

27. Mothersill herself frames the notion of indistinguishability in terms of features 'accessible through acquaintance' under 'standard conditions of observation' (Beauty Restored, pp. 143–4). 


29. Ibid., p. 132. 

30. Ibid., pp. 132–3. 

31. Ibid., p. 142. 

32. Ibid., p. 140. 

33. Ibid., p. 132. A formalized version appears on the same page. 

34. Ibid., pp. 132–3. 


37. Ibid. 

38. Ibid., p. 143. 

39. Ibid. 

40. Ibid., p. 130. 

41. Critique of Judgement, §12, p. 64 (translation adapted from Meredith). 

42. Ibid., §16, p. 72. 

43. Ibid., §45, p. 166. 

44. Ibid., §48, p. 173. 

45. Ibid., pp. 172–3. 

46. Ibid., §16, p. 72. 

47. Savile appears to take the same view of the relation between the assertion of free beauty and his own position. See 'Beauty: A Neo-Kantian Account', p. 132, n. 24. 

48. I am grateful to John Armstrong, Sebastian Gardner and Paul Taylor for reading an earlier version and offering me comments. 

THE PARADOX OF HORROR

Berys Gaut

'It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy.' Thus did Hume open his classic discussion of the paradox of tragedy, and it can as properly serve as a statement of the kernel of the puzzle found in the closely related paradox of horror. We can approach this paradox by reflecting on the following statements, all of which seem to be true. (1) Some of us enjoy horror fictions. (2) Horror fictions characteristically produce fear and disgust in their audience. (3) Fear and disgust are intrinsically unpleasant emotions. The most straightforward explanation of these facts seems to be that we enjoy the fear and disgust the fictions produce in us. But to assert this yields the apparently paradoxical view that we enjoy intrinsically unpleasant emotions. So the paradox of horror rests on what might be termed the paradox of the enjoyment of negative emotions. However, there is another explanation of the phenomena available: we are enjoying not negative emotions, but rather some other feature of the situation, such as the curiosity we feel about what is going to happen. This is, roughly, the solution to the paradox that Noël Carroll defends in a recent book. I will criticize this solution, as well as an expressivist solution. I then examine several recent claims that there is nothing paradoxical about our enjoyment of negative emotions, and will show that a variation of this view can be defended against apparently decisive objections. Thus it transpires that we can enjoy fear and disgust, so there is nothing paradoxical about our enjoyment of negative emotions, nor about our enjoyment of horror fictions.

Carroll provides a cognitivist solution to the paradox of horror. Drawing on the work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, he argues that monsters, such as werewolves or a man with a fly's head, are violations of our categorial schemes. Douglas argues that such violations are seen as threatening and impure, and this is Carroll's explanation of why works of horror generate fear and disgust. But because monsters are categorial violations, being physically impossible according to our conceptual scheme, we are also curious about them, and find them fascinating. This curiosity is heightened in the case of
novels and films by the processes of narration, which entice us to wonder whether the monster exists and what it looks like, involve us in the question of whether the characters in the fiction will come to believe in its existence and can destroy it, and so on. Hence our enjoyment of horror arises from its exploitation and satisfaction of our curiosity about monsters and the narrational processes of their discovery, monsters being peculiarly suited to elicit our interest because of their status as categorical violations. But this status also explains why monsters produce fear and disgust in us. So we cannot have the enjoyment without the negative emotions: "the disgust that such beings [monsters] evince might be seen as part of the price to be paid for the pleasure of their disclosure" (p. 184). Moreover, because we know that the monsters are only fictional, the fear and disgust they arouse in us are muted in comparison with what they would be if we were to meet such monsters in real life, which allows the pleasures of curiosity more easily to outweigh the displeasures of fear and disgust.

Though Carroll demonstrates considerable skill in defending his solution, it is, I believe, unsatisfactory. His view depends crucially on claims about monsters, defined as beings not believed to exist now according to contemporary science (p. 27). Yet not all horror fictions involve monsters: an important and popular sub-genre of the modern horror film is the ‘slasher’ movie, which deals with psychopathic serial killers.5 Psychopaths are not monsters; they are instances of an all-too-real phenomenon. Carroll’s response to this sort of objection is that some of these psychopaths are presented as having supernatural powers, and so are really monsters (p. 37); if the characters are human, but are akin to monsters, then fictions involving them are borderline cases of horror (p. 39); and otherwise we should regard the fictions as tales of terror (p. 15). But to take the latter course is simply to transform the paradox of horror into a paradox of tales of terror, where the solution involving appeal to monsters cannot work. On the other hand, to treat certain clearly human psychopaths as akin to monsters depends on a metaphorical extension of the term ‘monster’, and to talk of psychopaths as categorical violations extends the notion of a categorical violation to the point where beings simply with unexpected or unusual traits will be counted as categorical violations; yet we clearly need not feel disgust at the unusual. Moreover, to hold a position from which it follows that films such as Demme’s The Silence of the Lambs are borderline cases of horror marginalizes what look like paradigm examples of the modern horror film. Carroll’s appeal to monsters disguises the simple point that we can be disgusted by and afraid of human beings because they do evil and awful things, and no mention of monsters or of categorical violations is needed to explain our reactions.

It might be thought that Carroll should drop his talk of monsters and his definition of horror in terms of them, and simply appeal to our curiosity about the extraordinary characters in horror fictions as overcoming the fear and disgust they produce in us. He is doubtless correct in holding that such fear and disgust are less intense than they would be if we thought these beings were real, but, even so, as his many examples and common observation show, we can feel great fear and disgust during horror films. The problem with Carroll’s solution is that most horror films are so formulaic in their plots, and their monsters and killers so stereotypical, that it is difficult to believe that our curiosity could very often be sufficiently stimulated to overcome the purported disadvantages such works incur in producing disagreeable emotional states in us. The conventions of genre weigh too heavily on most horror fictions for Carroll’s solution to be a plausible one.

Finally, and most simply, consider Norman, a disappointed spectator who comes out of a horror film and complains that it wasn’t scary enough. He wanted to be really frightened, but the film hardly raised a mild tremor of apprehension in him. On Carroll’s view Norman must really be complaining that his curiosity wasn’t heightened enough. But that is not what he says, and indeed, he might say that the film was quite interesting. The problem was, he avers, that it wasn’t frightening. We are back to the core of the paradox of horror again: people seem to enjoy experiencing negative emotions.

II

It is worth briefly exploring an expressivist solution to the paradox. This holds that we do not enjoy the negative emotions that horror engenders, but, rather, we enjoy the expression of these emotions, by which we relieve ourselves of them, or lighten the grip they have on us.4 Collingwood usefully distinguishes two versions of expressivism: the simpler holds that the process is akin to unburdening oneself of emotions by engaging in acts of make-believe (for instance, getting rid of one’s anger by imagining kicking someone), the more sophisticated overlaps with the cognitivist view, holding that one lightens one’s emotion by coming to understand what was before an unknown perturbation.5

Carroll rejects expressivist solutions for horror, claiming that we cannot gain satisfaction from the expression of our fear of monsters, for there are none, so we have no antecedently felt fear of them (p. 246). However, this objection is too swift, for it fails to recognize that monsters can serve as metaphors for our fears. Interpretations of horror fictions as expressing covert sexual fears, or fear of death and the physicality of the body, or of loss of sexual identity, are legion, and are, in many cases, quite plausible. Carroll does acknowledge that the horror film cycle correlates quite well with periods of social tension (e.g., the 1930s cycle with the Great Depression), but he objects that horror had its aficionados even at times when there were no social anxieties, and that mere expression of social anxieties is not appealing, for otherwise public lectures on these topics would have mass appeal. Hence
expressivism cannot provide a general solution to the problem of horror (pp. 206-14, 248). But this reply, too, succumbs to the objection that horror can express perennial personal anxieties, as well as social ones, and can do so in a powerfully metaphorical form.

However, I believe that Carroll is correct in rejecting the expressivist position, for, even as adumbrated above, it suffers from severe shortcomings. If we are attracted to horror for its cathartic effect, so that watching a horror film is the equivalent of "talking out" one's fears, it is odd that these films are least attractive if one is in an uneasy or fearful mood. One doesn't say I'm scared, so I think I'll go to see a horror film. Rather, one needs to be in a fairly robust psychological state in order to enjoy these fictions at all. Further, these films not infrequently leave (and are designed to leave) a lingering sense of fearfulness in their audience: one may feel scared as one walks home, and uneasy going to sleep. This is precisely the opposite effect one would expect if one's fear had been 'lightened'. Instead, these fears have been induced and exacerbated, and then one is frequently left in a state of disquiet. Even if one has been given metaphors for the objects of one's fears, this has not resulted in a lightening of one's emotions, but rather provides new materials with which to produce these emotions at will. Finally, if the expressivist doctrine were correct, we should expect to dislike the arousal of our emotion of fear when watching a film, and then only start to enjoy ourselves when the emotion was dissipated at the end of the film, assuming that it has an end that did not further enhance our fear. But horror audiences can enjoy themselves throughout the film, and hence they cannot enjoy merely the 'lightening' of the emotion.

III

It would be a Herculean task to examine the many possible variations of cognitivist and expressivist accounts of the paradox of horror. But I have shown that some simple versions of both are incorrect. However, the motivation to think that some version of these theories must be correct is presumably that otherwise we are left with the apparent paradox that audiences are enjoying the negative emotions of fear and disgust. If we can show that this is not paradoxical, then cognitivist and expressivist theories will be less compelling. Instead, we can endorse the enjoyment theory: horror attracts because people can enjoy being scared and disgusted. This thesis has the merit of simplicity, and it accounts for the intelligibility of Norman's complaint. It can also explain a salient fact about horror, of which it is easy to lose sight. The genre has as its self-conscious aim the production of fear and disgust in its audience, and it has become increasingly sophisticated and successful in achieving this effect. Moreover, the majority of horror works lack any serious artistic worth. They are pure entertainment: they aim simply at providing

their audience with enjoyable experiences. Taking these points together, the simplest, most straightforward explanation of the phenomenon of horror is that sometimes people enjoy being scared.

Consider Suzy, a mountaineering enthusiast. She enjoys putting herself into dangerous situations, feeling the thrill of fear as she dangles over the edge, knowing that it is only her skill and equipment that save her from certain death. She finds life simpler, more elemental in such situations, her fear gives an acuteness and 'edge' to her experience that is lacking in everyday life. She appreciates many aspects of the experience, and her fear is an inextricable part of the composite whole which she enjoys. Her motivations are not the stuff of psychopathology, still less are they unintelligible: the existence of many activities from sky-diving to motor racing testifies to the enduring attractions of danger. On a humbler level, even the pleasures of riding roller-coasters depend partly on the fear one feels as the car careers around the bend, and one is not entirely convinced that it will stay on the tracks.

Nor are such phenomena confined to fear alone. One can also enjoy other 'negative' emotions. One can enjoy disgusting stories, and there is a minor genre, popular on college campuses, of 'disgust' movies, pre-eminent amongst which is John Waters' Pink Flamingos. The negative emotion of anger can also be enjoyed: irascible individuals sometimes seek out situations in which they will have an opportunity to get angry. Likewise, it is possible to relish a feeling of quiet melancholy, dwelling on the sorrows and disappointments of life, and weeping for the sadness of the world.

Phenomena of this sort have been noted by several philosophers in the last decade, and have been seen as key ingredients in the solution of the paradoxes. It would be tempting simply to cite such cases without explanation of how they are possible, and think that this would decisively show that one can enjoy negative emotions, and so dissolve the paradox of horror. But to do so merely opens one to the objection that they are not really possible at all, for they would involve the enjoyment of intrinsically unpleasant emotions. Hence, the objection continues, such cases are misdescribed, and what is enjoyed in them is something other than the presence of a negative emotion. For instance, Susan Feagin in her critique of Carroll's solution to the paradox discusses several examples, including the roller-coaster case, of the enjoyment of negative emotions and their associated sensations. Carroll's response is that she simply ignores the paradoxicality of negative emotions, and what he enjoys about roller-coasting is not the queasiness, but the 'novel way of moving through space' and the 'overall thrill' of the ride. This redescriptions strategy will be attractive only as long as we are unable to explain away the apparent paradoxicality of the enjoyment of these emotions.

Two kinds of theories have been advanced to explain how the enjoyment of negative emotions is possible, but neither is entirely satisfactory as it stands. The first is the 'control thesis', developed by Marcia Eaton, and refined by
John Morreall, on whose version I shall focus, holds that one can enjoy negative emotions when one is 'in control' of the situation which produces the emotions, where control is understood in terms of an ability to direct one's thoughts and actions. So Suzy can enjoy her mountaineering escapades because she knows that she is skilful enough to avoid coming to harm. It is peculiarly easy to enjoy negative emotions in the case of fiction, since the fiction has no practical consequences for its audience. In this case it is sufficient in order to be in control that one be able to direct one's attention and thoughts. However, if one loses this control, perhaps because the fiction depicts violence and suffering so graphically that one's negative emotions become too strong, then one will not enjoy the emotions. Thus there is a ready explanation for how one can enjoy negative emotions, both in fiction and in real life.

This solution is ingenious, but inadequate. The paradox of negative emotions arises because, apparently, we are able to enjoy intrinsically unpleasant emotions. But the control thesis leaves it utterly mysterious how the mere fact that I can choose to attend or not to an otherwise unpleasant emotion, such as fear, could render that emotion pleasant. Further, the believer in the intrinsicality claim will hold that it is a necessary, conceptual condition on an emotion being fear that it is experienced as unpleasant, so that the psychic mechanism of hedonic transformation, to which the control theorist gestures, is a conceptual impossibility. There is thus a lacuna in the control theory, which owes us an account of how the apparent conceptual connection between fear and displeasure can be explained away, or how the connection can be construed so that it does not undermine the theory. But, in any case, the theory's linkage of the enjoyment of such emotions with the control of them seems straightforwardly false. People vary greatly and unpredictably as to whether or not they enjoy horror films. If Morag does not enjoy them, that need not be because she cannot adequately control her attention with respect to them. Rather, her reason for not enjoying the film is that when she does direct her attention to the bloody corpse, she does not like what she experiences. Conversely, Norman may believe that the very height of enjoyable fear is when his gaze is riveted to the gruesome spectacle, when he 'cannot take his eyes off' the unfolding carnage. For, after all, if one is enjoying something, then one's attention tends to be drawn irresistibly to it.

IV

The second, more promising view of how it is possible to enjoy negative emotions has been developed by both Kendall Walton and Alex Neill. They deny that these emotional responses are intrinsically unpleasant. They both speak as if it is a purely contingent matter whether or not people enjoy the emotions themselves. It is not the emotions themselves that are intrinsically unpleasant, they hold, but, rather, it is the objects of the emotions which are unpleasant or disvaluable. Walton argues that Hume was wrong to think that sorrow is in itself disgreeable. Rather, 'What is clearly disagreeable, what we regret, are the things we are sorrowful about—the loss of an opportunity, the death of a friend—not the feeling or experience of sorrow itself. Neill, in a critique of Carroll's theory, similarly points out that the emotions of pity or fear aren't painful in the way that stepping on a thumb-tack is. Instead, he says, 'In describing an emotion as "painful" or "negative" or "unpleasant", I suggest, we are in fact saying something about the situations in response to which we typically experience those emotions. That is, it's the situations rather than the emotions which are distasteful or undesirable, which we (metaphorically?) describe as painful or unpleasant.'

However, this view encounters two serious objections as thus formulated. Firstly, the defender of the claim that negative emotions are intrinsically unpleasant will properly protest that it can't be a purely contingent matter that these emotions are felt as unpleasant. For imagine we came across a tribe who said that they felt a certain emotion at the death of their loved ones, and that this emotion was the most enjoyable one to be had. We would, I take it, be justifiably reluctant to translate the word they used to name this emotion as 'grief'. This suggests that there is a conceptual constraint on negative emotions being felt as unpleasant. Secondly, both Walton and Neill have a problem in so far as they appeal to a contrast between the unpleasantness of the emotion and the unpleasantness of the object of the emotion. For to say that something is unpleasant is to attribute to that thing a dispositional property: namely, the property of producing unpleasant experiences in people, and the salient experiences in the cases under discussion are those of sorrow and fear. Neill tries to counter his objection in a footnote by claiming that the unpleasantness may be in the situation itself rather than in the feelings I have towards the object. He gives the example of pity, which is an emotion directed towards others' suffering. So the painfulness figures here as something which the people whom I pity suffer, rather than as something which I experience. As he admits, the suggestion needs further work, but it does not seem promising. For it is not sufficient for me to pity others that I think they are suffering: the sadist may believe the latter, without feeling any pity at all for them. If we have to appeal to unpleasantness here, it must be an unpleasantness which I also feel.

There is a more promising way to meet this second objection. Neill explicitly disavows a hedonistic theory of value, and in the passage, which I quoted, he says that the situations towards which negative emotions are directed are distasteful or undesirable. Walton would doubtless take this position as well, and both he and Neill endorse versions of the evaluative theory of the emotions to be discussed in the next section. I suggest, then, that we drop talk of the pleasant and unpleasant here, and speak purely in general evaluative
terms. This move would allow us to counter the objection I raised about the dispositionality of the unpleasant. Hence we could allow that when people are enjoying negative emotions it is not because they regard the objects of the emotions as unpleasant, even though they enjoy the emotions, but because they regard the objects of the emotions as undesirable, and to believe that something is undesirable, is not ipso facto to find it unpleasant. However, it will be replied, to drop the reference to pleasure, and merely to speak of the objects of the emotions as disvaluable, seems to make the first objection I considered even more devastating, for now the contingency of the link between the negativity of emotions and their unpleasantness is even more salient. But I will argue that one can meet this objection in a way that neither Walton nor Neill considers, by showing that there are conceptual connections between evaluation, desire and pleasure, but that these non-contingent links are of a sort which do not threaten the solution to the paradoxes defended here.

V

Hume was puzzled by how it is that the spectators of a tragedy can enjoy sorrow, terror and anxiety, since he held that such emotions essentially involve feelings of pain. As Walton notes, we can dissolve the paradox by disputing Hume’s analysis of the emotions. In fact, as I will now argue, the correct view of the emotions entails that negative emotions are such, not in respect of unpleasant feelings, nor even in respect of the unpleasantness of their objects, but, rather, in respect of the negative evaluative thoughts they incorporate.

Hume’s theory is an instance of the ‘traditional’ view of the emotions as phenomenologically characterized feelings. The dominant modern theory of the emotions, however, holds that emotions are cognitive, essentially incorporating evaluations. Thus to fear something involves evaluating it as threatening, to be angry with someone involves evaluating her actions as wrong, to be sorrowful involves thinking that a loss has been suffered, and so on. What other factors must be present for an emotion to exist is a matter of dispute, but plausibly they include the requirement that the subject be in an abnormal physiological state caused by the evaluation. However, one emotion is to be individuated from another in terms of the evaluations involved, rather than by the particular features of the physiological state or of the associated bodily sensations, for there is no pattern of physiological changes or set of sensations peculiar to each emotion, and an emotion may be associated with different sensations in different people. Now, if the emotions are to be individuated by the evaluations, then the difference between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ emotions must consist in the difference between the evaluative thoughts. But there is no phenomenal character to a thought per se. So the difference between positive and negative emotions can only consist in the fact that the evaluations incorporated into the former are positive and those in the latter are negative. That is, what makes negative emotions negative is not the painfullness of either the emotional response or of the object. Rather, it consists in the fact that objects to which these emotions are directed are brought under negative evaluative concepts: the dangerous, the wrongful, the shameful, etc. Since we can disvalue something without finding it unpleasant, it follows that it is possible to find both negative emotional responses and their objects pleasant. Hence, by appeal to an evaluative theory of the emotions, we can show that there is nothing paradoxical about the enjoyment of negative emotions, for it is only required that one disvalue the objects of these emotions. Hence one can dissolve the paradoxes of horror and tragedy.

There is a certain irony in this solution, since Carroll is fully aware of the evaluative theory of the emotions. Indeed, his account of the emotions is based on the version of the evaluative theory due to William Lyons, which I have drawn upon in the preceding paragraph, and he elaborates his definition of the emotion of art-horror so as to conform to an evaluative analysis of the emotions (pp. 24–7). But he does not see in his book that the ‘abnormal, physically felt agitation’ (p. 27), which he requires for fear to be present, need not be an intrinsically unpleasant state, for the negativity of the emotion can be explained in terms of the object of the emotion being negatively evaluated, rather than the emotion itself being unpleasant. Indeed, Carroll himself argues that what the agitation feels like can vary massively from person to person and from time to time in one person, so it is doubly puzzling why he assumes that the agitation must be experienced as unpleasant.

We now have to answer the objection that this solution allows it to be a contingent matter that we generally experience negative emotions as unpleasant. I am going to argue that the view of the emotions as evaluative does allow for the existence of a conceptual connection, but a conceptual connection of a sort that still allows us to dissolve the paradoxes. I will consider the connection in two stages: firstly, the conceptual link between evaluations and desire, and secondly, that between desire and pleasure.

Internalists about evaluation hold that there is a necessary connection between judging a situation to be good and having a motivating reason to bring it about (the reason need be only prima facie, and so may be overridden by other, conflicting reasons). This is so, because evaluations give us reasons for action: for someone to hold that an action is good, but that he has no reason to bring it about, shows that he has not grasped the meaning of the word ‘good’. Further, people can be deceived about the contents of their beliefs, and if someone claims to believe that something is good, but it is apparent that he has no motivating reason to bring it about, that is defeasible evidence that he is mistaken about the content of his belief. Now internalism of this sort is too strong, for it is possible to be in a state of anomie or despair
in which one can recognize that a course of action is a good one, yet not be motivated to pursue it. Further, it is at least conceivable that a moral pervert should be motivated by a course of action just because it is evil. But both sorts of cases are motivational deviations, which are selectable as such only against a background of motivational normality. Hence a more modest internalism will claim that necessarily typically, if someone believes that something is good, then he will have a motivating reason to promote it. 18

Secondly, there is a conceptual connection between having a motivating reason (a desire, in the broad sense in which philosophers use that term) and finding something pleasant. Hedonists try to capture this connection by claiming that the only thing desired for its own sake is pleasure. As many philosophers have argued, this is false, since I can, for instance, rationally choose to forego a life of pleasure if it is based on systematic deception. 19 But a more promising conceptual connection is captured by Mill’s dictum that ‘to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility’.20 This is compatible with holding that we desire for their own sakes things other than pleasure, for instance, knowledge. For even if I desire knowledge for its own sake, I will find the idea of acquiring it pleasant. As J. C. Gosling has argued, Mill’s dictum captures the characteristically human way of desiring things, one might say, passionately: if we really want something, we will be joyful at the prospect of achieving it, and downcast if we cannot obtain it. 21 This is supported by the fact that if one thinks that one desires something, yet feels no pleasure at the prospect of getting it, then that is strong, though defeasible, evidence that one does not desire it after all. So there is a conceptual connection between desire and pleasure. However, Mill, in holding that we always find the idea of the desired thing pleasant, makes the connection too strong, for one may, for instance, do one’s duty without enjoyment. So we should adopt the same strategy as we used above and hold that necessarily typically, if someone desires something, then the idea of achieving it gives her pleasure.

Putting together these two conceptual connections, we have the conclusion that there is a conceptual connection between evaluation and pleasure: necessarily, typically if someone positively evaluates a state of affairs, then she will feel pleasure at the idea of achieving it. Now, if the individual has the relevant knowledge about the state of affairs concerned—if the state of affairs is as her idea represents it to be—then the state of affairs will be pleasant. Conversely, necessarily typically, if someone negatively evaluates a state of affairs and she is relevantly informed about it, she will find that state of affairs unpleasant. So it follows that, given that the agent is adequately informed, the view of the emotions as evaluative does place conceptual constraints on whether it is typically possible to enjoy being in the situations which are the objects of the emotions. Further, since the pleasant is a dispositional property, if the object is unpleasant, the experience of it (including one’s affective experience of it)

is unpleasant. Hence, in the case of negative emotions, the view of the emotions as evaluative entails that informed agents will typically experience the objects of their emotions and the emotions themselves as unpleasant.

So the evaluative theory of the emotions is not susceptible to the counterexample based on the unintelligibility of the tribal people who feel sorrow, yet find the emotion pleasant. For, we can note that the emotion concerned is not typically unpleasant for them, and therefore is not sorrow. But have we not now reproduced the paradox of horror, by showing that one cannot feel fear, and hence evaluate something as threatening, without experiencing the emotion as unpleasant? However, this is not so, for it was crucial to the conceptual connections discussed above that they were of the form necessarily typically. This being so, there is plenty of scope for the enjoyment of these emotions in atypical situations or by atypical people. This allows Suzy to enjoy her fear, and it allows the aficionados of horror to enjoy their fear and disgust. The latter are helped by the fact that they know the film is fictional and that neither they nor the actors depicted are in real danger. But these atypical cases are only possible against a background in which people do not enjoy these negative emotions. The background of typical unpleasant responses is necessary for these emotions to be negative.

This itself might seem a paradoxical result, but it is not. It is, in fact, a perfectly familiar result of holistic theories about the mental. The position I defend here does not assume, or entail, the truth of functionalism. But like functionalism it is a holistic view, and functionalists similarly define mental states by means of a ‘typically’ operator, in order to respect the holism of the mental. Functionalists seek to define mental concepts in terms of their functional role, and so hold, for instance, that pain is (roughly) that state which typically results from bodily damage, typically produces the desire to escape the source of the damage, and typically produces avoidance-behaviour. As David Lewis has pointed out, this allows for cases where atypical people may not be motivated to avoid pain (or, we can add, may even enjoy it); but it is only pain that they can enjoy because of the background of normal aversive reactions to that state in the (human) community of which they are members.22 So the full solution to the paradoxes depends both on a view of the emotions as evaluative, and on the recognition of how mental holism presents itself in respect of emotions, desires and enjoyment.

Hence we can dissolve the paradox of horror. That paradox rests on the claim that the enjoyment of negative emotions, understood as intrinsically unpleasant emotions, is impossible. The paradox seems to arise only because we construe the negativity in terms of these emotions being intrinsically unpleasant, whereas we should really construe their negativity in terms of the fact that the emotions essentially incorporate negative evaluations. But this entails that typically people will find the objects of these emotions unpleasant and the emotions themselves are typically unpleasant. Thus it is wrong to
hold that whether people enjoy these emotions or not is a merely contingent, non-conceptual matter. But because there is only a conceptual requirement that people typically don't enjoy them, that allows room for some individuals on some occasions to enjoy them. Moreover, this solution explains why it can seem so plausible to hold that these emotions are intrinsically unpleasant. For, while it is false that necessarily, if someone feels fear, she does not enjoy the experience, it is true that necessarily she or others of her community typically feel fear. It should be clear that this solution, being entirely general, also solves the paradox of tragedy.

Of course, why any particular individual enjoys feeling fear, and another doesn't, or why some horror films are enjoyable and others not, is an interesting and no doubt complex matter. But it is the proper subject of empirical, psychological investigation and it would be unproductive to engage in armchair speculation about why this is so. What I have shown here is that this empirical investigation is possible. For I have argued that there is no a priori, conceptual problem about the enjoyment of negative emotions in real life, or in fiction. There is no paradox of horror.23

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REFERENCES

2 Noël Carroll, The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart (New York: Routledge, 1990), especially pp. 178–95. Page references in the text are to this work. In chapter 1 he defends the view, recorded in (2) above, that the horror genre produces not just fear, but also disgust in its audience.
3 See Carol J. Clover, 'Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film' in James Donald (ed.), Fantasy and the Cinema (London: BFI, 1989), for some evidence of how widespread such films are.
4 This is, of course, a common, though perhaps incorrect, way of interpreting Aristotle's doctrine of katharsis. For a welcome scepticism about the possibility of establishing precisely what Aristotle meant by this term, see K. Bennett, 'The Purging of Catharsis', British Journal of Aesthetics, 21 (1981), pp. 204–13.
6 See the references below to Feagin, Eaton, Morreall, Walton and Nell.
13 Ibid., p. 65, fn. 13.
14 Ibid., p. 61.
17 See William Lyons, Emotion (Cambridge U.P., 1980), especially chapters 3, 7 and 8. Lyons also thinks that the concepts of some, though not all, emotions involve reference to desires. But the internalism I argue for below will show that the concepts of all emotions implicitly incorporate reference to desires which are typically possessed by those experiencing the emotion.
18 The argument of this paragraph is that of James Dreier, 'Internalism and Speaker Relativism', Ethics, 101 (1991), pp. 6–26, at pp. 9–14, though I have substituted 'typically' for his 'normally'.
23 I am grateful to John Haldane for his comments on this paper.