a journey of discovery—as an act of mind whereby a person comes to know in a richer or deeper way some aspect or essence of experienced life. Urmson (1962) identifies the aesthetic experience with use of particular criteria of value (e.g., harmony, balance, integrity). Others remark of its phenomenology. Maslow (1971) calls attention to its peculiar, almost paradoxical, unself-consciousness, noting (seemingly with exasperation) that the experience vanishes with any attempt to corner it for inspection. More commonly, the aesthetic experience is identified by its pleasure. Bronowski (1978, p. 11) speaks of the pleasure of perceiving in a new way, of "trying out and exploring imaginary situations." Henri (1923, p. 102) adds that though the aesthetic experience is a pleasurable pastime, it is not simply so: "To apprehend beauty is to work for it. It is a mighty and entrancing effort, and the enjoyment of a picture is not only in the pleasure it inspires, but in the comprehension of the new order of construction used in its making." And, for Dewey (1934): "There is . . . an element of undergoing, of suffering in its large sense, in every experience. . . . It involves reconstruction which may be painful."[4]

Although illuminating of aesthetic experience, these distinctions prove o closer examination to be indecisive. Each admits experiences into the categor "aesthetic" that do not belong and forbids others that do. Not every journey o discovery is an aesthetic experience. Unself-consciousness can occur also i highly stressful activities. And not every pleasure is an aesthetic pleasure. Wha distinguishes aesthetic experience is its signature process; it is a particular spe cies of mental activity (Dewey, 1934; Gombrich, 1960; Langer, 1967). This prc cess is marked by its relationship to purpose. Unlike other kinds of thinking aesthetic experience is detached from purpose (Arnheim, 1966; Dewey, 1934) Bruner (1962) describes aesthetic thinking aptly as a "play of impulses at th fringe of awareness." This is in contrast to purposeful thinking that occurs at th center of awareness. According to Bruner, purpose preempts aesthetic experi ence by calling on the mind to search for efficient means to its satisfaction thereby crowding out the frivolity that makes for aesthetic discovery. For aes thetic experience to occur, the demands of life that ordinarily are the reason fc thinking must be set aside; the person must be on "vacation from reality' (Dewey, 1934). This is why art succeeds only when the person "gives in" to and lets it motivate and guide imagination. Writes Bruner (1962, p. 25): "To b dominated by an object . . . is to be free of the defenses that keep us hidden fror ourselves."

This detachment of aesthetic thinking from purpose remains despite the fac that purposes can be (and often are) found in it. As an example, it is sometime observed that aesthetic thinking evolves by stages—from initial conditions c disorganization and conflict to later conditions of organization and equilibrium– and on this basis concluded that its purpose is to organize perceptions or resolv tensions (cf. Arnheim, 1971). This, however, is a very different idea of purpos from that identified with other kinds of thinking. This purpose does not com before thinking but emerges from it as a kind of consequence. It is not the reaso for the thinking taking place. Whereas ordinary thinking serves a purpose, aes thetic thinking only assumes one.

Although Bruner's description of aesthetic thinking—as a play of impulses a the fringe of awareness—has much to recommend it, two of its details bear scru tiny. First, the phrase "at the fringe of awareness" must be understood not t refer to an actual place in the mind or brain (e.g., the left hemisphere) but instea to a particular kind of thinking. James (1890, p. 249) used this very phrase t describe thought processes whose dynamics are fugitive from introspection. Ac cording to James, all that can be reported about these processes are the thought they produce—nothing of the steps in their making. Russell (1921) called thi kind of thinking "knowing by acquaintance." In contemporary writing, thi thinking has been called "pattern recognition," "image-based thought," an "syncretic cognition" (see, e.g., Buck, 1985).

Second, to say that aesthetic experience exists as a play of impulses is to sa neither that it is wholly spontaneous nor that it is completely free. It must hav

coherence and direction of some kind; otherwise it would be meaningless. In the main, the coherence and direction of aesthetic thinking come from the object being contemplated (e.g., the work of art). Indeed, it is the magic of art that it can routinely function in this way. The mind plays but on a playground of dimensions and activities determined by the art work.

Aesthetic Experiences, Art Experiences. Although the aesthetic experience is characteristic of art (some say definitive of art), it is not the only experience of art. A work of art can be appreciated not only for its beauty but also for its technical virtuosity or for the messages it conveys about social or moral life. The latter are not aesthetic experiences, though sometimes they are mistaken for such. The aesthetic experience makes no exclusive claim upon art but shares this territory with a multiplicity of others.

Although art can be experienced in many ways, each experience is singular. It is uniquely aesthetic or technical or moral or something else (see Urmson, 1962). This logical property of art experiences is built into the idea of experience types. Without it, there could be no such thing as aesthetic experiences, only experiences that have more or less of some aesthetic quality.

Feeling and Form in Art

The aesthetic experience has been shown to be a unique species of activity—one marked by features of content and form. One of these features is its characteristic pleasure. What more can be said about this pleasure? And, more important, where does it come from?

A closer look finds that aesthetic experiences are not simply pleasurable. The pleasures of art vary considerably. Arguably some are not really pleasures at all but more like trials of some kind. Mozart's piano concertos are each affecting in a different way (e.g., compare No. 21 in C-major with No. 24 in D-minor). More generally, Mozart's music has a different feeling from that of Bach or the Rolling Stones. Similarly, Van Gogh's canvasses are each felt in a different way but none in quite the same way as those of Rothko or Warhol. There are differences also between art forms. The feeling possibilities of music are different from those of painting or sculpture, which are different again from those of poetry or theater. Finally, the pleasure in any given art work may differ from one person to the next and even for the same person from one occasion to the next. Aesthetic pleasures are notoriously individual.

The subtle emotionality of aesthetic experience perplexes any attempt to explain it. Why are aesthetic experiences generally (if not unexceptionably) pleasurable? And why are these pleasures so varied? Any simple answer to the first question seems almost to condemn the answer to the second. Bronowski (1978) argues that pleasure comes from making discoveries. Urmson (1962) contends that pleasure results from meeting specific criteria of beauty (e.g., proportion,

balance, harmony). More commonly, however, aesthetic feelings are explaine by the process of aesthetic experience itself (see, e.g., Arnheim, 1969; Dewey 1934; Hoffman, 1948; Langer, 1967). Feeling is said to be a quality of this prc cess, one of its manifestations or phases. For Dewey (1934, p. 602): "All th emotions are qualifications of a drama, and they change as the drama develops.' For Langer (1967), feeling emerges from the play of aesthetic thinking in muc the same way that the red glow of superheated iron emerges from the play of iro molecules. Feeling is the way aesthetic thinking appears to consciousness.

The idea that aesthetic feeling is a quality of process affords a simple ye compelling account of both its generality and individuality. On one hand, th pleasure taken in aesthetic experience generally can be attributed to its character istic process—that is, the play of impulses at the fringe of awareness. It is a kin of recreation. On the other hand, the specific cast of this pleasure in the individ ual case can be attributed to the particular form taken by this process. Aestheti thinking never takes precisely the same course, nor does it wind up in the sam place.

Yet the question remains: *Why* is the play of impulses at the fringe of aware ness pleasing and in so many different ways? The answer usually given is tha this process is lifelike—that it is alive and an exemplification of experienced life Langer (1967) calls this "living form" and argues that it is definitive of aestheti feeling. For Dewey (1934), feeling derives from an organic dynamism o "forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to it own integral fulfillment." The aesthetic experience, he contends, is a life unt itself. This is the key to its pleasure. This is the key also to its peculiar individu ality. What is felt is *a* life—a life having its own dynamics and form.

What is perhaps most baffling about aesthetic feelings is that they can b pleasurable despite being about things that are unpleasant or even horrifyin (e.g., death, pathos, loss, despair, guilt). For example, it is possible to feel writer's pain (and in some fashion enjoy the feeling) without actually bein pained. This is an important characteristic of aesthetic feeling: what is pleasura bly felt is sometimes a figuration of a real feeling (that is not felt). This point ha been made before by Campbell-Fisher (1951, p. 266) in connection with the feel ing of sadness:

> My grasp of the essence of sadness . . . comes not from moments in which I have been sad, but from moments when I have seen sadness before me released from entanglements with contingency. . . . we have seen this in great beauty, in the works of our great artists.

Characteristics of Art

Talk about art can hardly begin before encountering the question of what it is As it happens, talk about art also can hardly end on this question because it ca never be answered decisively.

Art cannot be described in terms of necessary and sufficient attributes (Weitz, 1962). Works of art resemble one another as members of a family (see Wittgenstein, 1953). They share attributes with one another but have no attributes completely in common. One searches in vain for definitive properties of art.

Further, it is no help to define art by how it is experienced—for example, in terms of its feeling or sense of beauty. Art works have no imperative feeling qualities. They are vehicles for experience, opportunities for feeling or perceiving beauty. A sober view of art finds only an object (the "art work") and a thinking and perceiving person. Feeling, or a perception of beauty, is simply one way the person's experience of the object can turn out.[5] Plainly, there is something about art that encourages such experiences (just as there is something about the attitude of the person that does likewise). This something is not causal or definitive but rather facilitative.

The question better asked of art is, What properties of art works make them likely to function as vehicles of aesthetic experience? As Goodman (1978) puts it, the question is not "What is art?" but rather "When is art?" In what follows, four such properties are identified: (1) boundaries (2) dynamic tensions (3) a record of growth, and (4) unresolved possibility. Although there is no logical basis for saying so, these properties seem almost sine qua nons of the aesthetic experience. Where they find each other's company, whether by design or accident, in a defined work of art or something else—aesthetic experience is more likely to occur. Later it will be argued that properties like these also make it possible to experience work aesthetically.

Definite Boundaries. Art works have definite boundaries, which identify the work apart from other objects of the world. More important, they make it possible to regard the work openly—free to explore whatever impulses or ideas it might suggest. Secure in the knowledge that the work is finite in both space and time, the beholder is enabled to commit the otherwise dangerous act of relinquishing conscious control over his or her thinking, an act that Bronowski (1978, p. 18) describes as suspending one's "sense of judgement." The perceiver knows that whatever its course, the experience is temporary and that control can and will be reestablished. This is essential to the free play of mind that is the aesthetic experience.

According to the painter Hans Hoffman, boundaries are important not only for aesthetic appreciation but also for the creation of the art object. Boundaries, he says, present not a limiting prospect but a means for suggesting the limitless (1948, p. 42–43):

> From the beginning, your paper is limited, as all geometrical figures are limited. Within the confines is the complete creative message. Everything you do is definitely related to the paper. The outline becomes an essential part of your composition. . . . A consciousness of limitation is paramount for an expression of the Infinite. Beethoven creates Eternity in the physical limitation of his symphonies.

Whereas Hoffman notes the artistic importance of spatial and temporal boun aries, Dewey (1934) calls attention to boundaries inherent in the particular m dium of the work. Art, he asserts, is defined always by its medium. It is unique contained by a medium and could not exist as that art in any other medium. Tl medium, he argues, forces a centering of the attention on a particular sense senses and thereby makes possible the act of "intensified expression" that is ai

On reflection, the boundaries of art works can be seen to be of two kind There are obvious physical boundaries in space and time; for example, paintin take up only so much space (often with the contrivance of a frame to mark whe they leave off and where the outside world begins); dances, dramas, operas, ai symphonies have duration (often beginning and ending with the raising and lo ering of curtains). There are also more subtle boundaries set up by the intern integrity of the work. Art works find coherence in the interrelations of their part The art work is a unity, complete and whole unto itself. This unity is not guara teed by the physical boundaries of the work; it depends also on how the work internally constituted. The physical boundaries of art works are not merely cess tions; they also are consummations.

There is, finally, an imperative quality to the boundaries of art. Their ve presence indicates that what is contained inside is something special, somethi to be regarded unto itself and apart from the prejudices of purpose or vanities ego. In this sense, the boundaries of art works are social. They call for definition of the work as art and thereby for a particular orientation to the wo by the perceiver.

Dynamic Tensions. Art holds the viewer in its thrall by presenting a con tion not of completion but of tension. This tension is created by the arrangeme of artistic materials to produce an impression of forces operating one against a other. In painting, for example, tension is created by what Hoffman (1948, p 44–45) calls the opposing forces of *push and pull*:

> Depth, in a pictorial, plastic sense, is not created by the arrangement of objects one after another toward a vanishing point, in the sense of the Renaissance perspective, but on the contrary (and in absolute denial of this doctrine) by the creation of forces in the sense of PUSH AND PULL. . . . To create the phenomenon of PUSH AND PULL on a flat surface, one has to understand that by nature the picture plane reacts automatically in the opposite direction to the stimulus received; thus action continues as long as it receives stimulus in the creative process. . . . The function of PUSH AND PULL in respect to form contains the secret of Michelangelo's monumentality or of Rembrandt's universality.

One form that tension often takes in art is rhythm—for example, meter poetry, measures in music, patterning on the surface of a painting. Rhythm given by a dialectical patterning of forces; first one is dominant, then the oth Dewey (1934, p. 631) has said that "the *first* characteristic of the environ world that makes possible the existence of artistic form is rhythm. There rhythm in nature before poetry, painting, architecture and music exist." He

gues that rhythms provide structure and stability to all life processes. Langer (1967) adds that rhythm is primary in securing the unity of art works and in identifying them as living forms.

The property of tension is important for two reasons. First, it gives the art work an arresting vitality. The work is made to seem alive and individual (though there may be many literal copies of the work available). These are characteristics of the aesthetic experience itself. Second, it calls the perceiver to action and brings to aesthetic thinking a purpose of its own—something it would not otherwise have. Tension cries to be resolved. This property of art is captured nicely by Arnheim (1971), who describes art as "disorder striving toward harmony."

Record of Growth. Art does not just present a condition of tension; it presents also a basis for its resolution (though not the resolution itself). By its very constitution, art projects a course of development—what is here called a "record of growth." Dewey (1934, p. 633) regards this aspect as essential to art:

> The structure of an object must be such that its force interacts happily (but not easily) with the energies that issue from the experience itself; when their mutual affinities and antagonisms work together to bring about a substance that develops cumulatively and surely (but not too steadily) toward a fulfilling of impulsions and tensions, then indeed there is art.

Although difficult to see in the finished product, this property of art nevertheless can be detected in the course of its creation. When laid bare, the process of artistic creation exhibits a progressive, cumulative development of order. Writes Henri (1923, p. 67):

> Art is the inevitable consequence of growth and is the manifestation of the principles of its origin. The work of art is a result; is the output of a progress in development and stands as a record and marks the degree of development. It is not an end in itself, but the work indicates the course taken and the progress made.

The record of growth is illustrated by the legacy of Matisse's series paintings and the painter's commentaries about them. In his series "Nu Bleu," he starts form a point of capturing a great deal of information about his subject and moves subsequently toward a more simplified and expressive generalization of the forms.

> The reaction of each stage is as important as the subject. For this reaction comes from me and not from the subject. It is from the basis of my interpretation that I continually react until my work comes into harmony with me. Like someone writing a sentence, I rewrite and make new discoveries. At each stage, I reach a balance, a conclusion. At the next sitting if I find a weakness—I re-enter through the breach—and reconceive the whole (Matisse, 1936).

Unresolved Possibility. By its record of growth, art asserts the prospect of resolving its created tension. Yet the art work itself does not provide resolution;

it leaves this to its beholder. In the best works, resolution is not singular but ca be achieved in different ways each time it is encountered. Great art poses subtle interesting tensions that have no simple or final resolution. They persist in cha lenging the perceiver, never letting matters rest. Their beauty, as Hulme (i Dewey, 1934, p. 613) puts it, is "the marking time, the stationary vibration, th feigned ecstasy, of an arrested impulse unable to reach its natural end." It is thi unresolved and unresolvable possibility that makes for beauty in art and raises above mere prettiness.

Bruner has called this property of art its "category of possibility." The nam is apt; art is all about possibility. It is about tension and the possibilities of it resolution. Yet these possibilities are not unbounded; they are decidedly categoi ical. Only those resolutions that work, that relate meaningfully to the problem c tension posed by the work, can be accepted. As Justi (quoted in Arnheim, 1951 p. 266) makes clear, the artist "will not leave free play to phantasy, but fasten to the spell of his creation." Henri (1923, p. 67) says about the art work that "is not an end in itself, but the work indicates the course taken and the progres made. The work is not a finality. It promises more, and from it projection can b made."

Summary

Although these four properties are in no way definitive of art, they are con mon to many art works and seem signally encouraging of aesthetic experience Together these properties define an object that begs for aesthetic contemplatior *Boundaries* allow thinking to proceed freely at the fringes of awareness, in ten porary disregard of real world demands. The object can be experienced on i terms—the beholder free to be pulled along, to be dominated by the work. *Tei sion* brings life to the thinking process by calling upon the beholder to provide resolution. Otherwise purposeless, thinking is able to find a purpose of its owr The *record of growth* offers a way of proceeding, a way to organize thinkin toward resolution. Finally, *unresolved possibility* challenges the beholder to fin a resolution, and perhaps a new one with each appraisal.

An object having these properties would seem to have a good chance c evoking and sustaining aesthetic experience. Nevertheless, it would be a chanc only. As noted, the properties of art works do not cause aesthetic experienc they present conditions for its appearance. It is necessary also that the behold be ready and interested to see the object in this way.

The Aesthetic Attitude

Aesthetic experience arises as a kind of compact between an appropriately er dowed object and an appropriately inclined beholder. From the beholder, it r quires openness and involvement:

> You cannot look at a picture and find it beautiful by a merely passive act of seeing. The internal relations that make it beautiful to you have to be discovered and in some way have to be put in by you. The artist provides a skeleton; he provides guiding lines; he provides enough to engage your interest and touch you emotionally. But there is no picture and no poem unless you yourself enter it and fill it out (Bronowski, 1978, p. 14).

Since Bosanquet (1892), the participation of the perceiver in aesthetic experience has been recognized by postulating an "aesthetic attitude." This attitude is defined by a readiness to explore an object, to see what it might suggest. This attitude contrasts with the more familiar "instrumental attitude" whereby objects are considered more narrowly in terms of the desires they satisfy or the uses to which they can be put.

The necessity of the aesthetic attitude makes bold the point that art does not evoke or cause aesthetic experience. No matter how compelling the art object, there can be no aesthetic experience without a willing and able beholder. At the same time, it is clear that attitude by itself is not enough. There is still a need for the right kind of object to support aesthetic experience. Both the art object and aesthetic attitude are facilitating conditions for aesthetic experience; they are necessary and encouraging but not sufficient.

Is it to be concluded that aesthetic experiences do not have efficient causes? Leaving aside metaphysical arguments against the very idea of causes (e.g., Hume, 1748) and the fact that not one has yet been identified, this conclusion cannot be escaped. Aesthetic experiences could not have their own causes because they are part of an already caused stream of experience. As James (1890) made clear nearly a century ago, thinking occurs as a single continuous stream (see also Dewey, 1934). Although this stream can be analyzed into episodes according to need or interest, this in no way changes its essential unity and integrity. No matter how they are defined, episodes are not separate and independent things. Rather, they are as Dewey (1934, p. 598) describes them: "shadings of a pervading and developing hue." It follows that if aesthetic experiences are not separate and independent things, they cannot have separate and independent causes.

Insofar as aesthetic experience can be explained at all, it must be by mention of those conditions that make it more likely that the stream of experience will take this particular form. It is minimally necessary that the person have the right (aesthetic) attitude and be confronted by an object of the right nature. Under these conditions, it can be said only that aesthetic thinking is likely. Again, it must be recognized that even under these conditions, aesthetic experience need not occur. It seems there is a basic (ineluctable?) indeterminancy associated with the aesthetic experience.

Conclusion

As even this brief appeal to art makes plain, there is much to learn from art about the psychology of aesthetic experience. Above, observations were made of

the content and process of this experience; of the relationship of form to feelin in aesthetic experience; of the properties of art works that contribute to thei functioning as vehicles of aesthetic experience; and finally, of the importance o aesthetic attitude and its implications for explaining aesthetic experience. Thi appeal to art makes plain also how much there is left to see. How does aestheti experience take place? What are its features? How is this experience related t others before and after it? How long can it last? Is it easily disrupted, and if so b what? If interrupted, can it pick up where it left off, or must it begin anew? An which forms of aesthetic experience are associated with which feelings?

THE AESTHETIC IN WORK

To this point, the reader could be forgiven for thinking that the discussion ha gone far afield of the problem of work feelings. Quite the contrary. What ha been discussed as a psychology of art is no less a psychology of work. Aestheti experience is not confined to art but is potential in any kind of activity. Thi section considers the place of aesthetic experience in the psychology of work

The Aesthetic and the Practical

Perhaps the greatest objection to an aesthetics of work is that work celebrate practical values that are at odds with aesthetic values. In modern times, the ide of an aesthetics of work almost seems quaint. The jungle law is efficiency, an this is to be engineered by "scientific" methods of time and motion study.

A longer view of history, however, suggests a certain unity between aestheti and practical concerns. The early cave paintings, for example, were not done a mere decorations. By depicting the hunt on the walls of the cave, the hunter "rehearsed" the event about to occur, as well as drew upon magical conjuring spirits to assist him. The art was part of his struggle for survival. What is exhibite as "primitive" art in museums today is commonly a variety of tools and object that were used in daily life: pottery, spear handles, baskets, a beautifully carve bark canoe. All these objects could be analyzed in terms of their functionalit alone, but this would leave unexplained the extraneous craftsmanship that doe not increase efficiency. Dewey finds the root of early man's urge to include th aesthetic in his daily experience in his connection to the earth's rhythms:

> The participation of man in nature's rhythms, a partnership much more intimate than is any observation of them for purposes of knowledge, induced him to impose rhythm on changes where they did not appear. The apportioned reed, the stretched string and taut skin rendered the measures of action conscious through song and dance. Experiences of war, of hunt, of sowing and reaping, of the death and resurrection of vegetation, of stars circling over watchful shepherds, of constant return of the inconstant moon, were undergone to be reproduced in pantomime and generated the sense of life as drama. The mysterious movement of serpent,

> elk, boar, fell into rhythms that brought the very essence of the lives of these animals to realization as they were enacted in dance, chiseled in stone, wrought in silver, of limned on the walls of caves. The formative arts that shaped things of use were wedded to the rhythms of voice and the self-contained movements of the body, and out of the union technical arts gained the quality of fine art (pp. 631–632).

Hamilton's (1942) history of Hellenistic Greece makes it clear that few of the boundaries that segment contemporary life existed for the Greeks. Scientific theories were written in verse; learning and leisure were considered synonymous, athletes and statesmen shared a common status. Hamilton's thesis is that it was this integration of aesthetic and practical values that occasioned a flourishing of civilization never before (and perhaps never since) attained.[6]

Finally, the integration of practical and aesthetic values can be seen also in the Renaissance and epochal idea of humanism. So intimate were the enterprises of art and science during this period that it is difficult to separate the two. Artistic advances in anatomy, perspective and construction of the great dome of the Florence Cathedral were occasions for advances in medicine, science, and engineering. The artist was a respected member of a professional class and was accorded the same stature as the doctor and pharmacist—indeed, they were often members of the same professional guild.

The weight of history thus gives lie to the modern idea that aesthetic and practical values are distinct. Even so, it must be admitted that it is more difficult today than ever before to see the connection between the two. In the workplace, the industrial revolution (with its irrepressible logic of the division of labor and substitution of machines for people) brought more jobs with fewer opportunities for aesthetic fulfillment (see, e.g., Braverman, 1974). Work offers fewer opportunities for the free play of impulses. Work activity is fastened more tightly to external, rational control. In the arts, the movement has been away from making usable things and toward making things that are aesthetic only.

These trends obscure the essential unity between aesthetic and practical concerns. Artistry is possible even in the most prosaic doings and makings of modern life. Dewey (1934) describes the by now familiar phenomenon of the average person's finding more *genuine* aesthetic enjoyment in popular culture and the objects and events of daily life than in the highly reverenced and distant art of the museum.[7] Dewey's case, however, rests on more than appearances. His analysis finds no important differences between "the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience" (Dewey, 1934, p. 580). For Dewey, as for others (e.g., Hamilton, 1942; Henri, 1923; Langer, 1967; Levin, 1957), linguistic distinctions between such concepts as work and play, art and science, or whimsical and practical do not reflect natural divisions for people. These are misleading ways of talking about human activity that owe mainly to Protestantism and the industrial revolution. For these authors, aesthetic expe-

rience is not divorced from everyday life but integral to it. Henri (1923, p. 1: puts the point simply:

> *Art*, when really understood, is the province of every human being. It is simply a question of doing things, anything, well. It is not an outside, extra thing. When the artist is alive in any person, whatever his kind of work may be, he becomes an inventive, searching, daring, self-expressing creature. . . . He does not have to be a painter or sculptor to be an artist. He can work in any medium. He simply has to find the gain in the work itself, not outside it.

Examples of the Aesthetic in Work

The aesthetic possibilities of work are more than a theoretical abstraction c sentimental ideal. Consider this account of the work of an engineer, taken fror Kidder's (1981) chronicle of the birth of a new computer, *The Soul of the Ne Machine*:

> The first three bits of the address would contain the segment number of a memory compartment—in the telephone analogy, a given compartment's area code. The other bits would define the rest of the address. But Wallach wasn't interested in them just now. He was pondering the first three bits. Suddenly, without thinking about it, he was drawing another box below the first box. . . . After he had drawn the diagram he stared at it, wondering for a moment, "Where did that come from?"

Wallach was delighted with his design for addressing memory and protecting it security, but

> the idea of placing that neat, clean structure on top of the outdated structure of the Eclipse repelled him. It was as if he had invented a particularly nice kind of arch for the doorway of a supermarket.

Later, after more design work,

> He was getting to like the looks of this architecture. He was starting to think of it not as a wart on a wart, but as a clean design with a wart on it. The wart was the Eclipse instruction set, virtually every part of which Eagle would have to contain, for the sake of compatibility. But there were some other empty corners of this canvas, aside from memory management and protection.

Wallach's design work is an embodiment of aesthetic experience. It is a creativ play of mind at the fringe of awareness. The job itself even resembles art; it is project with definite boundaries, dynamic tensions, a cumulative record o growth, and finally, a triumphant sense of possibility in the "remaining corner of this canvas."

The work of managing, too, has definite aesthetic possibilities. According t Peters and Waterman (1982, p. 83), leadership requires the manager to be th "true artist, the true pathfinder. After all, he is both calling forth and exempli

fying the urge for transcendence that unites us all.'' For Selznick (1957, pp. 152–153) leadership is art: ''The art of the creative leader is the art of institution building, the reworking of human and technological materials to fashion an organism that embodies new and enduring values.'' This concept of the leader's job as calling for the creation of an organism embodying values makes the leader very much the artist. Like the artist, or his or her aim becomes to create ''living forms'' that involve others in some aspect of feeling (e.g., commitment, pride, love of product).

The aesthetic possibilities of the leader's job are perhaps nowhere more thoughtfully laid out than by Kuhn (1982, pp. 12–13). in his essay ''Managing as an Art Form: The Aesthetics of Management.'' He points out that managing becomes art as managers create meaning and bring it to life through their actions on the job:

> In dealing with their own and other people's wisdom and follies, through the changing circumstances of organizational life, freighted with emotions and laden with reasonings, managers must sustain a point of view—an image of who they are and a vision of both what is—the complex network of interrelations that make up the organization—and what it can become. To borrow from Virginia Woolf a definition of managing as an art form, the manager continually affirms a point of view that is constructed and sustained through creative, aesthetic affirmation. Managing becomes art as managers create meaning, construct form, recognize patterns and place values on their relationships with others, both within and outside the organization. They affirm the structures of their perceptions in the face of the chaotic elements of daily life and the contradictions in nature and even the negations in themselves and in others. The meanings of their affirmations are as fleeting and fragile as the vital, creative part of the organization itself; it is art that exists only in process. It is in fact processional art.

Kidder, Peters, and Waterman, Selznick, and Kuhn leave little doubt about the presence and importance of aesthetic feeling in work. Echoing Bruner, Kidder describes computer design as a living play of the mind—a thought process that proceeds largely outside the pale of awareness. Peters and Waterman, Selznick, and Kuhn describe leadership as an essentially artistic process—a process aimed at making something that involves people in a vital and feelable play of mind. The leader is artist. He or she creates a living form, what Selznick calls an ''organism.''

More generally, it is perhaps this idea of aesthetic experience that lies behind the much ballyhooed and perhaps incompletely understood idea of ''excellence'' in organizations (see Peters and Waterman, 1982). Excellence is a kind of beauty, a kind of aesthetic. The excellent organization engages its members in transcendent values, values that rise above worldly concerns, values that can play freely at the fringe of awareness and bring aesthetic pleasure. Indeed, it is more than passing interest to note that the so-called excellent companies share many of the properties identified earlier with art works. These companies have clear and well-maintained boundaries. They are marked off from their surroundings as something special, heroic even. They also are alive with tensions of

various kinds. Peters and Waterman speak of the tensions between quality an cost, service and efficiency, passion and reason. Kuhn speaks more genericall of the contradictions, negations, and chaos of organized life. These compani also are records of growth. They are living histories. They celebrate the past wi stories, in many cases stories about founding fathers and the values they stoc for. As Peters and Waterman point out, these stories do more than recount a dea past; they are a basis and direction for the future. Last, these companies are su fused with a definite and unique sense of unresolved possibility. Always there a vision of what the company can be, an image of a possible future not yet a tained. In view of these characteristics, it is hardly surprising that these comp nies are able to keep their members enthralled.

From even this brief and unsystematic look at work, it is apparent that ae thetic experience is not confined to art but can be an integral part of work life well. Further, it seems unlikely to be an isolated phenomenon peculiar to hi levels of management or certain kinds of work activities (e.g., Kidder's desi engineer). Rather, it is potential in any kind of work or in any kind of work org nization that encourages the aesthetic turn of mind. The empirical question thus not whether there are aesthetic experiences of work but when and how o ten. This question remains for further investigation.

WORK FEELINGS REVISITED

This paper began by noting that understanding of the complex emotionality work is limited by an impoverished conceptual vocabulary. It is time now make good the claim that study of aesthetic experiences of work can impro upon this vocabulary. How are work feelings now to be conceptualized? Wh might be desiderata for future research?

Aesthetic Feelings of Work

This chapter leads first to the conclusion that one source of feeling in work aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience is a definite kind, marked by speci contents (e.g., feeling, unself-consciousness) and a characteristic process (thinking detached from purpose). Feeling emerges in this process and is intrins to it. What is felt is a play of the mind at the fringe of awareness.

This suggests that there is an aesthetics of work as surely as there is one of a However obvious this conclusion may seem in retrospect, these aesthetics fi little voice in the literature on work. Perhaps this is because aesthetic experienc are assumed not to be part of practically oriented activity. Or perhaps this is b cause the origins of aesthetic feeling are unobvious. Whereas it seems plain th work feelings could result from satisfactions or frustrations of values (Lock 1976) or from social processes of interpreting and labeling work (Salanick

Pfeffer, 1977), it is less obvious that they could "emerge" as a manifestation of the work itself. Finally, it could be that aesthetic experiences have not actually been ignored but have been understood as something else. Perhaps they have been masquerading in different dress, a prospect taken up presently.

Related Concepts of Work Feeling. How are aesthetic experiences related to other work feelings that are said to inhere in the work itself—for example, "intrinsic satisfaction" (Koch, 1956; Staw, 1976), "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), "motivator factors" (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959), and "peak experiences" (Maslow, 1971)? Consider, for example, how aesthetic experience compares to what Csikszentmihalyi (1975, p. 43) calls the "flow experience":

> 'Flow' denotes the wholistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. It is the kind of feeling after which one nostalgically says: 'that was fun,' or 'that was enjoyable.' It is the state in which action follows upon action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. We experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future.

Reinforcing this similarity between aesthetic experience and flow is the further fact that "flow" arises in activities that are artlike. Obvious examples are games. Games also have definite boundaries (often defined explicitly by a set of rules), dynamic tensions (in the form of built-in challenges and organized suspense), a record of growth (as marked by a score, or by ordering of opponents), and unresolved possibility (typically guaranteed by a structure that results either in success or failure, winning or losing). Also, and as any child knows, games are not fun unless the players want to play. A certain receptive attitude is required—a kind of "aesthetic attitude."

Consider also the affinity between aesthetic experience and "intrinsically motivated" activity. Koch (1956, p. 71) defines the latter as activity that occurs outside the ken of need or conscious purpose. This activity is "intrinsically determined within the conditions of its own context . . . self-regulated, self-determining, self-motivated, self-energizing, and unfortunately, self-liquidating." More striking still is Koch's description of how thinking goes on in this kind of activity. Thoughts

> seem to well up with no apparent effort. They merely present themselves. The spontaneity and fluency of ideation and the freedom from customary blockages seem similar to certain characteristics of the dream or certain states of near dissociation. As in these latter conditions, it is often difficult to "fix," hold in mind, the thoughts which occur (67–68).

If Koch seems to be describing aesthetic experience, perhaps it is because he is. He offers the aesthetic experience as a particularly sterling example of intrinsic-

ally motivated activity. The overlap of these two kinds of activity raise: intriguing theoretical questions. Are they the same thing? Does intrinsic motiva tion "emerge" in work activity in the same way as aesthetic feeling? If so, wha sense can be made of theories that root intrinsic motivation in rational processe: of causal attribution or categorization (see, e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1980 Sandelands, Ashford, & Dutton, 1983)? Does intrinsic motivation require an ap propriately inclined perceiver, one with the right "aesthetic" attitude? Attentioı to questions such as these could lead to broader understanding of both aestheti experience and intrinsic motivation.

Work as Art. The prospect that work may be experienced aesthetically sug gests that something can be learned about work by comparing it to art. It ha been suggested here that work can have properties similar to art and that thes properties can function similarly to encourage aesthetic experience. Specifically it has been suggested that aesthetic experiences of work are made more likely b the four properties of boundaries, dynamic tensions, a record of growth, an unresolved possibility.

This particular parallel between art and work is offered more as hypothesi than conclusion. It requires testing. Even so, it seems almost commonsensical. I work did not have definite boundaries, it would be literally interminable. If it di not have dynamic tension, it would be lifeless and dull, perhaps insufficientl disquieting to arouse more than minimal interest. Without a record of growth, i would be directionless and afford no glimpse of progress. And withou unresolved possibility, it would offer little cause to get involved. Looked at th other way, more positively, it is easy to see how work having these characteris tics could enjoin the vital play of mind identified as aesthetic experience. Wit boundaries, it is possible to commit the otherwise dangerous act of relinquishin conscious control over perception and thought. With dynamic tensions, there i available a motive for involvement. With a record of growth, it is possible t glimpse movement toward resolution of tensions. And finally, with a unresolved possibility, there is reason to believe that something can be accom plished, that meaning can be found in the work.

More important than any specific parallel drawn between work and art is th very idea that work can be thought of in terms of its prospects for aesthetic expe rience. This is a novel and potentially illuminating way to look at work. Thi view centers on the characteristics of work that can evoke and sustain a play c mind at the fringe of awareness. It identifies as pleasurable work that can be ex perienced in this way. This view of work contrasts sharply with those taken b contemporary theories of work feeling (see, e.g., Griffin, 1987). These theorie center on the characteristics of work that lead to specific interpretations of mear ing. They identify as pleasurable work that is perceived as "challenging" or re warding" (Locke, 1976) or to lead to "a feeling of being responsible for succes in a meaningful job" (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Comparing the two views,

can be seen that the former proceeds from an interest in the syntactic qualities of work (whether thinking in work assumes the aesthetic form), whereas the latter proceeds from an interest in the semantic qualities of work (what the work means). This difference in viewpoint is important and is taken up in greater detail in a moment.

Interesting though the parallels between work and art may be, it cannot be denied that there are important differences between them. Art exists for aesthetic contemplation; work does not. If work is experienced aesthetically, it is in spite of its other possibilities. Moreover, the evocative qualities of art are put there on purpose. This is not the case in work. For these reasons, art is bound to be a more rarefied and aesthetically more refined form. Still, and as argued above, these differences are not decisive. There is nothing in work that prevents it from being experienced aesthetically. As it is, the differences between art objects and work activities seem no more dramatic than those between disparate art forms such as paintings and stage plays.

Whatever differences exist between art objects and work activities, it is almost certainly true that just as there are no definitive properties of art, there are no definitive properties of aesthetically experienced work. Between aesthetically experienced work activities are resemblances that are again no stricter than those between family members. This suggests the important and sobering conclusion that there is no more hope of completely understanding aesthetic experiences of work than there is of completely understanding aesthetic experiences of art.

Aesthetic Attitude. It can also be concluded of aesthetic experiences of work that they too are likely to depend mightily on the person's attitude. The work must be regarded in a way that allows thinking to play freely within it. This means that conscious wants or desires that would otherwise direct thinking must temporarily be set aside. This aesthetic attitude contrasts with the instrumental attitude.

An important implication of this is that it is not possible to experience work aesthetically and instrumentally at the same time. To be in one frame of mind is not to be in the other. This incompatibility is a logical property of experience types. An experience of work must be aesthetic, or instrumental, or social, or something else. This is not to suggest, however, that a particular work activity cannot be experienced one way on one occasion and a different way on another occasion. Indeed it may be common for work experiences to alternate between types, perhaps even in rapid succession.

This logical incompatibility of aesthetic and instrumental experiences of work finds an interesting (and again suggestive) parallel in the incompatibility between intrinsic and extrinsic work feelings (cf. Staw, 1976). It is a well-established finding that feelings for a task can be crowded out by feelings about its rewards. Less well established, however, is the reason why this happens (see Sandelands, Ashford, & Dutton, 1983). Without putting too fine a point on it, perhaps the

reason has to do with the impossibility of experiencing an activity aesthetically and instrumentally at the same time. Thinking is either detached from purpose or it is not. Which of these states prevails on any given occasion no doubt depends on the (probably subtle) interplay between task conditions and attitude.

Research Issues. Although it is beyond our scope here to make the case definitively, a few words are needed at least to make plausible the claim that aesthetic experiences of work can be studied scientifically. Can aesthetic experiences be measured? What about the conditions of work that promote these experiences? And what about the aesthetic attitude?

Because aesthetic experience takes place mainly outside awareness, it can be observed only indirectly. Self-reports might be used to determine if and when aesthetic experience has taken place. Although aesthetic experience cannot be reported as it occurs, it can be reported after the fact. If the report is made soon enough after the experience (before its trace disappears from memory), it might even include details about what the experience felt like and how long it lasted. Alternatively, aesthetic experience could be betrayed by its detachment from purpose. Where thinking is observed to occur without purpose, aesthetic experience can be inferred. This procedure is limited to kinds of thinking that leave observable traces (e.g., doing arithmetic, writing, puzzle solving). It is limited more fundamentally by being based on induction (there is no proving that thinking actually occurred without a reason). Finally, aesthetic experiences might be detected by their insusceptibility to interruption. This possibility is suggested by the fact that unlike other kinds of experiences, aesthetic experiences are self-determining, self-motivating, and self-closing. This being the case, they could be revealed by patterns of interruptibility over time—reflected, for example, in the number of interruptions reported or the amount of incidental learning during the activity (see, e.g., Sandelands & Calder, 1987). The prediction is that interruptibility would be lower during aesthetic experience and higher at other times. This kind of measure would, of course, have to be carefully calibrated and take into account other factors that also could affect interruptibility (e.g., time pressure, stress, task demands).

Probably less severe are the problems associated with identifying and measuring properties of work that promote aesthetic experience. Such properties as hypothesized above—boundaries, tensions, record of growth, and unresolved possibility—are in varying degrees subjective and thus may be measured best by self-report. Other work properties bearing on aesthetic functioning may be more objective—for example, duration, or physical demands—and may be measured better in other ways.

Finally, although there does not yet exist a validated measure of aesthetic attitude, such a measure seems practicable. What is to be measured is a kind of openness, a readiness to concede control over thinking to an outside object. Very likely this attitude is partly reflected in a variety of existing personality

measures—positively in the cases of playfulness, creativity, sense of humor, ego strength, and self-actualization and negatively in the cases of dogmatism, authoritarianism, and self-consciousness. Assuming that a valid measure of aesthetic attitude can be devised, an interesting question is whether and to what extent this attitude is characterological or more narrowly situational. Very likely it is both.

The Concept of Work Feelings

As implied at the outset of this paper, this investigation was conducted only partly to show that aesthetic experiences are potentially an important basis of feeling at work. This investigation was conducted also to probe more deeply into feelings *of* work (as opposed to feelings *about* work), in the hope of moving toward a conceptual vocabulary better suited to deal with them.

Feelings of Work versus Feelings about Work. The aesthetic experience exists as a kind of thinking process. Its feeling exists as an emergent property of this process. Aesthetic feeling is *of* work, not *about* work. Aesthetic feeling is thus recognizably different from the mill run of work feelings described in the literature. Typically, work feelings are described as responses to the job or as judgments about the job. This can be seen in two well-known examples:

> Feelings are closely tied to how well [a person] performs on the job. Good performance is an occasion for self-reward, which serves as an incentive for continuing to do well. And because poor performance prompts unhappy feelings, the person may elect to try harder in the future so as to avoid those unpleasant outcomes (Hackman and Oldham, 1980:71–72).
>
> Job satisfaction may be viewed as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing these values are compatible with one's needs (Locke, 1976:1342).

These examples proceed from the view that work feelings results from perceptions about whether and to what extent a job gratifies job-related values or needs. They identify work feeling as an outcome of information processing the person takes stock of the job and forms an impression accordingly. Feeling is *about* work, not *of* work.

The distinction between feelings *of* work versus feelings *about* work parallels the ancient distinction between feeling and judgment and its counterpart in modern psychology between affect and attitude. It would not be worth spilling ink over were it not that these latter, more "classic" distinctions have been trampled almost beyond recognition (see Sandelands, 1988). Today it is not uncommon to find affect treated as if it were a kind of judgment, like an attitude. Indeed, sharp distinctions are rarely made between affect and attitude. Most typically, affect is regarded as a component of attitude, as part of a judgment (as for example in tripartite models of attitude). The problem is that affect is nothing like an attitude

and could in no way be part of one. Affect is noncognitive. It does not result from judgment or information processing of any kind (no matter how nascent or subliminal). Rather, it emerges as a quality of ongoing activity—as a feeling *of*.[8]

The unfortunate result of confusing these feeling types has been an almost complete neglect of the nature and provenance of feelings *of* work. Ignored are the ongoing dynamics of work feeling. This problem is described by Landy (1978, p. 535) as follows:

> If one accepts the proposition that job satisfaction represents some affective state that is an important component of most theories of work motivation, it is distressing to recognize that attention has been paid almost exclusively to the conditions *antecedent* to that state. Little or no attention has been paid to the characteristics of the state itself or to the intra-individual past history of that state.

Landy, however, states the problem in a way that obscures its solution. In this case the difficulty is in the idea that job satisfaction represents an affective state. Once again, this identifies affect with a kind of judgment. In effect, it leaves no room for affect to have a dynamic life of its own. Whereas affect or "feelings of" are continuous, judgments are discrete. There simply is no room for the former in descriptions of the latter.[9]

Thus, there is much to be gained by keeping separate the concepts "feeling of" (e.g., affect, feeling) and "feeling about" (e.g., attitude, judgment). Most important, this brings to light the need to study feelings *of* work and the need for a conceptual vocabulary to talk about these wayward feelings. It is clear that it will not do to talk about these feelings in terms of information processing. Feelings *of* work are not perceptions or judgments and cannot be traced to antecedent acts of perceiving or judgment making. What is needed instead is a language that better reflects the emergent and processual nature of work feelings.

Although this paper focuses specifically on aesthetic feelings of work, it trades in concepts that are useful for describing feelings *of* work more generally. One important concept is that feelings emerge as manifestations of ongoing work activity. Feeling is a phase of doing. Related to this is the idea that work feelings are caused neither by work activity nor by the worker's attitude. Activity and attitude present only an occasion for feeling. Feelings of work do not have efficient causes. Last but not least, there is the idea that work feelings are bound inextricably to the *form* of work activity.

Feeling and Form. Investigation of the aesthetics of work calls attention to the intimate connection between the form of work activity and the way it feels. What is felt as aesthetic experience is thinking that has the form property of being detached from purpose—a play of mind at the fringe of awareness. This suggests that there may be other coincidences between feeling and form in work—

associations that do not depend on assessments of meaning or any other sort of information processing.

This idea is foreign and undeveloped in the theory of work feeling. Where form characteristics of work are mentioned (e.g., in models of job design), they usually are lumped with characteristics of content and linked to feelings through assessments of meaning. For example, Hackman and Oldham (1976) explain the relationship between job satisfaction and form properties such as "task identity" and "feedback" with the hypothesis that incumbents use information about these properties to see whether they are "personally responsible for performing well on a meaningful job." This way of explaining feelings follows naturally from the view that feeling is a kind of judgment.

The idea that forms of work activity can be felt directly implies that it is unnecessary to know what work means to know how it feels. Work feelings can be understood simply as forms of work activity. Also, it indicates clear *how* a feeling could legitimately be said to be intrinsic to the work itself. A person with a positive feeling *of* work would neither accept nor even understand an offer of the feeling without doing the work. The feeling is of the doing; there is no cleavage between the two. Perhaps this is a clue to the longstanding mystery of intrinsic motivation. This idea raises a host of new research questions. Can forms of work activity be felt one way and yet have meanings that are felt in some other way? How are the syntax and semantics of work related? How do answers to these questions bear upon the distinction between feelings *of* work and feelings *about* work. Do these kinds of feelings intersect, and, if so, how? Other questions concern the possibilities of social influence. It is well known that feelings *about* tasks (work attitudes) can be influenced by the judgments of others (see Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978. Are feelings *of* work similarly influenceable? And, if so, how?

Although associations between feeling and form in work remain to be established, there are indications that they exist and that they can be studied systematically. For example, a recent paper (Sandelands, 1987) compared the grammatical forms and feelings of two tasks: writing poetry and grading exams.

> In poetry writing STATES and EVENTS are strongly linked. Where and how one begins affects where and how one proceeds which further affects how the task unfolds to completion. In exam-grading, STATES and EVENTS are joined more tenuously. Grading one exam has little to do with grading other exams. Associated with this difference in micro-structure . . . is a difference in continuity or "flow." . . . In poetry-writing there is a feeling of being pulled along by the task. In exam-grading there is a feeling that without constant effort, the task would never get done (pp. 132–133).

Thus it is suggested that the tasks of writing poetry and grading exams have different forms and different feelings. The flowing form of poetry writing comes with a feeling of being pulled along by the task, of being captivated. The dis-

jointed form of the grading task comes with a feeling that constant effort and attention are needed to complete the task—a feeling that the task is hard work. Although such observations as these by no means prove the connection between feeling and form, they are consistent with the thesis that what is felt is a process having a particular form.

The study of task grammar in general promises greater understanding of the formal basis of feelings of work. The signal challenge for future research is to identify which work forms are associated with which work feelings. What are the forms of joy, amusement, frustration, disappointment? A theoretical language of some kind is needed to describe these forms.

Reclaiming the Aesthetic in Work

Such revisions as detailed above in our understanding of work feelings are important beyond what they indicate for theory and research. Although not the intention of this paper, it is scarcely possible to resist the temptation to give at least some measure of the practical significance of a serious concern for the aesthetics of work.

Obviously, and not unimportantly, attention is drawn to the aesthetic possibilities of work—to the many and various ways work can be beautiful. Although it remains for careful research to determine, a typical workday may contain several aesthetic experiences. Some of these no doubt are of short duration—lasting perhaps no more than a few seconds. Others may be of longer duration—lasting perhaps several minutes. Whatever the ecology of these experiences, they surely are an important aspect of work feeling.

Concern for the aesthetics of work leads also to suggestions about how to make work more appealing. In this chapter it has been argued that aesthetic experiences of work are more likely when work has boundaries, dynamic tensions, a record of growth and unresolved possibility. Although its shape and promise cannot now be anticipated, there is an art of job design yet to be developed.

Finally, concern for the aesthetics of work leads to the insight that the aesthetic appeal of work cannot be guaranteed merely by tinkering with its design. It is necessary also to prepare and encourage those doing the work to appreciate its aesthetic possibilities—to assume an aesthetic rather than instrumental attitude toward the work. One way to do this is by drawing attention to these possibilities. Perhaps it is not so silly to suggest that if there can be courses on art appreciation, then why not courses on work appreciation. Another way to do this is by protecting the worker from concerns that interfere with aesthetic experience (e.g., ego-related concerns, concerns about safety, security). By alleviating these concerns—such as by employment practices or reward systems—it may be possible to encourage rather than discourage aesthetic experiences of work.

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NOTES

1. However innocent, this limitation in the scope of study may reflect an unwitting scientism that confines inquiry to feelings and feeling dynamics that can be rigorously operationalized and quantified. If understanding is to advance, chances must be taken also on concepts that are not yet amenable to such treatment.

2. It is ironic that feeling, the most immediate and pervasive aspect of human being, should be difficult for people to talk about. Langer (1967, p. 57) suggests that this is because feelings are known without symbolic mediation and thereby without conceptual form: "To turn this knowledge by acquaintance into knowledge by description is not a simple procedure of reporting private experience, because the formal possibilities of language are not great enough to reflect the fluid structure of cerebral acts in psychical phase."

3. This is not to say that there are not important similarities between art and science. Both are interested in human life and experience, to get it to "stand still to be looked at, and in principle, to be looked at by everybody" (Bosanquet, quoted in Langer, 1967, p. 115). Moreover, both traffic in the constructive use of metaphor. The artist's image or symbol, just like the scientist's concept or theory, functions to unite ideas or experiences not previously joined.

4. It is interesting that aesthetic experience is often described as a kind of "work." It is said to be a kind of labor. It is said also to have wages—new and deeper understandings of the experienced world. This linguistic parallel hints of deeper affinities between these disparate-seeming activities.

5. This contrasts with the idea that feeling or beauty is somehow contained in the art work—that the art work is a kind of symbol. This confuses the functioning of art with the way it sometimes turns out. Art functions only as a circumstance. Its beholder may "discover" in it a feeling or idea, but this feeling or idea is not actually in the work. It is in a sense "put there" by the beholder. After the fact, it only seems that the art work symbolizes that feeling or idea. Failure to recognize this has led to a number of gratuitous puzzles in aesthetic philosophy—for example, how can a work be interpreted in different ways? How can the artist's intent for a work be reconciled with the different interpretations given to it by critics? How can the significance of a work change over time? How is the "language of art" the same or different from natural language?

6. She remarks:

> It is clear that in Greece the values were different from our own today. Indeed we are not able really to bring into one consistent whole their outlook upon life; from our point of view it seems to involve a self-contradiction. People so devoted to poetry as to make it a matter of practical importance must have been, we feel, deficient in the sense for what is practically important, dreamers, not alive to life's hard facts. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Greeks were pre-eminently realists. The temper of mind that made them carve their statues and paint their pictures from the living human beings around them, that kept their poetry within the sober limits of the possible, made them hard-headed men in the world of every-day affairs (p. 67).

7. Ironically, contemporary art also has discovered the popular movements, from comics to graffitti. But when these works are also given museum status, it seems their spontaneity vanishes, and all that is left is an idea, a "movement" in art.

8. It is easy to see how this confusion could come about. A feeling *of* can always be made to seem a feeling *about*. One simply attributes it to the satisfaction or frustration of some need—for example, a need for beauty. On logical grounds, however, it makes just as much sense (if not more) to suppose the opposite—that feelings alleged to result from satisfactions or frustrations of needs are actually misattributed feelings *of*. Satisfaction statements (feelings about) may not be feelings at all but rather just what a note-taking and rationalizing consciousness makes out to be the reasons for feeling.

9. This is a point of some confusion. Often it is assumed that judgment does explain ongoing feeling. For example, it is said that, once made, feeling judgments persist—as if by inertia. Or else it is said that feeling judgments are made continually—that what is felt at one moment is the result of a judgment made the moment before. But these explanations raise even greater difficulties than they solve. *How* could judgments persist, if not abetted by some process behind the scenes? And if feeling is not inertial, how and why does the mind make the same judgment over and over again? And why does feeling seem to be continuous?

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