Session 3. January 19. More about the brain and some discussion of aesthetic issues. We will watch a video on basic information about how the brain does emotions (Turnbull 2003). Again, the encyclopedia article should open up questions which we are going to try to address with brain information.

Reading:
Keep studying your brain materials.

Solms and Turnbull, The Brain and the Inner World, chs. 1 and 2. "Introduction to Basic Concepts" and "Mind and Brain," 1-43, 45-78. 75-78 summarize the theoretical underpinnings of this course. 44+34pp.

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Basic: Art is not "practical." What about advertising (fashion photography)? Propaganda (e.g., Russian posters)? Kant: interesselosigkeit.

Detachment - distinterested (not uninterested). "Nonpractical" -- a useful term. Not strictly perceptual alone.

38b4. We say music is "sad," Symphony "heroic" (Eroica) nnh says attribute these emotions to perceiver, not work of art.

38b8. He says, with literature we respond to meanings, but how about rhyme, rhythm, etc.? He says these mostly depend on the meanings of words.

41a1-2. Sound effects in poetry come from meaning. Query, query!

"On her trip around the world, Nanzia Nunzio Confronted Ozymandias. She went Alone and like a vestal long-prepared." Stevens, "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction."

Some say art deals with "higher" senses, vision & hearing, not touch, taste, smell. A distinction in the brain.

Cp. blind person's appreciation of sculpture.

Aesthetic attitude includes enjoyment? Best criticism enhances enjoyment?

--isn't "enjoyment" a "purpose"? Why do we pay for a ticket?

--not cognitive. Music critics who give you history.

--not personal. How about Lesser's "analogizing"? Isn't that the "moral" function of literature, to shed light on one's life?

38a9. "That which cannot be perceived . . . is not relevant to aesthetic perception." Hence no biography, no discussions of technique. But what about a painting's "prevailing mood" -- is this something one perceives?
A parenthesis: 40a2: "As with so many other terms (for example, `romanticism'), we are surer of
the term's denotation (i.e., what instances it covers) than we are of its designation (i.e., the
criterion by which certain works would be included and others excluded." He is talking two
kinds of definition: prototypical and classical/logical. "Furniture'? Is a rug furniture? A
potted plant? Cp. "odd numbers"--exact definition possible.

40a4. Can any or all objects be regarded aesthetically?
But he says, they do not "repay" aesthetic contemplation equally. Note metaphor.
He is talking feedback!

40a9: Distinguishing mark of fine art is how it functions in our experience.
"Useful" art. Crafts. Glass art: "studio" vs. "vessel." Roman glass cup vs. modern glass artist's
cup.
Meaning: possibles: "about" / "theme" / "thesis" / "effect". A useful substitute for this knotty
term is "making sense." "Making sense" is less demanding than "meaning." "Fitting into
normal mental processing."
49a4: "Many views about human life, death, and love, and about the cosmic setting of
human life are implied in countless works of literary art." Hmmmm.

43a4: Form
Big form vs. little form.
Theme-and-variations.
Contextualism vs. Isolationism.
New Critics / formalists / structuralists were all isolationists.
Literary history / intellectual history were contextualists.
I would say most postmod criticism is contextualist. E.g., reader-response; New Historicism
45a  Gives various possibilities for being contextual.

Theories of Art,
Formalist. The standard modernist view. *The beautiful object.*
Art as [self-]expression. Romantics. Early 20C radical reaction vs. this idea.
47a5. How can music be sad? Yesss!
47b2. Music sad when it mimics human ways of expressing sadness. Ekman?
47b8. W/a "contains" or "embodies" feelings. NO! 48a1 Sadness is a property. NO!
HOW UN-PSYCHOLOGICAL ALL THIS IS!

Art as symbol of human feelings. 48a4 "Works of art are "iconic" signs of psychological processes
taking place in human beings, specifically, signs of human feeling."
48b5. Seems to suggest that if you add convention it makes this theory better.

Art and Truth (to human nature).
An issue for literature.
Current school of "cognitive criticism," "Darwinian criticism." "Neo-evolutionists." The*Aeneid*: why does Aeneas leave Dido and (ultimately) marry Lavinia? Both ordered by
gods.
Art and Morality.


Aestheticism: Oscar Wilde. Art for art's sake movement at end of 19C. Aesthetic & moral values are intimately related. (N.B. "values" in works of art, not minds.)

Art stimulates imagination. Current mess in in Iraq comes from lack of imagination. They are just like us, like what we like, e.g., "freedom," consumerism.

Art & music recommended for kids >2y to enhance cognitive skills. Adults?

51a3. What is the effect of art?

catharsis: work "off" emotions. Better: release from tension; inner clarification. heightened sensibilities.

Censorship? How does it work?

Definition of art?

52a9-53b7 Elaborate set of conditions.

nnh: art as convention

Aesthetic value. Subjectivist vs. objectivist theories.

Subjectivist: "emotive" theories. Aesthetic value just refers to an emotion. An individual, unique criterion.

"Sociological" view: lots of people will enjoy. nnh favors.

Objectivist: value is "in" work itself. A set of properties? Unity, complexity, intensity. But no one agrees on same.

Dewey: capacity to produce a satisfying aesthetic response? What's a "capacity"?

Conclusion: It seems to me that many of the difficulties and problems described are made more difficult by putting properties like form, meaning "in" the work of art rather than "in" the experience of the work of art. We will address this angle next week.

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DVD of Turnbull.

His background.

Terms you need to know.

Prosody.


"Object" - other person

Placebo.

4. January 26. This will be our last session that develops the knowledge of the brain that we will be using throughout the rest of the seminar. We will watch a video giving basic information about how the brain does memory--something that will be important further on in the seminar (Yovell 2003). We will open up some fundamental issues about the relation of mind
and brain with respect to literature. And we will be taking a look at the ideas behind reader-response criticism.

Reading:
Holland, "Reader-response already is cognitive criticism." Online. 2pp.
Holland, "Reader-Response Criticism." Handout. 9pp.
Holland, YMOM, ch. 3, "Where Is a Text?" Online. 21pp.