phenomenon of ourselves."[56] In early Nietzsche, then, if art does not quite occasion hope, it at least staves off despair, much as in Schopenhauer, though by different means. For Nietzsche, art helps us see ourselves as we truly are; without it "we would be nothing but foreground, and would live entirely under the spell of that perspective which makes the nearest and most vulgar appear tremendously big and as reality itself."[57] But in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche makes clear that in his estimation, art's capacity to help us see our condition is not sufficient grounds to occasion hope for the future. Hence his reformulation of Schopenhauer's will-to-live into the will to power, and his envisioning of the Overman [*Übermensch*] as the endpoint of human political and social aspiration, "the aim of the earth."[58] In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche opines that it is time for man "to plant the seed of his highest hope," which means "to not throw away the hero in [his] soul," to strive to attain to that higher plane of earthly existence symbolized by the *Übermensch*.[59] Physical life, of which this imagined specimen is the pinnacle, becomes for Nietzsche the ground and aim of hope itself: "Let your love for your life be love for your highest hope. And let your highest hope be the highest thought of life!"[60]

These exclamations can be read as Nietzsche's attempt to resituate the soaring, longing-filled language of the Christian tradition within an entirely immanent, terrestrially focused vision of the future polis and community. The vast gulf between the ecstatic language of *Zarathustra* and the course of world history after Nietzsche is felt very strongly in the work of a thinker such as Theodor Adorno, for whom, as we have seen, the picture of world history and the future is one of gloom but for whom art remains necessary as a radical revolt against the given: "The darkening of the world makes the irrationality of art rational."[61]

6. Aesthetic Utility in Contemporary Criticism and Theory

This putative gap between art and the world it enters must foment either a creation of a space for aesthetics outside the social realm or a challenge to its dehumanizing values from within. The ongoing determination of which of these has occurred has marked out a continuing divide in literary theory and criticism that Adorno himself navigated with some difficulty. I mean the divide between what Rita Felski calls "theological criticism" – according to which art is valuable precisely due to its *otherness*, its separation from the world – and "ideological criticism," according to which it is merely one more product in that world.[62] With *Hope and Aesthetic Utility in Modernist Literature*, I consciously follow in the stead of Felski and other critics, who take the ideological tack, but with the significant proviso that the category of the aesthetic is no mere pawn of or window into history but catalyst of it in remarkable

and complex if never precisely mappable ways. Among these critics is Elaine Scarry, whose book *On Beauty and Being Just* argues for a causal link between aesthetics and ethics, suggesting that social good can and does emerge from beauty. "Beauty," Scarry postulates, "is a starting point for education" – a position she maintains to be true whatever one's metaphysical presuppositions, and one that implicitly underpins my thesis regarding the reach and validity of aesthetic utility.[63] In her wide-ranging study *Dreaming by the Book*, Scarry delves more deeply still into the processes by which writers use the materials and processes of language to work on the imaginations of their readers. In *Aesthetic Reason: Artworks and the Deliberative Ethos*, Alan Singer provides a sustained critique of anti-aesthetic modes of reading in the academy. Drawing on texts by Beckett, Melville, Joyce, and others, Singer maps the interstices between aesthetics, ethics, and politics in order to contend for the "potential cognitive usefulness of aesthetics as a means for rationalizing human community."[64] And in *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature*, David Ellison traces the complex history of the relation between the aesthetic and ethical spheres through Kant and Hegel to Virginia Woolf, showing how their presentation as separate domains in Western philosophy is gradually interrogated and overcome in the field of literature.

Together, these rich and challenging works comprise a welcome rejoinder to the commonly espoused notions that aesthetics has nothing to do with the ethical plane, that art has no real social force, or that the only worthwhile metric to use in interpreting artworks is to assess how they are implicated in systems of power or ideology. The books I list above provide broad, exhaustive, and sweeping accounts of the validity and reach of the aesthetic and document its rich interconnection with other aspects of social life. But they also help remind us, albeit in varying ways, that aesthetic utility is initially and fundamentally about the encounter of a human mind with an artwork. The very impossibility of charting art's wholesale influence on social and ethical praxis has to do with the mysterious exchange inherent in that initial meeting between art and audience. We leave the theater, close the novel, finish the poem, experientially and psychically altered – but how? And in what ways do these changes shape our later actions and so, in multiplying their effects, insinuate themselves into history?

Two books that ably rise to the challenge of exploring this question are Derek Attridge's *The Singularity of Literature* and Rita Felski's *Uses of Literature*. The initial problem Attridge poses for himself in his book is that of how to differentiate literature from other kinds of writing. Literature's unique capacity and influence, Attridge argues, derives from its quality of otherness or alterity, its introduction of a wholly new conceptual plane with which readers are confronted and by which they (and thus, slowly, history) are changed. Concerning what I term aesthetic

utility, he is both reserved and forceful, insisting that while literature "solves no problems and saves no souls . . . it is *effective*, even if its effects are not predictable enough to serve a political or moral program."[65] In *Uses of Literature*, Felski stresses that literature's social value must begin with its immediate effects on its reader. She identifies four basic responses literature provokes: recognition, enchantment, knowledge, and shock. With respect to my project, the critical contribution of Felski's book is to specify some instigating agents of what I here call aesthetic utility – namely, the affective changes wrought in the reader by a text in the moment of its being read. These categorizable modes of readerly response are signposts of how and where aesthetic utility originates, as literature functionally alters psychological, emotional, and cognitive states, and from there, flowers mysteriously into thoughts, actions, and events the numerous cultural and political dimensions of which cannot be precisely mapped.

My own work assumes the reality of the process Attridge and Felski enumerate, but in *Hope and Aesthetic Utility in Modernist Literature*, I am interested less in the *mechanics* of that process than its *implications* for modernism and modernist writing. I argue that aesthetic utility forms a crucial and heretofore overlooked element of the thought-world of the modernist writers I investigate. This is evident not only because they defend it in their work but because their belief in aesthetic utility helped to predicate for them a version of hope with which they could write into a future that seemed, in many respects, increasingly ominous as the century progressed.

7. Aesthetic Utility: Between Autonomy and Pragmatism

"Poetry makes nothing happen." This famous line from W.H. Auden's poem "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" puts my appeal to aesthetic utility to the test. In context, Auden's jarring claim is softened by what follows it, the consolation that poetry nevertheless "survives / In the valley of its making" and is, finally, "[a] way of happening, a mouth."[66] In a clever gloss on the poem, Matthew Zapruder switches the natural emphases in the line, so that nothing becomes, counterintuitively, the thing that poetry makes happen: "Nothing, a mostly dormant idea that we probably don't think much about (and if so pejoratively), starts to *happen* for us in the poem . . . ."[67] But this imaginative reading is at least somewhat belied by Auden's own pessimism with regard to poetry's influence in the world. The passage that best sums up his view is found in his essay "The Public v. The Late Mr. William Butler Yeats," first published in the *Partisan Review* in 1939:

> For art is a product of history, not a cause. Unlike some other products, technical inventions for example, it does not re-enter history as

> an effective agent, so that the question whether art should or should not be propaganda is unreal. The case for the prosecution rests on the fallacious belief that art ever makes anything happen, whereas the honest truth, gentlemen, is that, if not a poem had been written, not a picture painted, not a bar of music composed, the history of man would be materially unchanged.[68]

To vouch for the reality of aesthetic utility, as I do in this book, is to argue the precise opposite of Auden's view. In this book I claim not only that Auden is mistaken but that the writers I examine generally take aesthetic utility for granted, as a starting point for their work. Poetry – and not just poetry, since my argument expands to encompass the literary arts more generally – does make things happen, real things, all the time – even if, frustratingly, we can rarely pinpoint exactly what or how.

That said, Auden is not alone in his resistance to acknowledging aesthetic utility. One way to contextualize this resistance is to note its connection to theories of the artwork's isolation or separation from society or of an inherent opposition between art and society. For Theodor Adorno, the development of mass culture is antithetical to the flourishing of art, which, during the modernist period, was forced to turn away from traditional realism in order to resist and condemn the deadening onslaught of capitalism. Art, Adorno argues,

> becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art. By crystallizing in itself as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as "socially useful," it criticizes society by merely existing, for which puritans of all stripes condemn it.[69]

In the modern period especially, Adorno believes, art exists only to indict society, which he saw as highly inimical to the creation of great art. The modernist concept of aesthetic autonomy, according to which the art object is in some sense free of the social realm, is incipient in Adorno's thinking here. In his classic work *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Peter Bürger historicizes the rise of the concept of autonomy in the late-nineteenth century, linking it to aestheticism and to the avant-garde tradition that followed.[70] Autonomy, which Bürger calls "the detachment of art as a special sphere of human activity from the nexus of the praxis of life," formed a kind of crisis in aesthetic engagement and a significant cultural moment in nineteenth-century philosophy and literature.[71] The apparent failure of art to impact society led to a withdrawal on the part of some artists from the social plane, a recursion to the worship of beauty and the defense of *l'art pour l'art* – art for its own sake. Such movements are chronologically and conceptually prior to the narrative of this book's argument; indeed, their very limitedness helped

to provoke the determined social hope in which the authors I discuss invested. Bürger describes autonomy as a constrained (and bourgeois) "historical development," and one with a built-in blind spot: "The category 'autonomy' does not permit the understanding of its referent as one that developed historically."[72] Critical axioms regarding the purity of the art object (its existence separately from its creator) or regarding the freedom of the artist to work outside and against the dictates of her culture are valuable theoretical tools because they can help us elucidate principles surrounding aesthetic meaning and the process of interpretation. But they do not, finally, absolve us from the fact that art is inevitably a product of cultural forces (as Auden noted) and equally a *producer* of cultural forces (as he denied), which is to say, inextricably bound up, for good or ill, with history itself.

While the concept of the autonomy or freedom of the artwork is one alongside which aesthetic utility can be made to coexist only with care, contemporary studies of autonomy make space for its inclusion alongside the commitment to aesthetic utility I make in this book. They do so by qualifying its supposed existence in a kind of ahistorical space, noting its emergence as a historical phenomenon as well as a theoretical apparatus. Two examples will suffice. In *Modernism's Other Work: The Art Object's Political Life*, Lisa Siraganian reframes autonomy as artists' commitment to the idea "that the art object remains immune from society's *meaning*" rather than from society itself.[73] Autonomy connotes not the art object's wholesale freedom from society but its freedom to *mean* independently of a given social interpretation – a freedom with its own social and political consequences. Autonomy thus becomes a "fascinating compromise" between writer, text, and reader, one that returns us again to the question of art's influence on the world via the creation of a "politics out of a theory of beholding or reading."[74] In a similar vein, Andrew Goldstone's *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to de Man* recasts aesthetic autonomy as a means of modernist self-inquiry, a way for writers to create space for literature's independence within a specific social framework. What Goldstone terms "relative autonomy" acknowledges the symbiosis between literature and culture but develops as a trope that allows "modernist writers to take account of, and seek to transform, the social relations of their literary production" by imaginatively emplacing visions of autonomy within art forms themselves.[75]

Even apart from arguments for aesthetic autonomy, the depiction of art as something fundamentally useless to society is not uncommon – and forces us to think carefully of what we mean when we talk about utility. Hannah Arendt poses these questions for us in her essay "Culture and Politics," in which she proposes that

> artworks are superior to all other objects. Even after millennia they have the ability to shine for us, as they did on the day that brought

> them into the world. That is why they are the most worldly of all things. They are the only ones that are produced for a world supposed to outlast each mortal human being, and that therefore have no function whatsoever in the life-process of human society. Not only are they not being consumed like consumer goods, or used up like objects of use; they have to be lifted up out of this process of use and consumption altogether . . .[76]

The final goal of artworks, Arendt claims, is immortality; they are "imperishable from the standpoint of the political sphere and its activities," because they have no bearing on or relation to it.[77] Arendt here means immortality in figurative and not literal terms; the art object is immortal when and because it survives the death of the culture that produced it and lives on into the next one. For Arendt, the essential division between aesthetic creation and other forms of production is that art bears within it an inherent resistance to a utilitarian mindset – what Arendt calls a "suspicion of means-ends thinking."[78] This suspicion has political origins; it emanates from a distaste on the part of the ancient Greeks for the violence required in utilitarian forms of production, a distaste itself rooted in the fact that the Greeks' "discovery of the political rested on the earnest attempt to keep violence out of the community."[79]

If this distaste led to the creation and protection of a separate sphere for art, within which it could strive to attain immortality, several strands of Arendt's argument are nonetheless worth challenging. In keeping with my commitment to aesthetic utility, I posit that she underestimates art's immediate social relevance in favor of its longevity. We might observe, for instance, that it is not necessarily true that art objects are not "consumed like consumer goods"; do we not sometimes speak of consuming a movie, or a novel, or even a painting, in just this way? And while reading a book and eating a cheeseburger are not equivalent, both leave the consumer changed, whether mentally or physically.[80] Furthermore, given Arendt's reluctance to acknowledge the shaping of society by art in the short or long term, it is unclear why the survival to which all artworks attain should even be desirable. Of what value is immortality if – since it precludes influence – it is defanged?

I believe the gap between my view and Arendt's can be bridged somewhat by attending to her notion of utility. For Arendt, utility involves a concrete, goal-based, practical approach that is inhospitable to artistic creation. To understand "utility" in this (admittedly pervasive) sense of the term is to render it as something potentially ruinous for art and artistic flourishing. It is for this reason, I believe, that many modern-day poets and critics are as hesitant as Arendt to talk about poetry in terms of its social utility. In his book *The Hatred of Poetry*, Ben Lerner argues that because the poem exists outside the world of capitalist labor and market value, "its usefulness depends on its lack of practical utility."[81]

Poetry is useful – to the extent this can be possible on such terms – only insofar as it does not enter the messy real world of human affairs. Matthew Zapruder offers an equally paradoxical assessment. In his excellent book *Why Poetry*, he calls the poet's task "usefully useless" and avers that although poetry is "vital to our survival," it performs this vital role by evading utility as traditionally understood.[82] Poetry's value emerges in how it presents "the possibilities of language freed from utility."[83] In so doing, it "draw[s] us into a different form of attention and awareness."[84] But its effectiveness is restricted, for Zapruder, to the realm of language: the medium in which we apprehend it also delimits its impact.

I think there is something admirable and protective in these reticent, careful estimations of poetry's social effectiveness. A major reason for the critical and artistic reluctance to merge terms like "aesthetic" and "utility" – to admit, straight out, that art has its uses, and is a potent social actor – is because this would seem to sully and cheapen the purity of the artist's task. Merely one more tool in the global economy, art would be pragmatic, commercial, potentially didactic. It would be subject to the whim of market forces – and eventually, maybe, wholly fixated on them. Interpretation, too, would suffer, constantly drawing us back into the exhausting confines of the narrow world art in fact seems intent on freeing us from.

My usage of the phrase "aesthetic utility" downplays none of these very real concerns. Instead, my response is to flip "utility" on its head by asking why we must expect so little of the word. As Felski puts it, in academic circles there exists "a deep reservoir of mistrust toward the idea of use."[85] But utility can be profound and multi-faceted. Why must it be measured? Why should something have to be calculable or predictable to be effective?

An irony obtains here. We wish to keep art separate from crass notions of utility. But it is the lens through which we define such terms as usefulness and utility that tells us whether the realms even need separating. As I see it, the contemporary and limited understanding of utility originates in two thought systems. One is the commodifying, mechanistic superstructure of late capitalism, which understands and values all products solely in economic terms and via cost-benefit analyses. The other is a post-Enlightenment materialist mindset prejudiced in favor of empirical data and quantifiable evidence and against mystery, indeterminacy, and the hidden life-world of the individual mind. Both these forces have combined to create an episteme in which whatever cannot easily be quantified, predicted, or apportioned into units of value, whatever does not leave a clear material trace, must be classified as useless. In contrast, I argue that resistance to the uncategorizable or ineffable requires denying most of the invisible work through which a culture actually survives and prospers. If these cultural forms of thinking have taught us what counts as utility, so that we understand the word by their lights, then

to affirm aesthetic utility is to reject their lesson – an action that, in my estimation, needs repeated doing.

8. Literary Expressions of Modernist Hope

If aesthetic utility is the ground for modernist hope, can any cultural source be identified as the origin of this chain of cause and effect? At the risk of oversimplification, I would suggest that exactly insofar as modernism appears historically as a *crisis* of the new – a crisis of epistemological, psychical, and spiritual proportions – it occasions the need for a hope founded on aesthetic utility. The heterogeneous texts and writers I discuss imply that this feature of modernism is not limited to any one strain, chapter, or movement within it. The texts in question range over a timespan of some fifty-five years, from 1902 to 1957, covering roughly the whole of the modernist period. They were written by individuals who held a range of sexual, national, gender, racial, and ethnic identities and who produced texts in genres including the novel, film, poetry, memoir, and drama. This breadth intimates that more work can yet be done to localize iterations of modernist hope to particular sites of being and doing but also shows that hope is not entirely subordinated to any of these identities, though it is often tethered to them in fruitful ways.

In the first chapter of this book, I begin by considering the lineaments of hope in two late Henry James novels, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. The chapter seeks to clarify James's conception of the relationship of aesthetics to ethics, and relatedly, art to life, through an analysis of the heroines of these two novels, Milly Theale and Maggie Verver. I show that each of these protagonists draws from the realm of the aesthetic in order to respond to situations of extremity in their own lives. The unpredictability of aesthetic utility ensures that Milly and Maggie must each come to grips with the fact that the social power of art must be harnessed to an ethical framework in order to provide sustainable hope for the future. The same is true of James, for whom the novel must not only represent the world but imagine avenues to a better one.

My second chapter seeks to prove the reality of aesthetic utility by examining a mistaken understanding of it. Proceeding from the premise that modernism is characterized by deep uncertainty, the chapter contends that D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* contains two significant responses to this uncertainty: hope and fear. But the hopefulness signaled by Griffith's film is problematic, firstly because it presents a racist vision of society, and secondly – and relatedly – because it rests on a flawed understanding of aesthetic utility. Despite its virtuosity, Griffith's film denies the necessary indeterminacy of art in favor of a brute didacticism and an appeal to verisimilitude. These strategies reflect Griffith's aggressive, confident form of hope, one that is ultimately undermined

by the film's own anxieties concerning the realization of the future it depicts.

The book's third chapter engages with the work of H.D., focusing especially on her autobiographical novel *The Gift* and her collection of long poems, *Trilogy*. Interpreting H.D.'s art and aesthetic philosophy alongside her spiritual practices, I show that the animating principle in H.D.'s work and thought is that of creativity. For H.D., each creative act is absolutely new but also partakes in a tradition of aesthetic communication traceable throughout history. It thus demonstrates a paradoxical singularity and connection I term *identity within uniqueness*. Through this mechanism, art offers its audience both continuation and change and therefore enables hope for the social future over against the warfare and violence that beset H.D. throughout her career.

In Chapter 4, I read Melvin B. Tolson's long poem *Libretto for the Republic of Liberia* as undergirded by a transnational and multi-ethnic politics of identification. Tolson's Marxist-democratic vision of a future utopian society centered in Africa but extending throughout the world is rooted in his belief in what I term the *recovery of democracy* – the possibility of meaningful and egalitarian connection between individuals otherwise divided by class, race, or language. While Tolson stresses throughout his poem the ways in which difference is embedded into society at all levels, his poem itself works to spark confrontations between these sites of difference, including from the spheres of high and low culture, Western and African ideologies, and capitalist and socialist mores. In this manner, and with typically modernist self-referentiality, Tolson's poem both affirms and exemplifies aesthetic utility – the "work" art performs in culture – as the vehicle that enables us to go beyond merely envisioning a future toward fashioning it.

Finally, Chapter 5 argues for the presence of an unlikely and weak hope in Samuel Beckett's plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. This hope, I contend, is occasioned by art's capacity to defer – to fill time with provisional but necessary meaning given the apparent absence of other sources of hope. The world of Beckett's drama is structured by the impossibility of ascertaining the basic conditions of existence. Against this deficit of knowledge, art provides solace and hope in its very being; as future-directed aesthetic communication, its production signals a commitment both to the world Beckett lived in and the world it could become.

What ties these disparate artists together, then, is that their obligation to their chosen vocations subsisted not simply for its own sake – neither for love of beauty nor out of a longing to escape – but for the sake of the cultures in which they were invested. Their art contains an ethical slant: to put it simply, they cared about other and future human lives (and where this attention to others' lives was flawed or compromised – as in Griffith's case – their art turned against itself). This book thus offers

a window into a species of modernist writing that shares William Faulkner's conviction, expressed in the final line of his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, that "[t]he poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."[86]

Notes

1 *Gravity*, directed by Alfonso Cuarón (2013; Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2014).
2 Cuarón, *Gravity*.
3 The phenomenon of suicide, which can occur for many and complex reasons, qualifies but does not refute this possibility. In many cases, suicide takes place when hope for the future, while existent, is simply overwhelmed by pain in the present. For our purposes here, though, the disposition to hope needs only to be general and not absolute or universal.
4 I am thinking here of movies such as *Children of Men* (2006), one of the standout films of this millennium, also directed by Cuarón; John Hillcoat's 2009 adaptation of the Cormac McCarthy novel *The Road*; Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* (2014); and Ridley Scott's *The Martian* (2015), among others.
5 Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6.
6 Joris-Karl Huysmans, *À Rebours* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975), 335; and Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 181.
7 Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 116.
8 Walter Benjamin, "Experience and Poverty," in *Selected Writings: 1927–1934. Vol. 2.*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 733.
9 See, for example, Astradur Eysteinsson's authoritative *The Concept of Modernism*, in which he sums up the scholarship to date on modernism as having observed in its writers an "extraordinarily bleak view of modern culture and society," one according to which "the heritage of bourgeois humanism and all the values it was taken to ensure are evidently at sea." For Lawrence Gamache, modernism exhibits "a preoccupation with the present" precipitated by "the loss of a meaningful context derived from the past, from its forms, styles, and traditions." More recently, in his book *Modernism*, Michael Levenson sketches the historical progression most commonly espoused in the literature: "In the decades after Darwin, the skeptical drift – from world to self, from object to subject of perception – suggested a risk of essential loneliness within a world that was itself absent of meaning." See Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 30, 36; Lawrence Gamache, "Toward a Definition of 'Modernism,'" in *The Modernists: Studies in a Literary Phenomenon*, ed. Lawrence B. Gamache and Ian S. McNiven (Cranbury, NJ London: Associated University Presses, 1987), 33; and Michael Levenson, *Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 93.
10 This trend has been furthered by works such as Tyrus Miller's *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars*; Sianne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings*; Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz's edited collection

Bad Modernisms; and Heather Love's *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*.

11 Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1999), 14.
12 Philip Weinstein, *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 10.
13 "hope, n.1," OED Online, accessed July 31, 2019, Oxford University Press, www.oed.com/view/Entry/88370?rskey=b7Gzye&result=1.
14 Terry Eagleton argues in his book *Hope without Optimism* that

> there is in fact no characteristic feeling, symptom, sensation or behaviour pattern associated with hope, as there is with rage or horror. This is because it is a species of desire; and though desire is an experience, it is associated with no definitive sensation or affect. One can hope without feeling anything in particular.

Hope is, however, *usually* accompanied by feeling, and its opposition to fear, which is definitely an affect, has helped to unmoor it somewhat, at least in the popular imagination, from its traditional, orthodox seat as one of the Christian virtues (an unshakeable confidence in God's providence and beneficence). As I use the term, hope is an *affective disposition*, a posture toward the future that, while it is not inherently an affect, is affectively sticky – a zone of being to which certain kinds of feelings tend to attach themselves. See Terry Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2015), 55.

15 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 635, A805/B833.
16 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 638, A809/B837.
17 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis, IN; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988), 28.
18 Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, 32.
19 Arthur Schopenhauer, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wolfgang Schirmacher, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Continuum, 2002), 129.
20 Schopenhauer, *Philosophical Writings*, 36, 27, emphasis his.
21 See Mark Bernier, *The Task of Hope in Kierkegaard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
22 Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*, 63.
23 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 3*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986), 1375.
24 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 1*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986), 7.
25 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 1*, 67.
26 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 1*, 67.
27 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 3*, 1176.
28 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol. 3*, 1180.
29 Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*, 109.
30 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York; London: Continuum, 1973), 320.
31 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 345.
32 Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 103.
33 Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*, 3.

34 Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*, 114.
35 Amir Eshel, *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 28–29.
36 Here I follow Rita Felski, who proffers a similar distinction regarding the word "use" and its implications for aesthetics in her book *Uses of Literature*:

> "Use" is not always strategic or purposeful, manipulative or grasping; it does not have to involve the sway of instrumental rationality or a willful blindness to complex form. I venture that aesthetic value is inseparable from use, but also that our engagements with texts are extraordinarily varied, complex, and often unpredictable in kind.

See Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 7–8.
37 Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), Book X, 595a–608b/265–279.
38 Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S.H. Butcher (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1997), 10.
39 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 17–18.
40 Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, in *Horace's Complete Works*, trans. John Marshall, Christopher Smart, and Earl of Roscommon (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1953), 381, 143.
41 Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," in *Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 112.
42 Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 116.
43 Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 136.
44 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Alasdair D.F. Macrae (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), 207.
45 Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," 206, 219–220.
46 Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," 220–221.
47 Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," 225.
48 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), §10, 220/65.
49 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §9, 219/63.
50 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §59, 353–354/228–229.
51 G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art. Vol. 1*, ed. and trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, doi: 10.1093/actrade/9780198244981.book.1), 55, emphasis his.
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53 Schopenhauer, *Philosophical Writings*, 261.
54 Schopenhauer, *Philosophical Writings*, 159.
55 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1995), 89.
56 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 104, emphasis his.
57 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 79.
58 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1957), 116–117, 4.
59 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 9, 41.
60 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 45.
61 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 19.
62 Felski, *Uses of Literature*, 4–7.

63 Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 31.
64 Alan Singer, *Aesthetic Reason: Artworks and the Deliberative Ethos* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 16, 51.
65 Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 4, emphasis his.
66 W.H. Auden, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," in *Selected Poetry of W.H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1959), 53.
67 Matthew Zapruder, *Why Poetry* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 207.
68 W.H. Auden, "The Public v. the Late Mr. William Butler Yeats," in *The English Auden: Poems, Essays, and Dramatic Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London; Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1977), 393.
69 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 225–226.
70 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 27.
71 Bürger, *Avant-Garde*, 36.
72 Bürger, *Avant-Garde*, 46.
73 Lisa Siraganian, *Modernism's Other Work: The Art Object's Political Life* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17, emphasis hers.
74 Siraganian, *Modernism's Other Work*, 20, 6.
75 Andrew Goldstone, *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to de Man* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 22, 4.
76 Hannah Arendt, "Culture and Politics," in *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, ed. Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb, trans. Martin Klebes (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 190.
77 Arendt, "Culture and Politics," 196.
78 Arendt, "Culture and Politics," 194.
79 Arendt, "Culture and Politics," 191–193.
80 See on this point Attridge, who argues that literature's singularity arises from the absolute newness of the transformative processes at work whenever we encounter art. See Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, 24–25, 91–92.
81 Ben Lerner, *The Hatred of Poetry* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 52.
82 Zapruder, *Why Poetry*, 208, 220. Reflecting on his path to becoming a poet, Zapruder seems to contradict his own story about literature's social inutility when he prefaces a quotation from John Ashbery's poem "The One Thing That Can Save America" by calling it "the poem that changed my mind about Ashbery, and therefore about contemporary American poetry, and I guess therefore my life." As Louis Menand observes in his *New Yorker* review of the books of Zapruder and two other contemporary poets, these poets' resistance to admitting the power of poetry to change lives is ironic given that their own lives were all materially and fundamentally changed by poetry. Menand closes his review with a concise description of the way aesthetic utility actually functions in the world: these poets, he writes,

> all tell pretty much the identical story about themselves. One day, almost inadvertently, they read a poem, and suddenly they knew that they had to become writers. They did, and it changed their lives. Later, they all wrote books about poetry. I read those books, and it changed my life. You read this piece about those books. Maybe it will change your life. If it does, the change will be very, very tiny, but most change comes in increments. Don't expect too much out of any one thing. For although the world is hard, words matter. Rock beats scissors. It may take a while, but paper beats rock. At least we hope so.

See Zapruder, *Why Poetry*, 77, and Louis Menand, "Can Poetry Change Your Life?," *The New Yorker*, July 24, 2017, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/31/can-poetry-change-your-life.

83 Matthew Zapruder, *Why Poetry*, 14.
84 Matthew Zapruder, *Why Poetry*, xvi.
85 Felski, *Uses of Literature*, 7.
86 William Faulkner, "William Faulkner's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech," *Southern Cultures* 12, no. 1 (2006): 71.