

A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF THE THREE NEW APPROACHES TO AESTHETICS*

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the role of the three new approaches to aesthetic study that extend the scope of aesthetics from artwork to broader realms such as nature and everyday life. The problem is, "Why are these three approaches important in aesthetics?" As to the research findings, aesthetic concepts, aesthetic experience, and aesthetic objects can provide a new vision of aesthetic study that can extend its scope to broader or better applicable realms, such as the natural, environmental, and everyday life of people. To achieve the aim of the research, the descriptive and evaluative methods are used. This paper is supposed to provide the proper knowledge of how the aesthetic concept, aesthetic experience, and aesthetic object contribute to a wide range of fields, from philosophy of art to design, architecture, urban design, digital technology, and environmental conservation. Its interdisciplinary impact makes aesthetic study a more valuable tool for improving both personal well-being and societal development.

Keywords: Aesthetic Concept, Aesthetic Experience, Aesthetic Object, Nature, Everyday Life

Introduction

As philosophy is a wide subject, there are different branches of it. Philosophy literally means 'Love of Wisdom' in Western tradition which also means a pursuit of reality, the search for truth, and the endeavor to live a good life. The study of reality and existence, exploring the nature of being, the world, and the universe, this type of branch is called metaphysics. Concerning the study of knowledge, its nature, sources, and limitations. Which asks, "What can we know?" and "How do we know it?" This branch is called epistemology. Ethics, an axiological study of morality, examining what is right and wrong, good and bad is another important branch of philosophy. It explores how people should act and what values they should live by. Likewise, another study mainly concerned with value judgment is aesthetics, traditionally known as the science of sensuous knowledge or philosophy of art, which focuses on the value study of artwork, beauty, and taste.

The study of reasoning and argument, that focuses on the principles of valid reasoning and the structure of arguments. This type of branch is called logic. The last one is the philosophy of X, in which X stands for many other fields of academics such as politics, science, mind, education, law, or religion. This branch analyzes the foundational problems and conceptual frameworks specific to any given field.

This research is mainly concerned with aesthetics since the purpose of this research is to show that aesthetic objects which are either art or non-art are tasted and judged by using aesthetic concepts for obtaining objective value because aesthetic experience from perceiving aesthetic objects is fundamentally subjective in its nature. The scope of aesthetics extends beyond art to include natural beauty and everyday experiences. It involves critical reflection on art, culture, and nature, and considers criteria like symmetry, harmony, and balance. Aesthetics also intersects with other areas of philosophy, such as ethics and metaphysics, by addressing questions about the

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value and meaning of aesthetic experiences. Aesthetics explores the nature of beauty, art, and sensory experience. It asks fundamental questions such as “What is beauty?”, “How do we perceive and appreciate art?”, and “What is the role of taste and judgment in artistic expression?”. However, it can be extended the scope of aesthetic questions from the three new approaches of aesthetics such as How does scientific knowledge about nature influence our aesthetic appreciation? What is the relationship between aesthetic value and environmental ethics? How do we appreciate the aesthetics of everyday environments, including urban and suburban settings? Aesthetics is intrinsically related to philosophy since it deals with understanding human experience and understanding the world, which may be natural or cultural, from a philosophical standpoint.

What Aesthetics is

Aesthetics is derived from the Greek word *aisthetikos*, meaning “sense perception.” German philosopher E.G. Hegel (1770-1983) defined aesthetics as “Philosophy of Art”, this definition is the most powerful and the best one. In philosophy, aesthetics refers to the study of sensory experiences, particularly as they relate to art, beauty, and taste. It seeks to answer fundamental questions such as: What is beauty? What is art? How do humans perceive and evaluate artistic expressions?

Aesthetics is concerned not only with visual art but also with experiences of nature, music, literature, and even everyday objects. Philosophers debate whether beauty and art are objective, meaning they exist independently of human perception, or subjective, depending entirely on the perceiver’s experience. Aesthetics has been a central topic of inquiry since ancient times. Plato and Aristotle, two foundational figures in Western philosophy, provided some of the earliest reflections on beauty and art. Plato believed that beauty was an ideal form, existing beyond the physical world. According to him, art is merely a copy of reality, which itself is a copy of the ideal forms. Therefore, Plato was skeptical about the value of art, as he felt it could distort the truth and mislead viewers by focusing on the appearance rather than the reality behind it.

Aristotle, in contrast, saw art as an important means of understanding and representing the world. He introduced the concept of mimesis, or imitation, arguing that art imitates life and that this imitation allows people to learn and experience emotions in a controlled environment. Aristotle believed that art, particularly tragedy, plays a crucial role in purging emotions through catharsis, providing critical thinking and emotional benefits to the viewer. In the 18th century, Immanuel Kant further advanced aesthetic theory in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790). Kant argued that aesthetic judgments are disinterested, meaning that when someone judges something as beautiful, they do so without personal desire or practical concerns. Instead, one appreciates the object for its own sake. Kant also suggested that judgments of beauty have a universal quality, meaning that if something is truly beautiful, it should evoke a similar response in others, even though individual tastes may differ.

The Subjectivity vs. Objectivity

Subjectivists argue that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, meaning that what one person finds beautiful, another may not. This view emphasizes personal experiences, cultural

influences, and individual preferences in determining what is considered beautiful or artistically valuable.

Objectivists, on the other hand, believe that beauty is a feature of the object itself, independent of individual perception. This means that certain qualities, such as harmony, proportion, and balance, make something beautiful, regardless of who is perceiving it.

Contemporary thinkers often propose a middle ground, suggesting that while personal taste plays a significant role in aesthetic judgments, there may still be some universal principles that guide our understanding of beauty.

For example, the natural human preference for balance could be considered an objective component of aesthetic appreciation, even if individual responses to specific works of art vary.

The Three New Approaches to Aesthetics

The core key concepts of this research are three new approaches to aesthetics, namely the aesthetic concept, aesthetic experience, and aesthetic object. Understanding the interrelation of these three concepts can help to explore how to define beauty, how people's perception engages with art or non-art objects, and the role of aesthetic objects in eliciting aesthetic responses.

The **aesthetic concept** refers to the framework or principles that define what is considered “aesthetics.” It includes the ideas and criteria by which we judge something as beautiful, artistic, or valuable from an aesthetic point of view.

While closely related to the philosophy of art, aesthetics also deals with responses to natural objects and phenomena that are described in terms of beauty and ugliness. The study of aesthetic judgment includes the principles and criteria by which we evaluate and interpret works of art and other objects of aesthetic interest. Aesthetics considers various cultural and historical contexts, recognizing that concepts of beauty and taste can vary significantly across different societies and periods. Hence, it can be said that the scope of aesthetics is wider than the ordinary thoughts of people, which usually refer to the realm of art.

Aesthetic concepts explore the nature of beauty, art, and taste, and how they evoke emotional or intellectual responses.

In painting, aesthetic concept is associated with the use of color, form, and composition creates visual harmony or provokes thought, such as **impressionism** revolves around the fleeting effects of light and color, creating a sense of movement and atmosphere, and **abstract art** is about evoking emotions and ideas through non-representational means.

In literature, aesthetic concept is associated with the use of language, rhythm, and imagery to evoke emotions or convey profound ideas, such as **romanticism**, a literary movement, emphasizes emotion, individualism, and the glorification of nature while **modernism** is about breaking traditional forms to explore the complexities of human consciousness and experience.

In Music, aesthetic concept is associated with the arrangement of sound and silence to create harmony, rhythm, and emotional resonance, such as **Pop, Rock, and Hip Hop**. Some of the most popular music globally includes pop, rock, and hip hop, which have had significant cultural and artistic impacts and continue to evolve and find success.

In Nature, aesthetic concept is associated with the appreciation of natural forms, patterns, and phenomena as sources of beauty and inspiration, such as **sublime** refers to the awe-inspiring

beauty of nature that evokes a sense of grandeur and power while **picturesque** describes landscapes that are charming and visually pleasing, often resembling a picture.

In everyday life, aesthetic concept is associated with finding beauty in ordinary moments, objects, or routines, such as Minimalist Design that is a well-organized workspace can be aesthetically pleasing. **minimalism** emphasizes reducing clutter and clean lines and essential elements that focus on simplicity and functionally. **Culinary Arts** which is the presentation of a dish, like sushi, combines taste and visual appeal.

Fine Art in Aesthetics

Fine Art refers to art created primarily for its aesthetic value and emotional power rather than for practical function or commercial gain. Fine art pieces are generally regarded as high-quality works that reflect deep artistic talent and are appreciated for their ability to convey profound meaning or evoke emotional responses. Some prominent concepts of fine art are –

Cubism: Cubism breaks objects into geometric shapes and presents multiple perspectives simultaneously. See: illustration (1)



Illustration (1): Pablo Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version)"

Source: <https://www.artchive.com/artwork/les-femmes-d-alger-o-version-pablo-picasso-1907/>

Realism focuses on depicting subjects as they appear in everyday life, without embellishment or interpretation. See: illustration (2)



Illustration (2): Gustave Courbet's The Stone Breakers

Source: <https://birsanatbirkita.com/art/courbet-the-stone-breakers/>

Impressionism: This movement captures the effects of light and color, often with loose brushwork and an emphasis on the momentary. See: illustration (3)



Illustration (3): Claude Monet's "Impression, Sunrise"

Source: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/impressionism/a/claude-monet-impression-sunrise>

Expressionism: Expressionism seeks to represent emotional experiences rather than physical reality, often through distorted forms and vivid colors. See: illustration (4)

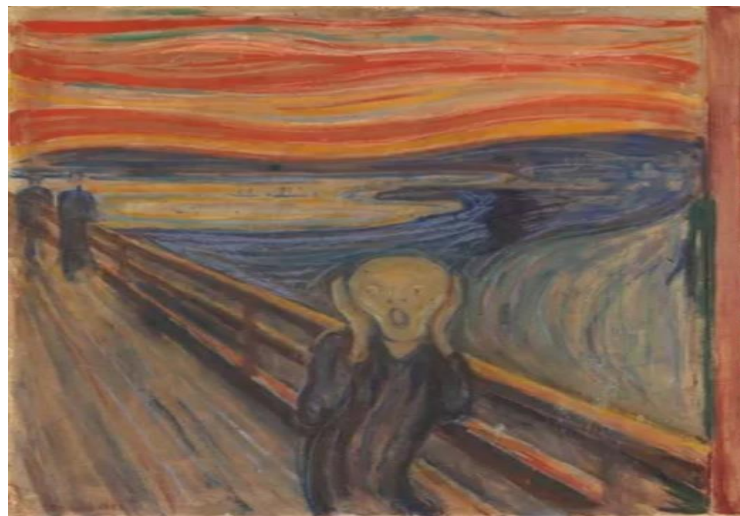


Illustration (4): Munch's "The Scream"

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Edvard-Munch-The-scream-1893_fig1_354657351

Minimalism: Minimalism emphasizes simplicity, using limited colors, shapes, and forms to create a sense of order and clarity. See: illustration (5)



Illustration (5): Sol LeWitt, Two Open Modular Cubes/Half-Off (1972) at Tate Gallery, London.

Source: <https://theartling.com/en/artzine/famous-minimalist-art/>

Conceptual art: Conceptual art prioritizes ideas over aesthetic form, often challenging traditional notions of art. See: illustration (6)



Illustration (6): A man takes a piece of candy from "Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.) by Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Source: <https://www.felixgonzalez-torresfoundation.org/works/untitled-portrait-of-ross-in-l-a>

These concepts illustrate the diverse ways in which fine art can explore and express aesthetic values. Aesthetic concepts are subjective, meaning it depends on cultural, personal, and historical contexts. Aesthetic concepts provide the intellectual for perceiving art and beauty, shaping our understanding of what makes an object or experience aesthetically significant.

Aesthetic experience is a profound and often transformative encounter with art, nature, or any object that evokes a deep sense of beauty, wonder, or emotional resonance.

Sensory engagement lies at the core of aesthetic experience. Paintings and sculptures captivate the visual senses through their vibrant colors, intricate shapes, and thoughtful composition. Music stimulates the auditory senses by weaving melodies, harmonies, and rhythms into an evocative tapestry. Meanwhile, the textures and materials of sculptures or architectural designs appeal to the sense of touch, offering a tactile dimension to the experience.

Subsequently, aesthetic experiences can foster intellectual growth and critical thinking. Through art, individuals are encouraged to delve into interpretation, navigate ambiguity, and embark on intellectual inquiry. This journey enhances analytical abilities while cultivating open-mindedness and a capacity for thoughtful evaluation.

In addition, aesthetic experiences frequently mirror cultural, historical, and societal influences, enabling individuals to gain deeper insights into diverse cultures and viewpoints. They offer a valuable avenue for examining identity, advocating for social justice, and embracing shared human experiences, thereby nurturing a sense of community and connection.

The aesthetic experiences of perceivers encompass emotional responses, sensory engagement, intellectual stimulation, critical thinking, and the cultivation of cultural understanding and social connections. Conversely, the aesthetic experiences of artists involve the creative process, emotional immersion, intellectual challenges, and the attainment of a flow state.

These aesthetic experiences are vital for fostering emotional, intellectual, and social growth. It bridges personal and collective experiences, stimulates creativity, enhances well-being, and offers profound insights into cultural and existential questions.

Aesthetic object is any item or phenomenon that evokes an aesthetic experience, typically distinguished by its beauty, form, or artistic significance. This concept encompasses various art forms—such as paintings, sculptures, music, and literature—as well as elements of nature, like landscapes or sunsets, which inspire aesthetic appreciation through sensory perception and emotional or intellectual involvement.

Moreover, an aesthetic object stimulates feelings of pleasure, wonder, or admiration through its appeal to the senses or the mind, making it an object of aesthetic experience.

The three new approaches to aesthetics for its broader meaning and scope, aesthetic concepts, aesthetic experiences, and aesthetic objects are interconnected. Aesthetic objects are judged using aesthetic concepts, and the interaction between perceivers and the object produces the aesthetic experience. The importance of these three approaches extends far beyond the superficial appreciation of beauty and ugliness.

An Aesthetic Study of “Rose Apple Gatherers” Poem

သပြေသီးကောက်

ဝါဆိုဝါခေါင် ရေတွေကြီးလို့
 သပြေသီးမှည့် ကောက်စို့ကွယ်။
 ခရာဆူးချုံ ဟိုအထဲက
 မျှော့နက်မည်းကြီး တွယ်တတ်တယ်။
 မျှော့နက်ဆိုတာ ချုံနဲ့လားကွဲ့
 မြွေနဂါးတောင် မကြောက်ဘူးကွယ်။
 တို့လဲကြောက်ပေါင် အတူသွားစို့
 အုန်းလက်နွားလေး ထားခဲ့မယ်။
 သွားကွယ် သွားကွယ်။
 မင်းသုဝဏ် (၁၀ ဇွန် ၁၉၃၁)

“Rose Apple Gatherers”

July, August-rain and flood
 Let's go pick the ripe rose-apple.
 Hi! Take care! In thorns and mud,
 That's where big, black leeches grapple.
 Leeches? Pah! The hornless thing!
 I'll fight snakes or serpent-kings.
 Who's afraid? Let's all go now.
 Come on! Come on!

Translated by G.H. Luce

In this poem, the aesthetic object encompasses both the poem as a whole and the elements within it that are valued for their beauty or importance. Typically, an aesthetic object can be classified into three categories: its form, its content, and its subject matter.

Form: In this poem, lines are conversational, resembling a dialogue between two or more speakers as they prepare to gather rose-apples (သပြေသီးကောက်). This form reflects the casual, energetic tone of the poem. Although the poem is not tightly bound by rhyme, it features some

internal rhyming words (e.g., “grapple” and “apple”), which adds a playful rhythm and reinforces the lighthearted nature of the poem. The tone is informal and adventurous. There is an element of excitement and courage as the gatherers face natural obstacles like thorns (ခရာဆူးခွံ) and leeches (မျှော့နက်မည်း). The repeated phrases like “Come on!” “သွားကွယ်” creates a sense of enthusiasm and urgency, encouraging the group to move forward despite challenges.

Content: The poem captures the scene of a group of people about to gather rose-apples during the rainy season (July and August). The conditions are tough, with thorns (ခရာဆူးခွံ) and leeches (မျှော့နက်မည်း), but the group is determined and fearless. This sense of adventure is highlighted through their casual dismissal of the dangers, such as leeches (မျှော့နက်မည်း) and snakes (မြွေနဂါး), and their eagerness to continue. The poem uses vivid imagery of the natural environment, describing “big black leeches” (မျှော့နက်မည်းကြီး) and “thorns (ခရာဆူးခွံ).” These natural elements create a sense of hardship and danger, yet they are not portrayed as overwhelming or insurmountable obstacles. The poem’s conversational tone includes a humorous dismissal of dangers like leeches (မျှော့နက်မည်းကြီး) and snakes (မြွေနဂါး), showing the gatherers’ playful, fearless attitude. The reference to leaving the “coconut cow” (အုန်းလက်နွားလေး) adds an element of whimsy, implying that they are leaving behind their everyday comforts for an adventurous task.

Subject-matter: The primary subject matter revolves around human beings interacting with the natural world. The gatherers are venturing into a harsh, wild environment during the rainy season, yet they embrace the challenge with confidence and excitement. This reflects a broader theme of the relationship between humans and nature, where danger is met with bravery. Despite the rough conditions, the gatherers exhibit resilience and courage. The poem suggests that life’s obstacles, whether they are physical like leeches or metaphorical challenges, can be overcome with determination and camaraderie. The task of gathering rose-apples, a seemingly ordinary activity, is portrayed as an exciting adventure. This conveys a deeper appreciation for the simple pleasures in life, turning a mundane chore into an opportunity for fun and teamwork. The form, content, and subject matter of this poem work together to create an energetic and adventurous tone. The free verse structure reflects the spontaneity of the situation, while the content focuses on the gatherers’ interaction with a challenging natural environment. The subject matter highlights themes of courage, adventure, and the joy found in life’s simple tasks.

Aesthetic Concept of this poem

Beauty of Nature: The poem vividly describes the natural background, such as the rainy season (ရေတွေကြီးလို့-heavy rain) and the ripening of the rose-apple (သပြေသီးမှည့်), celebrating the beauty of seasonal change and its relationship to human life. **Bravery and Adventure:** This one also emphasizes overcoming natural obstacles like thorns and mud (ခရာဆူးခွံ) and leeches (မျှော့နက်မည်းကြီး). The idea of facing nature with boldness is central to this aesthetic concept, suggesting that adventure is an integral part of human life.

Community and shared experience: The lines “တို့လဲ ကွဲကျပုခါလျ အတူသွားစို့” emphasize togetherness and solidarity, highlighting a collective effort. The sense of community and unity adds to the poem’s aesthetic concepts by showing how experiences in nature are shared and

enjoyed together. The joy and reward come not only from nature but from the shared experience of facing challenges together.

Simplicity and detachment: The decision to leave the “coconut cow” (အုန်းလက်နွားလေးထားခဲ့မယ်) can also symbolize simplicity or detachment. This aesthetic concept ties to the idea of focusing on the experience itself (picking the rose-apples) rather than holding onto things that may be unnecessary in the present moment. It reflects an aesthetic appreciation of minimalism.

Aesthetic Experience of this poem

Sensory Engagement: The description of “ရေတွေကြီးလို့” (floods), “ခရာဆူးချုံ” (thorns), and “မျှော့နက်မည်းကြီး” (leeches) engages a reader’s senses; these can evoke the visualization of the rainy season’s challenges. This sensory experience immerses a reader in the scene and makes it feel more real.

Emotional Responses: The poem evokes feelings of excitement and determination through its portrayal of nature's obstacles and the reader's response to bravery. The line “မြွေနဂါးတောင် မကြောက်ဘူးကွယ်” (I’m not afraid of even snakes or dragons) reflects a bold, fearless attitude that encourages in life.

Cultural Understanding and Social Connection: The rainy season and the tradition of gathering fruits like rose-apple would evoke cultural memories. The poem may evoke feelings of nostalgia and shared experiences tied to communal activities and nature’s bounty.

The poem’s depiction of a challenging but rewarding interaction with nature transforms a mundane task into a powerful aesthetic experience. Through its imagery and tone, the poem conveys the idea that beauty can be found in struggle and perseverance, and that adventure itself is an aesthetic pursuit. By analyzing these elements, perceiver gain a deeper appreciation of both the poem’s artistry and its philosophical exploration of human engagement with the world.

Conclusion

Aesthetic objects, experiences, and concepts converge to form the framework through which individuals engage with and interpret the world of beauty, art, and expression. The diversity of aesthetic objects, ranging from natural phenomena to human-made artifacts, illustrates the broad spectrum of stimulate that provokes aesthetic engagement. These objects become central to the formation of aesthetic experience, where the subjective interpretation of beauty and emotion is enacted.

Individual aesthetic experiences are informed by personal, cultural, and contextual factors that shape how they perceive and value aesthetic objects. Aesthetic concepts, such as beauty, the sublime, and the picturesque, function as abstract frameworks that guide this engagement. They serve as perspectives through which aesthetic objects are evaluated and understood, highlighting the importance of cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts in shaping aesthetic judgments. These concepts are not fixed but are instead dynamic, evolving as societal norms, cultural values, and individual preferences change over time.

One key insight derived from this exploration is the relational nature of aesthetic experiences. Rather than being confined to the object itself, aesthetic value emerges from the interaction between the object, the individual perceiving it, and the broader context in which this

interaction takes place. This reinforces the idea that aesthetic experience is deeply personal and subjective, though it can be informed by shared cultural or philosophical frameworks. For instance, while one individual may find beauty in a piece of modernist art, another may perceive the same work as chaotic or unpleasant, highlighting the variance in aesthetic experiences.

Furthermore, the significance of aesthetic experience extends beyond mere enjoyment of beauty or artistic value. It encompasses a wide range of emotional and intellectual responses, from awe and wonder to contemplation and critique. The process of engaging with an aesthetic object can lead to deep reflection on broader philosophical, ethical, or existential questions, indicating that aesthetic experiences are not only about passive reception but also about active interpretation and meaning-making. Throughout this paper, many have examined how aesthetic objects, experiences, and concepts are intertwined, shaping human interactions with art and beauty in profound ways. These elements are not isolated phenomena but are part of an interconnected web of perception, interpretation, and appreciation. By understanding this interconnection, man can better appreciate the complexity of aesthetic experiences and the role they play in our lives.

Aesthetic objects provide the foundation for experiences that are subjectively interpreted through aesthetic concepts. These experiences are influenced by individual perception, cultural context, and philosophical ideas about beauty and art. By recognizing the dynamic interplay between objects, experiences, and concepts, we gain a deeper understanding of how aesthetics informs not only the appreciation of art but also people's broader worldview. The study of aesthetics, therefore, remains an essential inquiry into human existence, reflecting people's desire to find meaning, beauty, and value in the world around us. To conclude, aesthetic concepts, aesthetic experiences, and aesthetic objects can provide a new vision of aesthetic study that can extend its scope to broader or better applicable realms, such as natural, environmental, and everyday life of people.

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