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Canada

Aesthetic Response and Post-Viewing Experience:
A Process Study

Richard Lachapelle

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in
The Department
of
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ABSTRACT

Aesthetic Response and Post-Viewing Experience:**A Process Study**

Richard Lachapelle

Using qualitative research methodology, this thesis set out to examine the post-viewing experiences of two volunteers in relation to two works of art encountered in a museum setting. The study began with a tandem interview in which both subjects gave separate verbal accounts of their viewing experiences, followed by a group discussion of their responses. Two weeks later, separate follow-ups were conducted in which the participants were asked to repeat the viewing and recounting exercise of the first session. In addition, each subject was asked to report all activities relating to either painting undertaken during the two-week interlude. Analysis of results revealed that both subjects engaged in considerable and relevant post-viewing activities. These varied with each participant, but included discussions, contemplation, visual recall, associations, and inquiry. The varied nature and extent of these activities led to the conclusion that, for these two subjects at least, the aesthetic response process extends well beyond the actual art viewing period. Memory was identified as a potentially significant feature of many of the post-viewing activities observed.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

The research project presented in this thesis has as its source my experience as a museum educator. In my work, I have had the opportunity to become familiar with the varied reactions that all kinds of people have when viewing works of art. However, widespread exposure to such responses does not necessarily guarantee in depth understanding of their nature and meaning. Many a time, I have been left baffled by the comments, the queries and sometimes, the seemingly aggressive nature of the reactions of some museum visitors to the works of art under consideration.

These experiences have led me to investigate the processes that individuals go through when they respond to art in a museum setting. I have come to wonder about the developmental aspects of adult aesthetic responses. Furthermore, I have become curious about how adults formulate judgments in response to specific works of art.

Statement of the Problem

By and large, the most widely used form of educational intervention in art museums consists of the guided tour - usually a one-time affair, lasting less than one hour - given by a volunteer docent or by a professional art educator. There is a widespread, yet non-verbalized,

assumption underlying the educational rationale for the guided tour. This assumption is that learning in the museum setting is always an immediate experience occurring at the precise moment when educator and public discuss the works of art at hand. Perhaps this assumption is simply an extension of the generally held view in education that learning is mainly a question of the transmission of facts from teacher to student. From this perspective, learning is seen as almost instantaneous, and it follows therefore that the evidence of learning can be immediately detected. Not all educators agree with this conception of the learning process. According to Brent Wilson (1974, p. 64), "...it is wrong-headed to attempt to assess the outcomes of aesthetic education programs only while the programs are still on-going or immediately following completion".

It has occurred to me that we know practically nothing about what happens to adult participants in the days or weeks following their involvement in a guided museum tour. Does learning in relation to a specific art experience continue well after the initial contact with the work of art in question? In other words, does the adult's response to a specific work of art carry through in the days or weeks immediately following the initial encounter between the viewer and the art object?

These are significant questions, though somewhat complex and much too broad to be answered here by one process study. Two related and somewhat more manageable questions are

therefore the focus of this thesis project. What kinds of related experiences will two study participants have in the subsequent couple of weeks following the initial viewing of specific works of art? And finally, do the participants' understanding and appreciation of these works of art change as a result of such experiences?

Definition of Terms

For the sake of clarity, this section presents and defines the basic technical terms that the reader will encounter in this paper.

Aesthetic: Traditionally, the term "aesthetics" has been used to designate the branch of philosophical enquiry dealing with theories of the beautiful. In this thesis, use of the word is not intended to be restricted to its philosophical etymology. Rather, the use of the adjective "aesthetic" is meant to distinguish the domain of human cognition and experience that is the focus of this research from other kinds of cognition and experience, namely the empirical and the moral (Parsons, 1987). Furthermore, it was never intended that the word be used as a criterion to identify "expert" and "non-expert" commentary in regards to works of art. For this reason, with the condition that the comments had to be related in some way to the work of art under

review, all remarks made by study participants were taken into account. Therefore, the use of the term "aesthetic response" is used, in this thesis, as equivalent to the expression "verbal responses to works of art".

Aesthetic Experience: This term is widely used by many researchers, including Michael J. Parsons (1987), to describe the affective and cognitive activity involved in viewing and appreciating works of visual art at all levels of ability.

Aesthetic Understanding: This is the term favored by Abigail Housen (1983), and she uses it to define the process by which persons of all ages and levels of art viewing experience come to understand works of art.

Aesthetic Response: This term is used to identify yet a different conception of the viewer's experiencing of a work of art. "Aesthetic response" describes, at the same time, the role and the experience of the viewer who, in looking at a work of art, is said to engage in a "dialogue" with that work of art. This undertaking, on the viewer's part, is understood to consist of both internalized (private) and externalized (verbalized) experience of both an affective and cognitive nature. For the purpose of this thesis, the term refers mainly

to the verbal responses given freely by study participants in reaction to looking at an original work of art.

"Aesthetic Response" is also the most widely used label to identify the domain of scholarly research that studies the ways by which people experience and understand works of art.

Aesthetic Development: This is the term used to describe the differences in aesthetic response at various levels of ability that can be explained by a maturation process related to the individual's overall development and his or her increased exposure to aesthetic objects and events. Such development is understood to follow an orderly and sequential pattern, usually described as a number of stages through which development can be seen to occur or deviate from.

Post-contact or Post-viewing Experience: These are two terms I have coined to identify that part of an individual aesthetic experience and its understanding, that occurs after the viewer has left the actual presence of the artwork.

Empirical: This term is used in its literal sense as an adjective to qualify information that originates or is based on experience or observation. Its use in this

thesis is in no way related to the idea of the quantitative treatment of data.

Descriptive Model: This expression designates theoretical models that attempt to closely represent, illustrate, and explain how a natural phenomena actually occurs.

Prescriptive Model: This kind of model presents a procedure to be followed in order to achieve a certain desired result. Aesthetic response models that are prescriptive in their formulation will present and explain how an aesthetic experience may or should be undertaken. Such models are often used in applied situations, for example, in teaching.

Practical Justification of the Thesis

A single process-study such as this one can only begin to explore what has turned out to be a very complex, yet pertinent and interesting question. If anything, this study has provided hints as to the direction in which further research should be conducted. Also, it was hoped that the research methodology used in the present study would be validated for expanded use in subsequent research. In fact, this has occurred. Finally, it is hoped that the early

encouraging findings generated by this project will be corroborated eventually by additional and more exhaustive research. Then, and only then, will we be able to commence to provide answers to the question of what happens to aesthetic responses after the initial viewing period ends, and if anything does occur, how such a response proceeds from then on. Eventually, such information will hopefully prove valuable to museum educators and teachers in the preparation, practise and assessment of educational programs and strategies that seek to develop and promote aesthetic understanding.

Theoretical Justification of the Thesis

A lot of research findings have been published, on the one hand, about the stages of aesthetic development in children and adults, and on the other hand, about the process underlying aesthetic response itself. It appears that so far, no researcher has explored how an adult's response to a specific work of art unfolds over extended or post-contact time. This research covers new ground in regards to research in this domain, and therefore, findings generated by this research effort partially fills a gap in our empirical knowledge about aesthetic response.

Methodology

The research methodology used for this study is Naturalistic Observation (Matheson, Bruce & Beauchamp, 1978). The aesthetic responses of two volunteer participants, each of them to two different works of art, were observed in their "natural" setting, a fine arts museum. The research design for this study can be described also as a quasi-experimental process study as the research protocol does call for the observation of the changes in the aesthetic responses of the participants with the passage of time (Matheson et al., 1978). The investigative approach for the purposes of this inquiry was by choice qualitative and descriptive. Finally, structured nonstandardized interviewing was used as the principal method of soliciting data at the end of each sequence in the protocol (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature and Research

Many researchers have proposed descriptive theoretical models that attempt to explain the diversity of individual responses to aesthetic objects or events. In the following section, I will review the literature concerning two related, yet different, aspects of aesthetic response. Part of the literature surveyed here describes the actual event that occurs when a person contemplates an art object. I will refer to this event as **the aesthetic response**. The second area of research literature summarized describes how this ability to respond aesthetically to art objects develops throughout the human life cycle. I will refer to this developmental facet of aesthetic response as **aesthetic development**. Finally, in the third section of this chapter, I will review some of the prescriptive paradigms that have been proposed by educators with the purpose of assisting viewers in responding to works of art.

Some of the early, as well as some of the more recent research undertaken on aesthetic response, has been to propose theories that emphasize the cognitive aspects of the art viewer's response. For example, Leonard Zusne (1986) proposes a descriptive model of aesthetic response based on a reformulation of Festinger's (1957) Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. However, instead of Festinger's concept of

"dissonance" as the motivating factor in seeking renewed homeostasis once a conflict has taken place, Zuscovitz proposes that a state of "cognitive consonance" - which is a form of pleasant, intrinsic motivation that "is sought for its own sake" - is the main factor inciting and rewarding aesthetic behavior (p. 531). He further proposes that "fittingness" is the mechanism via which aesthetic judgments are made. "The core of the aesthetic experience is the experience of some degree of fit between the specimen (the aesthetic object or event) and the corresponding standard. The degree of fit determines the intensity of the experience" (p.531). Zuscovitz also proposes a mechanism through which aesthetic development may occur. "The fact that the ideal standard is held only for the time being and that it is held by a given individual suggests the acquired nature of the standard and of the variations within an individual over time and among individuals" (p.537).

A second paradigm, also essentially cognitive in scope, is proposed by John A. Codd (1982) to explain how aesthetic judgments are made. Codd argues that art appreciation is essentially a cognitive activity which involves interpretation of the aesthetic object or event using criteria that "are embedded in a normative language system and bounded by a logical structure" (p.15). "Interpretive cognition", as Codd calls it, has three distinctive features. The first feature, "interpretive indeterminacy", relates to the fact that the aesthetic object itself can support a

number of different interpretations. "Intentionality" is the second feature, and it pertains to the fact that aesthetic cognition is an activity that is engaged in at will; it is not an automatic response. It is, according to Codd, something that we can do, if we want to. Finally, the third and last feature of "interpretive cognition" is "imagination". The feature of "imagination" requires that we go beyond what is immediately apparent in the work of art. "Because works of art are complex symbolic objects, considerable understanding may be required to grasp their meaning....It is important to recognize that imagination is required not only to create but also to interpret a work of art" (p. 23).

There has been some criticism of theories that attempt to portray aesthetic response solely as a cognitive process. In a review of recent attempts to create a theory of aesthetic development, Barbara J. Kaplan (1982) emphasizes that a plausible theory will have to include both the cognitive and affective components of aesthetic experiencing. "Part of the aesthetic and creative experience seems to involve suspension of the distinctions and differentiations we have learned and to experience thinking **with feeling**" (p. 95).

A half dozen researchers have formulated descriptive models of aesthetic development. Most of these were first proposed some time ago; these include Coffey (1966), Murphy (1973), Clayton (1974) and Brunner (1975). As the many

features of these models tend to overlap, I have chosen, therefore, to present the two most recent models: Housen (1983) and Parsons (1987).

Abigail Housen (1983) proposes, in her doctoral dissertation, a model of aesthetic development which considers both the affective and cognitive dimensions of aesthetic experience. This model is comprised of five stages of aesthetic "understanding": 1) "Accountive"; 2) "Constructive"; 3) "Classifying"; 4) "Interpretive"; and 5) "Creative Reconstructive". In the first stage, the Accountive Stage, aesthetic response consists of relating the work of art to one's own subjective past experience. Housen says of this initial stage that "Preferences, beliefs, past history are not distinguished from judgments, but form the basis for making judgments" (p. 7). In stage 2, the Constructive Stage, a work of art is assessed according to its perceived function or utility, which can range "from the very moral and didactic to the very mundane and wordly. A painting may reflect the good and joyous life or it may be worth a huge amount of money" (p.8). During the third stage known as the Classifying Stage, the perceiver sets aside his own subjective impressions and instead attempts to appreciate art objects by objectively classifying the work in question "in terms of a period, school, style, or best of all, a particular place within the artist's oeuvre" (p. 9). In the Interpretive Stage (Stage IV), the viewer begins to respond to the work in a new and very individualized fashion. He or

she, for the first time, exploits feelings and intuition, as well as other information, in formulating a symbolic interpretation of the art work (Housen, 1988, p. 9). Finally, in the last stage called the Creative Reconstructive Stage, the work "is looked at in many different ways, from many different perspectives, with each new encounter colored by past insights. In relating the painting in such (a) way, the viewer acknowledges that both he and the art work bring to the encounter particular histories and properties" (p. 10). All information is now considered relevant, no matter whether its source is within the onlooker's own subjective experience or within the art work's factual existence.

Parsons' (1987) model of aesthetic development also is comprised of five stages. Unlike Housen's model however, which presents the aesthetic development of adolescents and adults, Parsons' theoretical representation of development covers the entire range of aesthetic understanding beginning with early childhood and continuing from there unto all stages of adolescence and adulthood. Each stage in Parsons' model presents an advance over the previous one in two ways. First, each progressive stage allows for a more complete understanding of the aesthetic object. Second, each successive stage represents an increasing ability, on the part of the viewer, to take and understand the perspective of other viewers as well as his or her own. Parsons labels these two criteria for identifying advancement from one stage to another as increasing "aesthetic adequacy" and increasing "psychological adequacy" respectively (p. 20).

Stage One in this model is called Favoritism and it identifies the responses of children up to about the grade of Kindergarten. The response here is best described as "an intuitive delight in most paintings, a strong attraction to color and a freewheeling associative response to subject matter" (p. 22). Beauty and Realism is the title given by Parsons to stage two. At this level of development, the subject of a painting is all important and the stage itself is structured around the notion of the painting as a skilled, realistic representation of a necessarily attractive subject. The main focus of the third stage is the expressive qualities of a painting, and appropriately, the stage has been named Expressiveness. Realistic representation is no longer seen as the purpose of a painting. Rather, paintings serve the purpose of expressing someone's experience. The viewer now looks for and judges a painting in accordance with its interest and intensity of expression. In stage four, named Style and Form, the viewer now understands that "the significance of a painting is a social rather than an individual achievement" (p. 24). The meaning of the work of art is constituted within a social framework which includes ideas of tradition, style and history. Finally, stage five is characterized by Autonomy. It is now understood that, in the end, the responsibility for evaluating the worth of a work of art rests with the individual. Yet, "individuals must judge the concepts and values with which the tradition constructs the meanings of works of art. These

values change with history, and must be continually readjusted to fit contemporary circumstances" (p. 25).

Some descriptive research has also been conducted into other aspects of the adult's aesthetic response. Annis (1980) and Horner (1986) have both suggested that viewers bring with them certain predispositions which determine, to a certain extent, how viewers will respond to the work. These tendencies (to respond in certain ways) are a consequence of the viewer's previous art viewing experience and, in fact, mirror that person's actual level of aesthetic development. Let us briefly review Horner's schema. Stanley Horner's model for the understanding of the meaning of single encounters with art works proposes that the art encounter may occur according to four different orientations: "Dream-Space", "Play-Space", "Metaphoric-Space" and "Conceptual-Space". Each of these four orientations can be manifested either in exclusion or in conjunction with the other remaining levels. In this model, a Dream-Space orientation is characterized by a loss of self-awareness and can be described as being swept-away by the art experience. Play-Space, on the other hand, is defined by the attempt to understand the process by which the object was put together or came into being as a work of art. The endeavor to, otherwise, find meaning in a work of art by investing it with significance identifies Horner's third level of orientation: Metaphoric-Space. Finally, "an objective, disinterested approach to interpretation" (Horner, 1986, p. 3) along with

an attempt to relate the art work to its cultural and art-historical framework are characteristics of the fourth orientation called Conceptual-Space.

In this third and last section of chapter two, we focus on an examination of two paradigms which, because of their prescriptive orientation, offer great potential for practical applications within the school or museum setting.

Stanley Horner¹ (1988a) has also conceptualized the course of aesthetic response into an eight-layered, or eight-phase, paradigm. However, before discussing Horner's proposal in more detail, let us turn our attention to another researcher's work, since this second Hornerian paradigm is, in part, a critique and a response to a system of aesthetic criticism proposed by Feldman (1987).

The method proposed by Feldman comprises a total of four steps: "Description", "Formal Analysis", "Interpretation", "Evaluation". The initial phase of Description involves the activity of becoming familiar with the various elements comprising the work of art without making judgments about the value of the work itself. In the second phase of this model, Formal Analysis, efforts are now directed towards discovering the relationships among the components that have been named or described previously. Interpretation is the third step in performing art criticism. It is the process that gives overall unity and meaning to the work of art that has been, so far, only described and formally analyzed. The aim of making an interpretation is to sum up the information found

under the particular theme, issue or problem that the artist has presented and explored in the work. Finally, the last stage involves passing Judgment on the work of art that has just been studied. Inevitably, judgment is expressed in terms of liking or disliking the work in question; sometimes, judgment is expressed in terms of a qualified critique of the art object that includes suggestions on how to improve the work.

In contrast to Feldman's model of art criticism, Horner's (1988a) paradigm includes twice as many stages, with the first four occurring even before the equivalent of Feldman's Description Stage can take place. Although the last four stages of Horner's model parallel somewhat Feldman's, they differ nonetheless in certain respects. We will discuss these a little later. Horner's paradigm differs with others we have discussed so far in that it is proposed both as a longitudinal description of aesthetic development, and as a model of the process underlying the actual one-time experience of responding to a singular work of art (Horner, 1988b).

The first four steps or "phases" in Horner's paradigm describe the individual internal experience of the viewer when contemplating a work of art. As a precondition to aesthetic experiencing, some philosophically based prescriptive methods for looking at art insist that the viewer adopt a disinterested and objective disposition. To achieve this ideal disposition, viewers must set aside

preconceptions and other notions that are thought to interfere with an open, unbiased experiencing of an object or event. However, this bracketing of the subjective also results in the setting aside or forgetting of past personal experience which, indeed, may be relevant to the understanding of the present event. Phase 1 of Stanley Horner's paradigm, called Forgetting, allows for input from all aspects of the viewer's being, including the subjective. Horner suggests that, instead of bracketing the subjective, viewers focus on the aspects of their previous experience that relate directly to the new phenomenon at hand. Past experience, instead of being an obstacle, thereby becomes the starting point for a new experience. "I am proposing...that initially we provide students with a means to focus inside the work, to take the natural attitude with them, thereby enabling them to discover their assumptions in action and to sustain essential continuity.... I have noted that when students are given this type of focussed entry, they are able to identify what matters; they seem to bracket or background what is out of focus without knowing that they are doing so" (p. 6).

In phase two of the paradigm, the responder calls upon her memory to manifest a "record" of the first-layer experience. "It is this remembered inner object/image/event as experienced that can now, in the second phase, be transformed through haptic/auditory/visual language into an outer object/image/event. This process of bringing to light,

i.e. Remembering, (emphasis is mine)... is itself a transitional experience..." (p. 10). The memory that is constructed in phase two, becomes itself a "new work", different and unique, "born out of the dialogue between the demands of the inner image and the demands of language as a fluid system of social interaction" (p. 11).

Reflecting, the third phase of the paradigm, is a process by which the responder's inner image, created in the first phase of the response sequence, is reflected upon through the means of a dialogue with the outer image created in the second phase. This mirroring of the outer image back to the inner image enables the responder to take a second look at herself/himself; her/his second layer re-creation of the artwork will survive this reflecting process only as long as the inner and outer images mutually confirm each other as meaningful and coincidental phenomena. As a result of this experience of Reflecting, a "new substitute inner object/image/event" is invented by the viewer in phase four of the response sequence, called Revealing. This "new meta-self-image" needs to be externalized through some kind of statement. Horner suggests that one way to go about this "is to go back to the art work and enter an **unconstruction** process: un-paint it if it is a painting, un-carve it if it is a carving or un-perform it if it is a performance" (p. 13). Having de-constructed the art work, the viewer can then proceed to put it back together again, as if she were the original creator of the work. "The extent to which we are

willing to revise another artist/author's work, will probably, at least in part, be influenced by our response to it" (p. 13). We may not be willing to revise works that have touched us profoundly, whereas other less "satisfying" ones may be reformulated in a number of different ways.

The final four phases of Horner's paradigm correspond to the external experience and "outer dialogue" surrounding the work of art, within a particular social context. These last four phases are also an updated, "more response-based orientation", version of Feldman's art criticism model. Horner's Layer 5 (Describing) corresponds to Feldman's first-stage called Description. Likewise, Horner's Layer 6 (Structuring) and Layer 7 (Interpreting) are not unlike Feldman's Stage 2 (Formal Analysis) and Stage 3 (Interpretation), respectively.

However, the final stage in Horner's paradigm differs from Feldman's Phase Four (Judgment) in that Horner's Retro-activating (Layer 8) results in the formulation of a theory that is "transferable to new situations". This implies that the viewer's response does not come to an "end", but rather to a temporary "closure", as he or she begins to move on to the next experience. "We can only let go of an experience when we have a sense of what has transpired, when the process as experienced unveils itself to us, gives us permission to move out and on." Horner argues that Retro-activating is different from what is proposed by Feldman in his model's final stage which Horner equates with

a "...Modernist need to finalize a project with a judgment"...."In the present context (of Theorizing) we are not judging; rather we are joining the discourse, proposing selectively when our ideology can be propelled forward, perfecting a haptic/technic/linguistic means that will give it validity in the discourse" (Horner, 1988a, p. 19).

The preceding comparison between Feldman's (1987) and Horner's (1988a) paradigms of aesthetic response marks the completion of this literature survey. This review has provided the context in consideration of which the research objectives of this thesis were formulated. Since no evidence of any previous inquiry into the relationship between aesthetic response and post-viewing experience was found, it was concluded that the thesis was exploring new ground. This, then, had important consequences for the development of a methodology and for the adoption of a framework for data analysis.

First, out of necessity, I developed my own specific research methodology for the study. This procedure was initially formulated in 1988, and then refined in 1989 in a series of pilot studies. Second, given that there is no record of previous research relative to this question, I decided that the most appropriate way to analyze data and to formulate conclusions about the project, would be to refer back to the research questions and procedures, rather than to attempt to find links with other studies. Both of these, the methodology and type of data analysis used for the study, are presented in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

The Process Study

Overview

In order to answer the investigative question refined in the first chapter of the thesis, a research protocol was designed based on a process study of two individuals' interactive art viewing experience. A salient feature of this procedure is that it consisted in part in interviewing the participants together as a group of two. In all, two interviews were conducted with each subject: the first, a tandem interview, was followed up later by a second solo interview. A time period of approximately ten days was allowed to elapse between the two sessions. The interviews focused on works of art selected by the participants. Finally, during the second interviewing session, each participant was asked about any activities that occurred during the intervening period that might have related, in some way, to the works of art under review. Following is a step-by-step description of the procedure.

Research Design and Procedure

- 1) All phases of the research procedure were conducted in a naturalistic setting: The National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. Furthermore, all interviews were held in front of the artwork in question.

2) During the first interviewing session, both subjects were present and both participated in the discussion of the works of art. At first, they took turns verbalizing their response to the artworks; later, they were invited to engage in a joint dialogue about the works before them.

3) A total of two artworks were discussed in both the first and second session. The selection of the works of art were made by each participant in turn, with the final outcome being that each subject selected one of the two works discussed during the procedure. Each subject was asked to make their selection according to the following criteria: i) the work selected was not to be familiar; ii) the participant was to select a work that he/she found attractive.

4) The process for responding to each of the two works of art began with an uninterrupted viewing period in which both participants were asked to direct their attention to the sole task of looking at the artwork. It was specified by the researcher that this activity must take about five minutes or more. This was to impress upon the participants the importance of this first step in the responding sequence. However, the exact duration of this initial viewing period, beyond the required minimum, was left to the discretion of the

participants.

5) The next step in the procedure consisted of eliciting from each participant an initial uninterrupted verbal account of their response to each art work. The subject who selected the work of art under consideration went first, followed by the second participant. The subjects were asked to respond out loud as they tried to retrace the experience they had during the initial five minutes of uninterrupted viewing. In this task, the interviewer's role was defined as that of a facilitator, rather than that of an interviewer. Participants were allowed to decide for themselves the format and length of this first account of their experience.

6) After both subjects had recorded their initial verbal accounts of their responses to the first artwork, they were invited, in the second phase of the interview, to actually engage in a dialogue about the work under review. This exchange was intended to simulate the participant interaction which normally occurs during a guided tour in a museum.

A summary of the four steps included in this first part of the research protocol is as follows: i) both

participants engaged in an uninterrupted viewing period of 5 minutes or more; ii) subject "A" then recounted her initial impressions using the technique described above; iii) this was followed, in turn, by a recounting by subject "B" of his initial viewing experience; iv) finally, an exchange took place between the two subjects concerning their ideas about the work of art.

7) The sequence summarized above was then repeated in dealing with the second work of art to be discussed, which was selected in turn by the second subject (subject "B" in the summary above). This second part of the procedure was identical to the first part, except that subject "B" gave his initial verbal account first, followed immediately by subject "A". The first interviewing session ended when all four steps in the procedure had been completed for this second selection of artwork.

8) At least ten days were allowed to elapse before undertaking the completion of the second and final phase in the research protocol. The participants were not asked to undertake any particular task during this intervening period, nor were they instructed to think particularly about the works of art just seen and discussed. It is important to note that the subjects were not informed ahead of time that they would be

viewing the same artworks during the second interviewing session as they did in the first. They were simply instructed that we would be meeting individually to discuss additional works of art. However, I did mention in a casual fashion that I would be curious, at the same time, to hear about any further thoughts or insights that they might have about the works of art seen during the first session.

9) The second interviewing session was scheduled to take place in ten to fourteen days following the first interview session. This time, each of the two participants was interviewed separately about the works of art selected during the first session. The session included the same sequence of events as before, except that both subjects were asked to respond first to the work of art they themselves had previously selected, followed after by a consideration of the second work. And, instead of a discussion following the initial verbal accounts, a series of prepared questions was presented verbally to each subject concerning the nature and extent of the activities, relative to each work of art, undertaken during the time period separating the two interviewing sessions.

The procedure of the second interviewing session can be summarized as follows: i) an uninterrupted silent

viewing period of 5 minutes or more was used to become reacquainted with the work in question; ii) a recounting of the second viewing experience, using the same process as before; iii) the answering of a series of questions designed to find out if the participants had reflected on or acted upon their initial response experience during the ten or more days separating the two interviewing sessions.

10) Finally, following completion of all the steps in this second interviewing session, a debriefing was held in which the participant was made aware of the objectives of the research and his or her role in it. Questions concerning the procedures or other aspects of the research protocol were then answered to the satisfaction of each participant.

Treatment of Data

All interview data was gathered using audio-tape recorders. Additional biographical information was collected in writing, using a form created expressly for that purpose, which the two participants were asked to complete following the first interviewing session. Once all interviews were completed, transcripts of these were

produced in order to assist in the final analysis of the data.

Analysis of the data generated by the study involved making a number of comparisons among sets of data collected during the research procedure. This process is presented in more detail in chapter four.

Selection of Participants

Two volunteers were recruited in order to complete this research project. The researcher contacted the first participant, and then solicited her help in recruiting a second subject for the study. This selection procedure was adopted for two reasons. First, I was concerned that the pair of subjects chosen for the project represent an approximation of the social context of the majority of museum visits. Most visitors attend the museum with a friend or a relative: someone with whom they feel comfortable. For that reason, I felt it would have been awkward to bring two strangers together for the purposes of this study. Second, this procedure had the advantage of extending the pool of possible participants beyond the researcher's own circle of acquaintances. Because of the large commitment required in terms of time and energy in order to participate in this study, it was felt that the possibility of recruiting

strangers for the study was not feasible. Furthermore, keeping in mind that this process study involved a qualitative and naturalistic approach to scientific inquiry, I could not foresee any identifiable need for or advantage in using a random selection of subjects.

I decided upon a three-point criteria for selection of participants based on: 1) age, 2) previous museum attendance, and 3) level of education. First, in order to participate in this investigation, a subject had to be between 25 and 45 years of age. Second, the participant was to have limited museum-going experience, defined for the purposes of this study as an approximate average of two art museum visits during the last two years. Finally, each participant was screened for his or her educational background. Since it is a well established fact that the average adult museum visitor is well educated, it was decided that a volunteer subject for this research project should have a minimum of two years of post-secondary education, preferably in a discipline other than visual arts or art history.

The participants in this study were not briefed initially about the objectives of this project. However, both were informed of the nature and the requirements (in terms of time, commitment, tasks to undertake) of their involvement in the project. Finally, a written consent and copyright release was obtained from each participant before the research procedure was initiated.

Study Participants and Their Background

Kate.

Kate was the person first approached by the researcher in the process of selecting participants for this investigation.

At the time of the interviews, Kate was 28 years old. She graduated from an Ontario university in 1984 having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Minor in Political Science. Her occupation involved working as an office manager for a union local, where her principal responsibility was to oversee the running of the office. She had been employed in this capacity for the last three years. When asked about the date of her last art museum visit, Kate responded by indicating that she has last visited such a gallery in February 1989, that is approximately four months previous to her involvement in this research project. Over the last two years, she had visited an art museum about a total of four times, averaging two visits a year. On such occasions, she reported that she would normally visit both the permanent collections and special temporary exhibitions. Her involvement in educational programs offered by art museums consisted in attending lectures and workshops offered in conjunction with the Degas Retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada in the summer of 1988. Kate also reported taking art as a subject in high school up to grade 11. She

had also taken a total of 6 paintings courses, mainly at the introductory level, in various community art schools.

Paul

Paul, age 35, was recruited as a participant for this study with Kate's assistance. Like Kate, Paul also worked for the same union local. His employment there was as a union representative, a job he had held since one year. His work in this capacity involved organizing employees into union groups, negotiating collective agreements, and, finally, ensuring compliance with agreements. Paul had been doing this kind of work for the past thirteen years. When asked about the last time he attended an art museum, Paul reported that it was in July of 1986, almost two years before his involvement in the research project. The kinds of exhibitions that Paul had seen previously included retrospectives, permanent collections, and other types of exhibitions as, for example, solo exhibitions by living artists and exhibitions of holographic art. Paul reported having previously attended various educational programs offered by art museums: guided tours, in-gallery talks, lectures and films. Paul also reported having visiting major art museums, both in Europe and in North America, during travels that took place between 1978 and 1984. He did not report, however, having taken art courses either in school or in other circumstances. Paul also reported on his

Biographical Data Sheet that he is partially colour blind, having difficulty in discriminating between the colours red, green and orange.

The outcome of the research conducted with these two volunteer participants is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Results

On June 7 1989 at five o'clock, I met at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa with Kate and Paul in order to undertake the first set of interviews called for in the research protocol. After discussion, it was decided that Kate would select the first work of art to be contemplated and discussed, and therefore would also be the first to give her verbal response to the work. Paul's response was to follow Kate's and be followed later still, by a discussion. At the same time, it was specified that, once we had completed all steps in the procedure for the painting selected by Kate, Paul would make, in turn, a selection of his own and, once more, the research sequence would be repeated.

Using a floor plan of the Gallery, I explained to both participants what kinds of works of art they could expect to find in the building, and where these various collections were located. At the same time, it was made clear that they could freely choose, for our purposes, any type of work they wanted, as long as they respected the specified criteria for selecting a work of art. Out of necessity, one restriction was imposed: Kate and Paul were asked to limit their choices to works of art in the permanent collections of the Gallery. This was required in order to ensure that the works would be available for further study later on. I explained once more

the criteria for selecting the artworks and I answered any questions about these and the overall procedure.

For her participation in this study, Kate chose a painting from the European collection:

Artist: Oskar Kokoschka (Austrian 1886-1980)
 Title: John G. McConnell² 1973 (NGC 18864)
 Medium: Oil on canvas, 106.05 x 88.9 cm
 Provenance: Gift of Elspeth B. McConnell,
 Montreal, 1976.

[See Figure 1]

After our examination of Kate's selection was over, Paul chose the following painting for our consideration. It is also from the Gallery's European collection.

Artist: Otto Greiner (German 1869-1916)
 Title: Prometheus³ 1909 (NGC 23221)
 Medium: oil on canvas, 120.5 x 80.5 cm
 Provenance: Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Tanenbaum,
 Toronto 1979.

[See Figure 2]

The second set of interviews were conducted individually on different dates according to the availability of each



FIGURE 1: Oskar Kokoschka, John G. McConnell, 1973.



FIGURE 2: Otto Greiner, *Prometheus*, 1909.

participant. A total of twelve days elapsed before Paul was interviewed a second time on June 19 1989 at 16:00 hours. Kate met with me for her second interview on June 21 1989 at 17:00 hours, fourteen days after her initial interview.

Kate

First painting / first interview.

In the first interview, conducted on June 7 1989, Kate begins by explaining why she selected Oskar Kokoschka's portrait of John G. McConnell as her personal choice for contemplation and discussion during the research session. She relates that she is attracted to the painting by its colour, and by the fact that the bold use of colour in the painting makes it stand out from among the other paintings shown alongside it in a small side gallery. She is struck by the expressionist way in which the artist has rendered this person's face. She feels that the painting tells the story of someone with a strong personality, and she associates this type of character with the personality of a politician.

...it's his face that I'm drawn to. I don't know exactly how to describe the sense that he's looking at you. And, to me, what keeps coming to mind is a statesman, a politician, the wisdom, the knowledge that is there. For some reason, that pulls me strongly to

it, and I keep thinking immediately of Winston Churchill - all it needs is the hat, you know - or MacKenzie-King. Just the colour! Like, one wouldn't expect, you know, bright red and orange and yellow in the face....The use of his colours - these brilliant colours - really accentuates the painting. Even to the extent that he is using the same colours in the background, which is totally toned down, adds to it (Lachapelle, 1989a, p.2).

In addition to the aforementioned aspects of the painting, Kate is attracted to the bold, confident style of the artist and how he successfully uses style to convey meaning in the painting. "He [the artist] is not tentative at all. He's not afraid to use the colours, and it clearly comes through. As a result, you read the personality of the gentleman [the subject of the painting]" (p. 4).

First painting / second interview.

When Kate is interviewed again about the same Kokoschka painting some 14 days later, her response remains basically unchanged.

He still seems to me a statesman, a politician. I would say [that the painting is] a mixture of both the artist's personality as well as the man's personality

[referring to the subject of the portrait]. He looks so strong to me. I don't know why I think he's a politician, but I do. I enjoy the way it was painted. I enjoy looking at it. I can't get over how bold he [the artist] is with the colours (Lachapelle, 1989b, p. 2).

However, Kate did notice a number of things about the portrait for the first time. This time she found the eyes particularly striking, and made note of the fact that the artist had painted each one a different colour. She also observed for the first time that the ear was painted with a great deal of care. "Considering the way that it [the overall painting] is painted - such broad strokes - the ear seems very detailed and it seems a little bit out of character to the rest of the body. There is slightly more definition to his ear than to his hands" (p. 3). To Kate, this suggested that perhaps the artist experienced trouble when doing ears. When I asked her where she thought the subject of the painting might be, she answered:

...I don't think of him as sitting anywhere in particular. The way the background is done, he [the artist] doesn't have a clear definition of where he [the subject] is. Like, he's not in front of a fireplace, or in front of his desk or something like that. So yet, without the concrete evidence of being behind his desk,

I still see him as a politician. But, do I see anything different (p. 3)?

Kate answers the question she has put to herself by commenting on a perplexing purple mark that her attention is drawn to.

The only thing I actually notice more this time is the band of purple at his waist. I'm not quite sure what that is supposed to be.... Because there is a light purple off of him, I'm not sure if that is a continuation of what is sitting in his lap. So, I don't know...I don't think it represents folds in his suit. I don't see it as that, I see it as something in his lap. Maybe it could be a blanket (p. 3).

Finally, Kate also commented on a second mysterious mark which seemed embossed into the paint on the canvas. "There's also another thing. I'm not sure what it is, off of his shoulder. You see the mark where the brown is? I didn't notice that the last time either.... I don't know what that would have been caused by" (p. 4). Upon closer examination, Kate and I were able to determine that this mark had been created accidentally when the artist actually painted the portrait. Because Kokoschka has worked with a lot of physical vigor, the brushing of paint unto the surface had pushed the canvas back against the cross-bar of the

stretcher, leaving traces of the cross-bar in the form of horizontal marks embossed in the paint.

Finally, I posed the series of questions I had devised (see "Procedures for Second Interview", Appendix B) to guide our discussion about the events and activities occurring in between the two interviews that related somehow to this painting. Kate reported that she had thought about the painting and discussed it with a number of people during that fourteen day time period.

Well, I thought about it when I was describing it to other people. It was interesting because I described it to two other people.... One... was John from the office. We discussed it and I told him my feelings on it and I described the painting to him. And then I've described the painting to somebody else [who had seen it before]....

...It was interesting - my discussion with the person who had seen it - ...because she and I both saw the same thing in it. And we both, we started talking about various other paintings that had political overtones [in them]....

In total, Kate reported discussing this painting with approximately seven people: two people from the office where she works (but not with Paul), with the friend who had seen

the painting, and with this friend's husband and sister, with a former roommate and, at least, with one more friend. Kate explained why she discussed the Kokoschka with so many people: "Cause I enjoy doing it, and they all knew I was going to do it. And they wanted to hear about it" (p. 9).

Kate also reported that she thought about the painting while she was reading. "...the book I'm currently reading is about the history of the Liberal Party since McKenzie-King. And, he [the subject of Kokoschka's portrait] reminds me of McKenzie-King and so, as I've read the first part of the book that dealt with McKenzie-King, I did think of this painting at times..." (p. 8).

When I asked her whether her understanding of the painting had changed since she saw it the first time, Kate answered that it hadn't, although she reported liking it more than before because "...the longer you look at anything one likes... you do have more appreciation for it" (p.6).

Second painting / first interview.

Kate's initial response to Otto Greiner's *Prometheus* (1909) is categorical; she just does not like this painting.

...I don't see anything that is remotely appealing at all in this painting.... To me, it looks like a pile of mud. Whereas in the last painting, he [the artist] used the same colours both in the foreground and the

background... [the foreground] was brilliant and the background was muted. [In] this, the same colour is used throughout, and he didn't take advantage of them, I find.... I do not like it for [the subject]. I don't know whether this is me saying this as a female, I didn't like the relationship between the little person and the man himself....I'm not sure whether that [small figure] is a male or [a] female. I'm assuming it's [sic] a male, but it makes no difference to me in that sense. It just shows control of the man [over the smaller figure], and I find that very, very unappealing. ...it exemplifies to me the world that we live in. That is exactly the way it is: you know, the big man succeeds and, it's always the little person down below. And I find that very, very offensive.... And I don't know whether that is offensive to me as a female because, in the society we live in, women are treated like second class citizens (Lachapelle, 1989a, p. 13-15).

Kate also demonstrates that she is little interested in finding out more about the painting. "...[Paul] was interested in - you know - the story behind it, I'm not really at all.... [The large figure in the painting is] looking in the distance and maybe looking either to the future or [to] what he's left behind. Quite frankly, I don't care. Whereas in the other painting [the Kokoschka] I could

sit and look and think, and think of a story, in this one I don't have the same sense. It's not something that I would find appealing" (p.15-16).

Second painting / second interview.

Seeing this painting by Otto Greiner another time during the second interviewing session did not change Kate's opinion of it. Rather, her second experience with the work confirmed her initial impressions.

This time I came to this painting trying to be more objective... more open minded than I was last time. Because of the discussion afterwards I thought maybe I was a little harsh. But, looking at it again, it evokes the same reaction. Not only does the subject matter bother me, but I don't like the way it was painted. This time I actually got up to look at it closer and he [the artist] painted [the figures] first and then painted the background. And it clearly shows up that he did that and it really bothers me cause it does look [like certain parts are] superimposed.... Actually, the more I look at it, the more I can point out flaws in it that I don't like (Lachapelle, 1989b, p. 11).

Kate reiterated some of the points that she had made about the painting during the first interview. She did not

like Greiner's use of colour, which she found to be drab in appearance. She commented on the lack of contrast between the foreground and the background. She criticized the absence of a prominent shadow in relation to the larger of the two figures. She still found the subject matter troubling and offensive. She was also annoyed by the way the artist had handled the application of the paint. "The painting bothered me - not only the subject matter: the general relationship between the two subjects - but the painting [meaning the paint application] itself bothered me. And, I had thought about those things [after the first session].... So, I had wanted, when I looked at it again, I wanted to check that out" (p. 11).

Once more, we turned our attention to the time period that separated the two interviews. I asked Kate whether she had thought about this painting during that time. She answered that she had done so a number of times, each time relating the subject matter of the painting (as she perceived it) to her work situation as an employee of a union that is male dominated and, in addition, a bastion of male chauvinism. She reported using the painting a number of times in her conversation with others to illustrate how men sometimes relate to women.

Kate spoke also of a number of conversations that she had with others about this painting. The first was at work where she discussed the painting with two of her co-workers.

This discussion centered on the grip that the larger figure in the painting has on the smaller figure. "...we got into quite the discussion as to how he [the larger figure] was holding the smaller figure, cause... [Paul] described it to...[the co-worker] as being... -What was the word? - cradling! And I said: "No way!" And I actually described [the grip by taking the co-worker's arm and demonstrating]" (p. 15).

Kate reported that this painting became a frequent topic of conversation at the office for about a week following the first interview. These conversations involved Kate, two co-workers and, indirectly, Paul who talked about the painting with the two co-workers but never with Kate. Kate communicated her experience of this painting to other friends as well. One friend just listened to what Kate had to say about it. With another, the discussion surrounded the similarity between the pose of the Greiner figure and Rodin's *Thinker*. With one of her co-workers, she had a conversation about the myth of Prometheus having to do with fire and the idea of the survival of the fittest. With another she discussed the possibility that the painting might be a symbolic expression of Nazi Germany's feeling of racial superiority. With her former roommate, the exchange consisted in elaborating a parallel being the subject matter of the painting and the view of women put forth in the Bible.

In addition to these conversations, Kate related that she had thought about the painting many times while alone.

I'd have to say that I did think about it at home, only because... it wasn't just the subject matter that bothered me. It was the way it was painted. And, it was the specific things that I found... [bothersome]. So it was the way that it was painted. I would think about it at home.... It just bothered me. It nagged at me more than I [pause]. I can't say that I came to any conclusions about it. It was just something that bothered me about the painting and, I did think about it (p.16).

Kate also explained that she associated the painting with certain events that had occurred at work. In particular, she equated the oppressive feeling of the painting with her own personal feelings following the unwelcoming reception she was given when visiting one of the worksites her union represents. Kate attributes this cold, uncooperative greeting to the fact that she is a female organizer in a largely male dominated sector of the industry.

Finally, when asked if her overall impressions of the painting had changed, she replied that they had not. But she questioned her desire to overlook this painting. "...it doesn't seem right that I can dismiss it. I don't see anything new [in it].... It's just an unassuming painting to me" (p. 12). Kate reported that her understanding of the painting had not changed since the first interview, and that her feelings about it were the same.

PaulFirst painting / first interview.

This report on Paul's participation in this study begins with the painting chosen by Kate: Oskar Kokoschka's John G. McConnell (1973). Kokoschka's portrait of McConnell can best be described as an expressionist rendering of the essence of a person using expressive and vigorous brushwork, and a bold and brilliant colour scheme. In the following extract from the first interview, Paul explains his initial reaction to the painting: one of confusion and ambivalence.

My initial reaction, when... [Kate] picked out this particular painting, was that I was very confused. I know that I have trouble seeing certain colours because of a colour-blind deficiency with my eyes; and, I know that the kinds of things that medical practitioners have used to test me for this colour blindness have included putting many colours together that are very close in the colour spectrum, and trying to make me pick out a form or a shape in those colours. And, my initial reaction to this painting is to not want to look at it. It's too confusing for my eyes to make anything of it. [It's] just a jumble of colours (Lachapelle, 1989a, p. 4).

Paul goes on to identify the kind of portrait that Kokoschka has painted.

I wanted to know what the artist was trying to paint so I immediately went to look at the title and the [name of] the artist. And, the title confirmed my initial reaction that the artist was painting a personality and not a person...- and here's an assumption: that the artist knew the person and the personality [of the subject]... - and wanted to put on the canvas the personality as opposed to an exact portrait of the man... (p. 4).

Paul then continues by explaining his strategy for dealing with this confusing and complex painting.

...what I immediately tried to get out of it when I sat down, was to try to focus away from the things that I found confusing and look at the different parts of the painting to see that personality.... The first [thing] that I was attracted to was the eyes. The artist dealt with them entirely differently: one was very bold and dark, one very light and not well defined, as far as I could see. And, then the next thing that I noticed right away was the shape of the face and in particular the prominence of the mouth and how relaxed that was painted. This person looks extremely relaxed in facial expression... the face is the very dominant part. It says so much about... the man. The next thing I was attracted to was the hands.... They seem out of

proportion in size,, larger than they should be. Again, my reaction to that was that... was intended to tell... [us] something. And, my assumption was that this man worked very hard at what he did in life and that his hands were an important part of what he was (p. 5).

Paul also communicated that he was curious about the artist's intentions in painting this portrait.

I wondered about the artist's choice of background and colours, but then I figured that, in term of bringing out the personality he wouldn't have wanted the background to: one, take away from what he was trying to convey, or [two] really add anything to it. It was simply space that needed to have something, but it wasn't to take away or add to what he was trying to convey about this personality. As I say, I found and I'm concerned that maybe I'm not seeing everything that the artist intended. I was, am, a little biased by... [Kate's] comments about the colours that are in the face, because I don't see them. I don't have the ability to see them, so I'm not sure that I'm seeing everything that the artist put there (p. 5).

Paul expressed, in the extract above, a genuine concern that, somehow, his colour blindness prevented him from gaining a genuine understanding of this painting. I asked

him to describe in detail what he actually did see, so that we might verify, on a purely pragmatic level, whether or not his sensory perception of this painting was accurate. Having done this, there was no doubt in my mind that Paul did in fact see the same shapes, textures, and painterly qualities in this painting that I did. I expressed verbally, for all our benefit, the opinion that Paul had just demonstrated that his colour blindness was, at worst, a minor setback which did not seriously impede his ability to visually perceive this painting.

Paul concluded his initial uninterrupted verbal response to this painting by stating that: "This is a painting that I would... not have stopped at [on my own] but, in a sense, because of this being forced to stop and look at [it], it's the kind of painting I would have to study for some time to have any reaction, or to see anything in it" (p. 5).

First painting / second interview.

When Paul is interviewed again about the same Kokoschka painting some 12 days later, his response points to some very significant changes in his appreciation of the work.

The first reaction, walking around the corner and seeing the painting again, was to smile. [It was] almost like seeing an old friend. It's the kind of painting to me - because of the colour - that's bright

and friendly. The person who's projected on the painting just seems to be that kind of character as well. So, it elicited an emotion right away of a smile... (Lacnapelle, 1989c, p. 9).

Paul notices, for the first time, how the artist has used brushstrokes and impasto in rendering this portrait.

... I hadn't noticed how heavy the brushstrokes were for the things that are highlighted in the painting: the actual brushstrokes in the face and the hands, and the button, the flower or the tip of a handkerchief in a lapel. They're not only very bold in colour but they're very heavy. There's very heavy heavy thick paint left on the canvas where the background, and the corners, and the things that are not meant to be the focus of the painting are. [They're so] [high]light[ed] in terms of the amount of paint being used [as] to almost be opaque (p.9).

Paul comments, again this time, on the "very bold and non-traditional" approach of the artist. "He was able to accomplish a depiction of the personality as well as enough of the detail of the actual physical presence of this subject". He is impressed by the skill of the artist. "It makes me wonder, because I see something entirely different when I see the painting up close than when I walk away from

it, how the artist was able to work so close to the canvas and yet achieve a result that has some impact from a distance. So, again, I'm impressed by the [artist's] ability... (p. 9).

Paul wraps up the first part of his second interview with the following comment.

I was quite intrigued by this painting... especially last time after we sat and studied it. And, now, I'm even more intrigued seeing it again for the second time. It's a very enjoyable painting for me (p. 9).

Finally, I presented to Paul the series of questions designed to explore the events and activities relating to this painting, that might have occurred during the interval separating the first and second interviewing session.

When asked what is new about his reaction to the painting upon seeing it for a second time, Paul answers by comparing his first viewing experience with his second.

When I first saw it, the very first time a couple of weeks ago, my initial reaction was to look away to whatever else was next or besides it because it was confusing. There was such a mix of colour, there didn't seem to be any immediate rhyme or reason [for it] to my eye. But, then I stopped to look at it, and the more I look at it the more the painting grows on me. The more

I feel I really like this painting. ...this time again... my immediate reaction to seeing it...was a very positive reaction (p.10).

When asked whether his feelings about the painting have changed, Paul reacted enthusiastically. "Changed dramatically - Yes! - from my very first look at it to where we are now. And I wondered about that reaction... I wondered what my reaction was going to be when I saw it again" (p. 10). Paul explains how his understanding of the painting has also changed.

I guess my understanding of the painting was enhanced last time by... the exchange of feeling about it that... [Kate] and I had. She was able to point out some things that I didn't see. And, when she brought them to my attention, they did enhance my reaction to the painting. Now my feeling... is that it is an extremely bold and yet effective painting of this person (p. 10).

Paul also reported that he now liked the painting much better than before. He also related how he had difficulty in recreating a mental image of this painting whenever he thought about it in spite of the fact that he strongly desired to see it again. He mentioned thinking about the painting once, when passing a statue of a famous politician on Parliament Hill, because he equated the statue with Kate's

vision of the subject of Kokoschka's painting as being a politician. Seeing an "overstuffed antique armchair in a window display" also "brought to mind the painting only in terms of the fact that this individual [in the painting] seemed to be very relaxed and at ease" as one might feel, sitting in such an armchair (p. 11). Paul also found himself reminiscing one day about the feelings expressed in this painting.

This past Sunday having been Fathers' Day, I was sitting very comfortably in my father's house on Sunday morning having a coffee, and he was sitting in his relaxed easy-chair reading the paper. And, it brought back that feeling in this painting of a very contented person who's accomplished things in his life. And, in that sense, it brought back that emotion and I thought again about, in general, a painting of a relaxed, accomplished man... in real life terms... [upon] seeing my father on Sunday morning, very comfortable in his easy-chair, reading his paper (p. 12).

Finally, Paul did discuss the painting with a co-worker at the office, but this exchange focused mainly on Kate's reaction to the painting; that is, her interpretation that the person portrayed might be a statesman. In closing the interview on Kokoschka's work, Paul comments on what he has learned from his experience with this painting.

...because I found the colouring to be very difficult to fathom, I turned away from it [the painting]. And, having spent the time and almost literally being force to take a closer look at it, it's shown me that if I take the time to do that with something that is confusing ... that perhaps... I could enjoy...[it].... I'm not sure why I had a negative reaction to it [initially], but certainly it's taught me to be a bit more patient, and stop, and look, and have a closer look at what I'm seeing (p. 12).

Second painting / first interview.

Paul begins his initial uninterrupted response to this, his own, selection of an artwork - Otto Greiner's *Prometheus* 1909 - by recounting his very first reaction to the painting.

I had an immediate emotional reaction to the painting.... There's a story behind this painting, and it elicited an immediate reaction of some concern. There's a conflict here (Lachapelle, 1989a, p. 12).

Paul recognized the name of a mythological character in the title of the painting, but he could not remember the story that went along with it.

And so, I began to look at the painting to see what's

there. I was intrigued by what's going on. There's such a difference in scale and size between the two human forms. One's very large and prominent in the painting, the other, very small, obviously very weak, or injured, or captive, or being cared for. It's not clear where the smaller person fits in the story. [He's]... obviously... in some distress. He's not in control of the situation. He either appears to be fatigued or ill, perhaps even captive and resigned to being sublimated to the larger man. And yet, the larger man, the way he is depicted - [is] gentle, pensive, thinking and looking back... - in either a retrospective... [frame of mind], or actually physically looking behind from [sic] whence they may have come.... the whole painting... told a story of either some struggle, some devastation, some fleeing from something. And... these two individuals are somehow caught up in a conflict (p.12 - 13).

Paul goes on to compare how the artist has rendered the two figures in the painting differently.

I was struck by the difference in physical size [between the two figures], and... the way the artist made the larger person much more detailed.... It's much more difficult for me to tell whether the smaller person is a male or female.... The hand [of the smaller figure] is dangling. You can't even clearly define the fingers,

and yet, in the large figure, the hand, the muscle... are clearly defined and spelled out. The neck, the folds of the [garment], the shape of the larger figure is much clearer than the little... person. And again, it seems that the artist clearly wanted to tell... that part of the story is that the larger person is clearly in control of the situation, whatever it might be (p.13).

Second painting / second interview.

Twelve days later, Paul had this to say about the Greiner painting.

I guess the first thing that struck me on seeing the painting again is that, last time, we had considerable discussion about how plain and ordinary the colours were. There wasn't a broad range of colouring, and... it was all quite dull.... I don't know if it [is]... because today is brighter or the lighting is different, but some of the shading wasn't quite [the same last time].... [This time] I expected it to be duller than it is....

And, it appears now, that the larger character can be best described as being totally nonchalant about the presence of the smaller figure. Now, I see this time

that the smaller figure is virtually collapsed.... The way that the body is collapsed, and the way that the painter has dealt with it [indicates]... a human form that is not in control of even its physical movements.... it's now more obvious to me than last time: the smaller form is incapable of controlling its own physical movements. It's... in whatever position it's in as a result of the larger person's actions.... there is nothing that is changed in my feeling about the larger [figure]... he just seems to be at rest, [and expresses] no obvious emotions (Lachapelle, 1989c, p.2).

Paul goes on to address one of the questions that has occurred to him since first viewing the painting.

When I left the painting last time, one of the questions I had later was, "Whose scale is this painted in?" Is this the world of the larger figure or is this the world of the smaller figure?... When I look at the painting today, it appears to be in the scale of the larger person (p. 2).

Paul points to evidence in the painting to back-up his decision, the size of various elements in the background; for example, the grasses along the edge of the water. Paul once more expresses a curiosity about the artist's intentions in

the way he executed this painting. "...for what reason did he not deal with any of the facial expressions? Was that intentional? It just leaves such a big question mark in my mind" (p. 3).

I then posed the series of follow-up questions designed to elicit data about the time period that had elapsed between the first and the present interviewing session. In response to my question about whether or not his impressions of the painting have changed, Paul replies in the negative. Everything appears "very much... the same" (p. 3). However, viewing the painting for a second time has brought to Paul's mind two questions that he had not considered before. "I wondered if the artist had provided us with any clues we'd missed as far as the relationship between the two individuals [is concerned], or... [about] what was happening to the smaller individual.... The other thing is: there was a lot of discussion last time about the interaction between the two. Was the larger person simply physically controlling the smaller, or was there any reason to think that the larger figure was concerned for the smaller one?... there's absolutely nothing in the painting to tell you one way or the other" (p. 3).

To Paul, it looks like the larger figure is absorbed in thought, concerned for something other than the small figure, searching for something in the distance. Paul remarks that he has noticed for the first time that the larger figure in

the painting looks superimposed in the painting, as if it was a cut-out pasted unto the background of the painting.

When questioned as to whether his understanding of the painting has changed, Paul reported that it was "not substantially" different from the first session. He did add that there were "a couple of minor questions that I was interested in coming back to have... answered". Further his feelings about the painting had not been altered since the first viewing. "But, after a careful viewing of it last time and [upon] seeing it again for a second time, it would not be the kind of painting that would stay with me for a long time. It wouldn't be the kind of thing that I'd purposely come back to see again" (p. 4).

Paul reported thinking about the painting a "couple of times" since the first interview.

Questions came to mind, and I found myself trying to see the painting again in my mind's eye. just to know what I had actually seen.... It was mostly in a day or two following the first interviewing.... I knew I was coming back [to the gallery], but I had no idea we were going to come back to see the same painting. But, I thought that, at least in passing, I would like to come back and check out a few things about the painting (p. 4 - 5).

Paul explained that he had thought mostly about the

differences in response that he and Kate had about this painting; that, in a sense, the degree of difference in their opinions has initiated, in him, a strong curiosity about the painting. Paul also reported wondering about the two characters in the painting: "the relationship between them or the condition of one versus the other" (p. 6).

Paul did not recall ever dreaming about this painting. But he did experience a feeling of "déjà-vu". Someone mentioned Rodin's sculpture titled *The Thinker*, and this immediately brought back to mind Greiner's painting, probably because of the similarity of the pose of the characters in both these works of art. In a separate event, the experiencing of emotions was associated with the painting. Paul explains.

I had thoughts and plans for the day yesterday, and late in the day was feeling somewhat disappointed that things had not worked out well. The rain had stopped and I went for a quiet walk from my parents' place to what had been my little area of quiet retreat when I was a child - overlooking the lake where they live - and I was just stopped in one of those thoughtful moods, sitting there. There were heavy clouds sort of receding off in the distance. It had been raining most of the day. And it put me immediately in mind of the painting, almost in terms of myself being in the larger figure's shoes. Here I was in a similar environment, and very

indifferent as to what was going on around me, but also very deep in thought. And that [brought]... to mind... the painting. And I thought about it again as I was sitting there (p. 6 - 7).

Paul also reported that he talked about the painting with one person, a co-worker at the office. The conversation they had was in regards to the differences in reaction and opinion that he and Kate had expressed in response to the painting. Paul related, as well, how he twice tried to find out more about the painting, devoting a total of about thirty minutes to that endeavor.

I was curious to know more of the myth and the story. And, in a couple of attempts I made - I work very close to the Ottawa Public Library - I stopped in to find what I could. But, I didn't find anything that told the story [of Prometheus]. But, I was interested in knowing more about the myth, to find out, perhaps, what the artist was thinking.... I wanted to put myself in the artist's shoes and have the same information [as he did], to see what my reaction would be to what he had done. But, I haven't been able to track down the story.

And that comment concluded our final conversation about this second and last painting.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of Findings and Conclusions

Discussion of Findings for Each Participant

In the presentation of the results of the interviews in the previous chapter, we have seen how Kate and Paul reacted to seeing two very different paintings for the first time. Although, there are similarities in the way each participant responded at different times to each painting, and we will review these, it is important to note that it would be inappropriate, based on so few observations, to address and discuss Kate's and/or Paul's aesthetic responses in terms of patterns or typicality. Therefore, the analysis that follows is intended as a description of the viewing experiences that occurred in the course of this study only. In no case are these comments intended as a generalization concerning the way either participant looks at works of art in other contexts.

Kate.

In her viewing experiences of these two paintings, Kate often responded first to the use of colour in the painting, whether or not that use of colour was deemed by her to be satisfactory. Her attention would often turn next to the relationship between the medium (how the paint was handled by

the artist) and expressiveness (how the artist conveyed his own emotional stance vis-à-vis the subject matter). Although Kate's comments often revealed an initial interest in formal aspects, technique, and the artist's style, eventually she extended her consideration of the painting to include content. Her exploration of the subject matter of the paintings often took a very personal stance, as Kate attempted to relate the meaning of the paintings to events occurring in her own life.

There were, of course, important differences in how Kate reacted to the two distinct paintings used in the study. The most important of these concerned her preference for Oskar Kokoschka's *John G. McConnell* over Otto Greiner's *Prometheus*. To say that Kate preferred her own selection of a painting (Kokoschka) to that selected by Paul (Greiner) is to make an understatement. Whereas Kate very much liked the former, she hated the latter. Her manner of responding to each painting became a function of her different feelings for each work of art. Her response to Kokoschka's work, which she liked, can be described as one of fascination and of continued interest. It included a willingness to debate the painting in an open and frank manner in the discussion that followed the individual verbal accounts of the first part of the procedure. Her verbalized response to Greiner's work, which she hated, was the exact opposite. It can best be defined as categorical, rigid and unyielding. It would seem that in "hating" this painting, Kate had already made up her mind

about it, and that no amount of gentle persuasion or reasoned argumentation was going to make a difference. You will recall that she had no interest or inclination to consider or follow up on clues, relating to the meaning of the painting, even when found on readily available sources such as the label of the painting. The discussion, that followed both participants' initial verbal account of this second painting was quite different in feeling and in tone than the first discussion. It would best be described as more of a debate than a dialogue.

Kate's two very divergent reactions to these different works of art raises some interesting questions. Her reaction to the first work is the kind of behavior that we, as researchers, would normally expect of the typical, "good", aesthetic response and we would be inclined, therefore, to naturally accept that experience as an aesthetic one. Kate's second viewing experience seems, at first consideration anyways, somewhat problematic: it is not what we expect of an aesthetic experience, either for ourselves or for others. We would be tempted to label it as a "failed" experience, doomed perhaps by the viewer being overwhelmed by her initial emotional response to the painting.

Current thought and theory about the nature of aesthetic experience tends to emphasize that such experience consists of thinking in conjunction with feeling. This suggests two possible explanations in regards to Kate's experience with the Otto Greiner. First, Kate's initial emotional response

was so all encompassing that it prevented her from experiencing the work on a cognitive level in addition to and in interaction with the emotional one. This seems unlikely as an explanation, especially if we consider the extent to which Kate has been able to relate the painting to her own personal life experience as well as to other broader social issues, such as equal opportunity for women in the workplace. Second, Kate's experience may be the typical response that occurs when an aesthetic experience is preceded by a strong negative emotion. As a researcher, I have witnessed only one other such negative reaction to a work of art. The features of this other viewer's experience with a despised work of art were remarkably similar to those present in Kate's encounter. It may be that, in fact, there are many types of aesthetic responses, each with its own organizing features or principles. If it did indeed exist, the "negative aesthetic response" might very well have characteristics similar to those demonstrated by Kate's experience. However, the feasibility of such an idea needs to be explored through further investigation of art viewing events that are characterized by initial negative emotional responses.

Paul.

In responding to the two paintings that were the object of this study, Paul's initial reactions often grew out of an immediate, emotional stance. His first look at Kokoschka's

work resulted in a feeling of confusion out of a concern relating to his ability to perceive colours. On seeing the painting for a second time, Paul expressed happiness at seeing "an old friend" once more. His first response to Otto Greiner's work was to relate the feeling of concern that he got from the painting. In many cases, the initial emotional response was followed by a focusing of attention on the subject matter of the painting. Finally, due consideration was often given to the artist's techniques, style, skills and intentions.

We have seen, in the **Results** section of this paper, that Paul's attitude towards Oskar Kokoschka's portrait of John G. McConnell changed dramatically from the first viewing to the second. Initially, Paul felt ambivalent about the painting, and was confused by the artist's unrestrained use of colour. Later, Paul's feelings about the portrait included joy at seeing the painting again, and a definite satisfaction at having an opportunity to look at it once more. In the second interview, Paul ascribes some of the transformation of his attitude towards this work of art to the exchange of ideas that occurred between him and Kate during the first interviewing session. I agree with Paul's assessment of the value of this interaction between both participants. Another event may have had a role to play, however minor, in this dramatic change. In response to the fact that he expressed some concern about his ability to accurately perceive the painting because of his colour blindness, I asked Paul to

describe to us in more detail what he did in fact see in the painting. This exercise allowed us to establish that Paul's visual perception was more than adequate for the task at hand; his visual impairment was deemed to be, in this context, slight indeed. I believe that this activity may have reassured Paul and given him confidence to trust in his own visual judgment. In the transcript of the discussion that followed the first individual verbal responses to these paintings, we can discern the seeds of this change. Kate, in fact, helped Paul to sort out some of his misconceptions about the painting, and this is done in a friendly, helpful manner. The real significance of these two events - the discussion and the exercise - reside mainly in their role as catalysts for the real change to come. The transcripts indicate that this transformation has taken hold in large part after the first interviewing session was completed. Paul had, by then, ample time and opportunity to rethink the comments made by both Kate and himself during their first contact with the painting. Furthermore, the fact that Paul had decided on his own to return to view the painting a second time, is an additional indication that he needed to check out the many ideas about it that had occurred to him during the intervening period between the two interviewing sessions. It is important to note that he decided this before he found out that was what we were going to do anyways during our second set of interviews.

In summary, we have seen Paul's attitude towards the

Kokoschka portrait change dramatically from its initial analytical, objective, and outwardly oriented stance. This position was evident in the type of activities in relation to the painting, that Paul engaged in during the first interviewing session. In order to distance himself from the initial confusion evoked by the painting, he chose to tackle it one section at a time, thereby taking stock of its various components and eventually constructing a more complete description of the work. In contrast, his second encounter with the portrait was more individual, subjective and inwardly oriented. This time, Paul was less concerned with his performance as a participant in the study and, instead, he was engaged on a more personal level in a dialogic experience with the painting. He approached the painting with candor, freshness and spontaneity, clearly enjoying any new discoveries he made about it.

Paul's predilection for Otto Greiner's *Prometheus* also undergoes some change over the two week period covered by these interviews. At first, Paul chooses this painting, for the purposes of our study, because he is genuinely engaged by the expression of concern of one of the painting's characters for the other. By the second interview, Paul sentiments for the painting have become lukewarm, although he himself reports no change in his feelings for it. Furthermore, his opinion about the nature of the relationship between the two individuals in the painting has changed. He no longer sees the larger figure as being concerned about the smaller

figure. Rather, the large character is now perceived as being oblivious to the plight of the smaller, helpless one. There is little evidence of any growth in Paul's understanding of this second painting. This is in spite of the fact that he thought quite a bit about it. Twice in fact, he attempted to find out more about the myth of Prometheus to which the title refers. Both attempts failed to provide information that might have led to new insights about the work.

The differences in the quality and the rate of growth in Paul's insight and understanding about these two paintings points to some interesting questions. Paul's understanding and appreciation of the first painting - the Kokoschka - may have grown in part because this painting is more self-contained than the second one, the Otto Greiner. Very little outside information is required in order to come to a better appreciation of the Kokoschka. Although it is a portrait, and knowing more about the life and personality of John G. McConnell might be helpful in understanding the painting, it is not essential. This painting is also about style, technique, formal qualities such as colour, and the expressive qualities of the medium, namely paint. These "other" intentions of the artist are obvious and cannot be overlooked. And so, the painting itself provides us with a lot of the information that we require in order to construct a better understanding of it.

The situation with Otto Greiner's *Prometheus* is quite

different. Here, we are dealing with a representation of the myth of Prometheus, which is a story that exists independently of the painting. Unless we are successful in obtaining additional prerequisite information concerning the myth, chances are we will be left wondering what the subject of such a painting is really all about. A certain amount of information within painting convention allows us to begin to construct an understanding of the representation, but unless additional outside information is eventually forthcoming, we may reach a point where we can no longer advance our comprehension of the work. This is what I believe may have happened here in the case of Paul's experience with this painting. He was initially very keen about finding out more about the intrigue represented in the painting, but reached a plateau in his appreciation of the work when his attempts to find out more about the myth failed. In a sense, Paul went looking for a key to unlock the meaning of the painting, but came back empty handed. As a result, his interest for the painting probably began to wane. We can only wonder what might have transpired had he been successful in finding out more about Prometheus, and whether such information might have affected the outcome of the second set of interviews.

Similarities and Differences Between Both Participants

In looking at each participant's experiences, we have begun to see, in effect, how Kate's and Paul's encounters with these paintings have been quite different. We have witnessed considerable change in Paul's attitudes to at least one of the two paintings viewed. On the other hand, it can be ascertained that in Kate's case, consistency characterized her encounters with both works of art; her stance towards them remained fairly constant from one interview to the next.

Both participant's experience of these two paintings extended well into the period that intervened between the first and second interviewing sessions. It is noteworthy that each subject had a different manner by which they prolonged the aesthetic experience of these works of art into the post-viewing period covered by this study. Paul's posture in this regard favored more private and introspective events in relation mainly to the subject matter of each painting. He reminisced about the Kokoschka upon seeing an antique armchair in a window display, and upon seeing his father on Father's Day. Paul reported thinking about the Greiner painting a couple of times - once in déjà-vu experience - and trying to find out more about it in two visits to the library. Kate, on the other hand, extended her experience of these works of art by publicly sharing it with others. She spoke of the paintings with a half-dozen of

co-workers and friends; she shared her ideas about them with others, and in turn, solicited their opinions. Once more, these conversations centered on the subject matter of the paintings, no doubt because subject matter had become a contentious issue for both participants during the discussion period in the first interviewing session. Of all of Kate's post-viewing experiences, those involving a social exchange far outnumber the private ones, although there were some of these as well.

Let us now turn our attention once more to the two initial questions that we posed as a formulation of the objectives of this study. First, we asked **What kinds of experiences will two study participants have in relation to specific works of art, in the ten to fourteen days following the initial viewing of these objects?** We can clearly state in a reply to this question, that both participants became involved in a number of post-viewing experiences that related specifically to the paintings they had previously seen. These experiences included a number of conversations (both at work and outside of work), thinking about either of the two paintings, sometimes as the result of associating it with something else (an object, the reading of a book, a specific event, an emotion etc.), and, in Paul's case, visits to the public library in attempts to find out more. We have seen as well that each participant favored certain kinds of activities over others. In a sense, we could say that each had their own style of post-viewing activity in regards to these two paintings.

A second objective for the study was identified by the question: Do the participants' understanding and appreciation of these works of art change as a result of such experiences? We have seen one definite and clearly identifiable case of a growth of understanding and appreciation in regards to a painting. I am, of course, referring to Paul's experience with Oskar Kokoschka's *John G. McConnell* (1973). The dramatic shift in attitude demonstrated in this case can be attributed, with a high degree of certainty, to the various emotional and cognitive activities following the initial viewing of the painting. In a second case, Kate also reported that her appreciation of this same painting had changed, in the sense that she has grown more fond of it. She attributed this modification to the simple fact that she had invested more time and energy in further contemplation of the painting. As a result, she ended up liking it more.

Possible Implications for Museum Education

Although we must resist the temptation to consider Kate and Paul as "typical" museum visitors and, in doing so, generalize the findings about their viewing experiences to others, these two participants' art encounters can suggest a number of possibilities about the underlying dynamic inherent in responding to art in a museum setting.

First, the events witnessed in this study reinforce the

importance of allowing time for social interaction during educational activities such as guided tours and gallery talks. In fact, now more than ever, museum educators must find effective ways to encourage and permit the active participation of the public in their educational programming. Kate and Paul's experience is consistent with what many museum educators have contended for a long time: the social dimension of the museum visit is an essential component of the aesthetic learning experience. Paul commented that the viewing and discussion exercises of the first interviewing session helped him to reassess his opinion of the Kokoschka painting. This is a testimonial of sorts to the importance of the social interaction that occurs in museum educational activities such as guided tours. In participating in this study, Paul had to view, comment and discuss a painting that had been chosen by someone else. He was forced thereby to concentrate on a work of art that he would normally have passed by. This form of benign entrapment allows a difficult work of art enough time to present itself to the viewer as a problem that demands some kind of resolution. Hearing others speak positively about such a work adds to the urgency of coming up with an acceptable explanation, or yet, a compromise between another's opinions and your own. I have always thought that guided tours in art museums operate educationally in such a fashion. They bring people to paintings that normally would be passed by. Hearing other

people talk seriously and passionately about such works initiates in some participants the need to re-evaluate their opinion of the artwork. Finally, such activities encourage a richer aesthetic understanding by exposing participants to the pluralistic nature of aesthetic appreciation. Participants are exposed to the fact that people respond in different ways to the same works of art.

Second, both Kate and Paul's experiences suggest the possibility that the aesthetic experience extends in time beyond the initial minutes spent viewing the work of art. In fact, it may well be that looking is just the first step in the sequence of affective and cognitive events that actually make up what we call an aesthetic experience. We have seen that in the case of these two participants, the initial viewing period was followed by a number of activities that included discussion and reflection, as well as spontaneous associations of various kinds. In addition, we have seen two examples (out of a total of four) where understanding and appreciation of the work of art definitely continued to grow after the initial encounter. In the remaining two cases, the extraordinary extent of related post-viewing activity points to the possibility of growth in understanding, even though our research instruments may not have been adequate to clearly demonstrate it. These kinds of occurrences suggest that there may be value in designing educational activities that include a follow-up component. Such a component could consist in examining, after a period of time has elapsed, any

developments about the work previously viewed. For example, a follow-up could take the form of returning to view a painting for a second time to discuss it once more; or again, it could consist of relating the previously viewed painting to a second unknown one, in such a manner as to allow new insights to surface. Furthermore, the need to include follow-up sessions in viewing activities implies that museums must begin to design programs that offer the possibility of continuity. Although beyond the scope of the present study, one can speculate that short once-only activities, such as the usual guided tour, are no longer sufficient to meet museum visitors' real educational and other needs.

Finally, Kate and Paul's viewing experiences have increased the likelihood that there is guaranteed educational value in ensuring that museum visitors and guided tour participants have easy access to educational materials that provide the viewer with additional information about works of art viewed and/or discussed on guided tours. Such material could take the form of handouts, simple guide manuals, acoustiguides, and of course, the pedagogical labelling of the works of art.

Recommendations for Additional Research

This study has provided ample material to suggest that further research into viewers' post-contact experience of art works will be a worthwhile endeavor. More study is required

with larger number of participants before we can assert whether or not the kind of post-viewing experiences reported by Kate and Paul are a widespread occurrence or simply isolated phenomena.

The procedure used in this study has proven itself a useful tool in researching post-viewing aesthetic experience. Its use could certainly be extended to more ambitious projects. One drawback of the procedure, however, is the inordinate amount of time that is required in order to transcribe the interviews. It has occurred to me that some parts of the procedure - in particular the series of questions relating to the events taking place during the interlude between interviews - could easily be adapted so as to allow for the quantitative analysis of the data generated by that part of the procedure. The advantage of doing so would be to allow numerous subjects to be interviewed, thereby providing the possibility of findings that could assist museum educators to better understand the dynamics of museum audiences.

Another interesting possibility that has occurred to me as a result of this thesis is to study the differences and similarities in post-viewing experiences, if any, between different kinds of art viewing populations. As an example of such a study, consider that we might examine how the post-viewing experiences of individual highly-experienced viewers (for example, graduate students in fine arts) might or might not differ from that of individual less-experienced

people (like Kate and Paul, for example).

Furthermore, earlier in this chapter we broached the subject of the possible existence of various types of viewer responses, when we considered the issue of negative aesthetic experiences. A closer examination of these kinds of encounters with art would certainly provide interesting material upon which to consider whether or not our present definition of an aesthetic experience needs to be challenged.

Finally, in reviewing the results of this study, one factor seems to have the potential of providing a unifying and coherent explanation for many of the various post-viewing experiences of our two participants. Memory seems to play a determining role in many, if not most, of these events. Post-viewing activities like those undertaken by Kate and Paul necessarily involve memory since they occur after the fact. In the absence of the actual work of art, the main record or referent available to the viewer, when thinking about the work of art, is the mental image that they have stored in their memories. It is interesting to note that many of the participants' experiences were somehow related to feats of memory: association of the paintings with work related events; reminiscences from childhood; recollection of affective experiences and, attempts at recreating a mental image of a painting, to name but a few examples. Furthermore, it is possible that viewers' initial responses while in the actual presence of the work of art, may also

involve various facets of memory, given the tendency of many viewers to readily associate pictorial representations with previous events occurring in their own lives or elsewhere. The evidence uncovered in this study indicates that the role of memory in the occurrence of aesthetic experiences is, therefore, a topic that is also worthy of additional investigation.

Conclusions

We have seen, in Kate and Paul's account of their personal experiences with two paintings, evidence of the extension of the viewing experience into the period that immediately follows the initial contact with a work of art. Finally, we have witnessed how dramatically an individual's understanding and appreciation of a work of art can change in the space of just two short weeks. And, in a separate instance, we have also found evidence of the growth, over time, of a genuine fondness for a particular work of art. I believe we have witnessed in these events the extension of aesthetic response beyond the period of initial contact between viewer and art object, into a post-viewing phase in aesthetic experiencing.

ENDNOTES

¹Stanley Horner does not agree with my classification of his work within the category of a "prescriptive orientation". Rather, he defines his work as the "theorization of a practice that was gradually articulated over a number of years of working with many different student populations. And yet, even after all this time, I am reluctant to place this simple version [of the paradigm], without context, in the public domain; I am fully aware of the ease with which it could, in this form, be read as a programatic, prescription formula. The intention is rather to provide a paradigmatic ground for individual scenarios. It is not presented as a system to follow, but rather as a meta-map...." (Horner, 1988a, p. 1).

²This portrait, which John Griffith McConnell commissioned Kokoschka to paint, was undertaken in Europe, probably in Switzerland or France. The 1970-72 edition of the **Canadian Who's Who** (p. 738) lists John McConnell as a Director of The Montreal Star and the St. Lawrence Sugar Refineries Limited, and as the Chairman of Commercial Trust Co. Ltd. He was born in Montréal, Québec on December 6, 1911, and he has passed away since the above index entry was published. His widow, Elspeth McConnell, donated the painting to the National Gallery of Canada in 1976.

³In Greek mythology, Prometheus was said to have created the first man using clay. **The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia** (1968, p. 883) lists the following for **Prometheus**: "[Gr., = forethought], in Greek religion, a Titan. He gave fire and the arts to mankind. Zeus punished him for this by chaining him to a mountain where a vulture devoured his liver. He was [eventually] freed by Hercules...."

Appendix A
Procedure for First Interview

A) Background information and consent

- i) Purpose of this study: M.A. Thesis Research.
- ii) Overview:
 - 1) Look at 2 works
 - 2) Each will select one
 - 3) Respond separately at first, then discuss them together.
- iii) CONSENT:
 - a) fill out forms
 - b) identity to be kept anonymous.
- iv) Objectives FIRST INTERVIEW:
 - to obtain honest description of your experience with a work of art.
 - no expertise is required. Interest in responses of non-experts.

SELECTION OF THE ART WORK: Steps to undertake:

- 1) Familiarize yourself with museum (Floor Plan)
- 2) You will each choose one WORK OF ART according to the FOLLOWING CRITERIA:
 - i) a work NOT familiar
 - ii) a work that seems interesting to you.

STEPS FOR DISCUSSING THE WORK:

Subject "A" makes a selection. WRITE DOWN SELECTION

- A) View work in silence for at least 5 minutes or more
- B) Give your RESPONSE to the work (Subject selecting goes first):
 - Retrace chronologically the steps by which you became acquainted with the work.
 - Where did you begin?
 - What did you first think about?
 - How did your impressions change?
- C) Second subject responds in turn.
- D) Now DISCUSS TOGETHER first work:

-feelings	-metaphors
-memories	-symbols
-fabrication	-associations (events/art)
-formal prop.	-artist's intent
-content	-changes to make / advice to artist?
- E) Subject "B" selects and responds first. **Repeat steps A to D.**

Appendix B
Procedure for Second Interview

Information on this part of the procedure

- i) Overview: Discuss same works of art as before
-in same order as before.
- ii) Same procedure as before:
 - a) 5 min. silent **contemplation**.
 - b) Give your **response** by retracing
CHRONOLOGICALLY the steps by which you
became re-acquainted with the work.
 - c) Then we'll **discuss** the painting together.

Questions to guide the discussion:

1. Tell me about your **IMPRESSIONS** of the painting **NOW**.

Try to relate these to your **PREVIOUS** impressions:
 - i) What is **NEW** about the painting?
 - ii) What is the **SAME**?
2. Has your **UNDERSTANDING** of the painting changed?
3. Do you **LIKE** it any better or less than before?
4. Between now and the first time you saw the painting:
 - a) did you **think** about it?
 - b) did you have any sudden **revelations** about it?
 - c) did you **dream** about it?
 - d) did it **come back** to you in any other way since you
first saw it?
-**associations**?
-**feelings**?
 - e) did you **talk** about it with anyone?
 - f) did you **read** about it? **Make notes**?
- 5) Is there **ANYTHING ELSE** you can tell me about your
experience with this painting?
- 6) Did you think about the procedure / study? (purpose?)

Appendix C
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Although your real identity will be kept confidential in the text of my Master's Thesis, I will require some information on your life experience in order to present an accurate picture of you as a research subject. The following information is therefore requested.

Name: _____ Age: _____

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:

	College or University	Discipline	Degree	Year
1)	_____	_____	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____	_____	_____
4)	_____	_____	_____	_____

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Describe your occupation: _____

Who is your present employer? _____

What are your main duties? _____

How long have you been employed at this job? _____

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE:

When did you last visit an art museum? _____

How many times have you visited an art museum in

a) the last year? _____

b) the last 2 years? _____

What are the kinds of exhibitions that you normally go to see when you visit an art museum?

a) special retrospective exhibitions _____

b) the permanent collection of the gallery _____

c) other types of exhibitions _____

Have you ever participated in any of the following educational programs as offered by an art museum?

- guided tours _____
- in-gallery talks _____
- lectures _____
- films _____
- workshops _____
- performances _____

ART TRAINING

Did you take art courses in primary or secondary school?
 _____ If so, in which grades? _____

Have you taken art courses since? If so, please describe below.

School	Type of course	Duration of course
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please describe your objective in undertaking the above mentioned courses.

If possible, please attach a recent copy of your Curriculum Vitae.

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