

## Conceptual Truth and Aesthetic Truth

### I. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

The tradition that there is a non-rational kind of knowing that rivals or even surpasses rational knowledge is as old as philosophy itself, and even Plato speaks of the ancient conflict between poetry and philosophy (*Republic* x 607b). For Plato, however, there seems no doubt about which of these rivals is the worthier. In the *Republic* and elsewhere he consistently (although not unreservedly) belittles the claims of nonrational knowledge, often refusing to distinguish between art and sophistry.<sup>1</sup> In the modern period the dispute over whether the disclosure of truth is best attained by conceptual or aesthetic means has not figured prominently in the English tradition, where empirical science and therefore the rational, conceptual model of knowledge has always been the dominant criterion. The idea of a non-rational kind of knowing has, however, attained considerable prominence in the German and French traditions of late nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, largely because the claims of aesthetic thinking—which traditionally had been slighted by philosophy—have been upheld under the influence of existentialism and related areas such as hermeneutics and post-modernism. Indirectly, the recent respect for alternatives to the rational model of knowledge is a result of the influence of Schopenhauer, who rejected the Hegelian subordination of understanding to reason. For Schopenhauer understanding is direct mental apprehension, while reason is the faculty only of indirect, demonstrative knowledge, whose primary function is to extend our understanding indirectly in areas where direct apprehension is not possible.<sup>2</sup> Reason is the tool of understanding, whereas for Hegel the reverse was true.

In the next three sections I would like to explore this other kind of knowledge. In the light

of that discussion I shall turn to Plato's critique of art and aesthetic knowledge in Book x of the *Republic*. Plato was well aware of the deeper kind of aesthetic knowledge, and the one-sidedness of his critique invites scrutiny. Let us begin by considering what kinds of knowledge art seems to be capable of, after which we shall take up the question of the means by which it achieves this, and then draw a comparison between the means available to art and those available to conceptual thought.

For the sake of simplicity I shall use the terms "art," "aesthetic thinking," and "nonrational thinking" almost interchangeably in what follows. Nevertheless, aesthetic thinking may not be the only species of non-rational thought, and the distinction between aesthetic and rational thought is not in fact coextensive with the distinction between art and philosophy. Some forms of art are rationalistic and some forms of philosophy owe as much to aesthetic as to rationalistic thinking. In discussing Plato it is anachronistic even to speak of "art" and "artists" rather than the individual arts and their practitioners, since he had no word precisely equivalent to our word "art"—*mousikê* comes closest—and tended to refer to the arts individually. It is a convenient simplification, however, and not misleading in any substantive way.

### II. LEVELS OF AESTHETIC COGNITION

There are at least four levels of experience at which art seems to express a certain kind of truth: those of 1) our emotions, 2) cultural values, 3) sensory experience, and 4) the elusive *significance* of our experience.

1. The most commonly recognized cognitive virtue of art is that it can communicate truth

about emotion. This was already put forward by Plato, most comprehensively in the *Laws* (II 54b-671a), where he argues that works of art, especially music and poetry, should be judged not according to whether they are pleasant but whether they portray the emotions well and whether they portray them in the (morally) right way (668b, 669a-b). This view provides the basis for what is usually called the "expression theory" of art, the dominant theory at the present time, although most subsequent versions of expression theory accept only the first of Plato's two criteria.

We can see that the aesthetic experience of art is able to convey a non-conceptual kind of truth about our emotional life insofar as the experience with which it presents us "rings true" emotionally. In literature an author can make explicit claims about the nature of our emotions and the reader can make explicit judgments about their truth, but such truth is conceptual. The distinctive capacity of art is more visible in a non-conceptual art such as music, in which it is possible to judge in an immediate (non-conceptual) way whether the sequence of emotions exhibited seems to make sense, and even whether it is profound or shallow. To be aesthetically effective the feelings expressed must reflect more than the personal idiosyncrasies of the artist: what is expressed must be shared, the feelings must be held in common, the particular must reflect the universal. In this sense art is able to disclose truth about our shared life of feeling.

2. Given the stylistic differences among art of various cultures, it is inevitable that works of art will be more meaningful and readily appreciated within their cultural milieu than outside it. Accordingly, works of art reflect something collectively cultural as well as individually human. While there is much that we can appreciate in ancient Greek art, for example, we cannot appreciate all that the contemporary Greeks could. Whatever else a particular work of art aims to express, it always does so *in terms of* a particular cultural style and particular cultural values. The experiences that it evokes inevitably reveal something of these values and the possibilities inherent in them.

This is what is meant by Hegel's claim that art expresses the spirit of a historical people, the *Zeitgeist*; and by Heidegger's remark that by

means of the art work "the nation first returns to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation."<sup>3</sup> This means, for Heidegger, not only that the poet *exemplifies* the soul of his nation but that he is a powerful and even necessary force in its shaping as well. Where the primordial bond between art and religion remains intact Heidegger's claim is clearly right, although it is not clear that art can wield such nation-shaping power in a purely secular way. The influence of Homer and Hesiod on Greek culture, for example, would not have been the same if they had written on secular themes as Shakespeare did. Shakespeare's considerable influence on subsequent literature is not paralleled in the social institutions of his culture. He was never the educator of England as Homer and Hesiod were of ancient Greece. Even the operas of Wagner would never have meant to Germany what they did, had their themes been from secular life like Verdi's instead of from mythology—although the power of their influence was limited by the fact that their mythology was a nostalgic revival rather than a living tradition.

Part of the artistic disclosure of cultural values is involuntary. Even when an artist does not set out deliberately to influence, interpret, or simply express the values of his culture, he will unavoidably reflect them; and even when a work of art is a failure of expression in other respects, this feature remains in evidence.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the more of a failure an art work is in other ways, the more likely it is to seem "dated" when its milieu is past, because it reflects this faded milieu and little else. Mediocre old novels and movies can sometimes evoke a bygone age more effectively than a masterpiece, since they are less successful in rising above their period to evoke something universal.

3. The two previous levels of aesthetic cognition displayed art's power to disclose truth about humanity itself, humanity both as affective individuals and as collective historical culture. However, art reveals something not only about the subjectivity of experience but about the experienced world itself, something that is not accessible to conceptual understanding. In our immediate perception of the world we perceive images that are combined into a total experience, but the images are composite and presuppose more fundamental qualities, such as color, shape, sound, scent, taste, and feel. Although

these simple qualities are logically prior to the composite images, they are not experientially prior since our immediate experience is of the "things" constituted by the images, which we analyze only subsequently into their constituent primitive qualities. In vision, for example, the most fundamental primitive qualities, color and shape, are in fact inseparable although distinguishable as the positive visual quality and its negation or limiting boundary.

Since in our normal experience qualities like color, shape, and sound are "absorbed" into the images of perceived things, they are experienced only derivatively—not in themselves but as submerged in the object. No analysis can help us grasp their experiential nature because they are experientially primitive. Wavelength analysis of colors may help us understand the physical *genesis* of our experience of colors, but the quality of that experience itself is not made any less brute and ineffable. Art, however, can make the qualities of color, shape, sound, duration, weight, etc., stand alone as images themselves rather than as mere features of normal physical things. Thus it can give us a framework within which to see these qualities in their own terms—although even art is never "neutral" but is limited by stylistic constraints and conventions.

In this way art can reveal truth about the world by making conspicuous the primitive qualities of which our experience is composed but which are normally submerged in that experience. The most extreme effort of graphic art in this direction is "minimalism," the earliest pioneer of which is perhaps Kazimir Malevich. His painting, *The Red Square* (1915), is nothing more than a flat red square shape precisely centered within a white square canvas, and his more famous *White on White* (c. 1918) consists only of a white square shape tilted off-center within a square canvas of a different shade of white. Such paintings, which became commonplace fifty years later, call our attention to particular colors and shapes with an explicitness and focal context that ordinary experience cannot provide.

In music such spareness is more difficult if the piece is to proceed for more than a short time without becoming tedious, but some music of the 1960s employs various degrees of minimalism<sup>5</sup> in which pure tones—sometimes no more than the same note played consecutively (sometimes overlapping) for various lengths of

time by different instruments—are produced with a minimum of formal melodic organization.<sup>6</sup> Even when severe minimalism is not employed, art can make us aware of shape, color, and tone by more subtle means, such as by using them in unexpected ways or in contexts that arrest our attention.

From a traditional point of view an exhibition of sensuous qualities would not be considered an important function of art although it does disclose a certain kind of truth about the world. It corresponds to what Kant calls "the art of the beautiful play of sensations" or the art of tone, which he regards as the lowest art form.<sup>7</sup> Heidegger, on the other hand, sees that art does not merely display these qualities in order to give pleasure, but also in order to disclose the hidden nature of what he calls Earth—although this is only a secondary sense of what is meant by that term.<sup>8</sup>

4. There is another way that art can reveal something about the world, a way which, for philosophical purposes, is of more consequence than the primitive qualities of sensation. If our experience is constituted from below by the primitive qualities we have just been considering (the sensuous qualities out of which our experienced world is composed), its *meaning* is bestowed from above in another way. It is at these upper and lower limits of our ordinary experience that art's special faculties for disclosing something of the nature of the world come into their own. Within the bounds of normal experience itself (the focus of Plato's arguments in *Republic* x) the artist enjoys no special insight.

Our ordinary experience of the world does not rest within itself but always points beyond itself: we are not content to know only what happens in the world but always wonder what significance it has. In the case of particular events we can give particular explanations, but when such questions are addressed to some aspect of the world of experience as a whole, they can be answered only in terms of something outside that range of experience itself, something that does not appear within the world but which imparts significance to it—like light, which cannot itself be seen but is manifested by the objects we do see, objects which become visible only by means of it. Our experience evokes an unperceived significance and at the same time becomes meaningful in the light of what is evoked.

The impulse whereby experience becomes evocative in this way and leads us to think of something beyond itself, originally and most commonly takes the form of religion. Religion has always given a place of prominence to art because of the latter's power to embody the significance of the "super-sensible" in works that are sensuous and therefore enter into our experience directly. This power of art to represent significance in sensuous objects has been described definitively by Kant in his doctrine of aesthetic ideas:

by an aesthetic idea I understand that representation of the imagination which induces much thinking, without however any particular thought, i.e. *concept*, being capable of being adequate to it, and which consequently language cannot fully reach and render understandable. ... The poet ventures to convey to the senses rational ideas of invisible beings, the realm of the blessed, the realm of Hell, eternity, creation, etc.; or even with regard to things of which there are examples in experience—e.g. death, envy and all vices, as well as love, fame and the like—going beyond the confines of experience by means of an imagination which emulates the play of reason in its attainment of a maximum, he ventures to convey them to the senses with a completeness of which there is no example in nature.<sup>9</sup>

Art's power of giving sensuous form to significance is also the more fundamental sense in which, for Heidegger, art discloses the hiddenness of "Earth," the realm within our experience that is not reducible to conceptual clarity. Earth includes not only primitive sensuous qualities but also that which underlies what is as a whole. Because Earth cannot be reduced to conceptual clarity it is accessible only to evocative rather than conceptual thinking, and therefore to imagination rather than reason (terms which Heidegger does not employ). What reveals itself in Van Gogh's painting of peasant shoes, for example, can only be *hinted* at with concepts: "In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field."<sup>10</sup> Here Earth refers not to elemental sensory qualities but to the fundamental ground of our experience, as later the Greek temple is said in some sense to make present the divinity itself.<sup>11</sup>

The view that art can apprehend and express the nature of what gives significance to our experience is the oldest and most widely accepted interpretation of its role, and it is the view on which the basis of art's rivalry with philosophy becomes most clearly evident.<sup>12</sup> Thus, although art affords no *conceptual* knowledge of the world, it nevertheless affords us its own kind of knowledge by means of its special sensitivity to the emotive, cultural, perceptual, and significant principles that circumscribe the world that we experience: 1) individual subjective feeling, 2) the collective subjectivity of a historical people, 3) the primitive perceptual qualities that constitute our experience from below, 4) the significance that illuminates its meaning from above.

### III. IMAGINATION

All four areas in which art provides us with cognitive experience are areas in which philosophy operates. Accordingly, if, as the *Republic* claimed, the kind of knowledge afforded by art is demonstrably inferior to that afforded by philosophy, the cognitive value of art will still be negligible. We must consider whether the kind of knowledge proper to art, which is comprised of images rather than rational concepts and is therefore called imagination, is a legitimate alternative to rational knowledge rather than the deficient one that the *Republic* claims it is. The *primary* reliance on one or the other of these faculties (neither of which is ever wholly absent) is the distinguishing difference between art and philosophy.

Imagination is a complex phenomenon, of which at least four different but cumulatively related senses may be distinguished. 1) Our sense organs convey simple stimuli representative of such phenomena as wavelengths of light and sound, which, in the act of perception, we convert into images. The power to effect this conversion is the most basic sense of imagination, i.e., "perceptual imagination." 2) The resultant images are immediately interpreted in accordance with patterns of classification derived in part from prior experience. This function may be designated as "cognitive imagination." 3) The material furnished by the preceding imaginative functions may be deliberately rearranged in arbitrary ways to form fictitious expe-

riences. This "inventive" function is imagination in the popular sense of the term. 4) A special case of inventive imagination is aesthetic imagination, in which the fictitious images constitute works of art. Our primary concern here is with aesthetic imagination, but it is first necessary to examine the nature of cognitive imagination since it is the cognitive aspect of art that we seek.

The earliest illustration of cognitive imagination, and how it differs from reason, may be found in the Divided Line section of the *Republic*. Socrates distinguishes four levels of apprehension of the world. The highest is *epistêmê* or *noêsis*—often translated as reason—while the lowest is *eikasia*—often translated as imagination (and which is described in terms later applied to art: compare 596d-e with 509d-510a). In the allegory of the cave, the level corresponding to *eikasia* depicts prisoners who can see only shadows of things (as in sense perception we *see* only their sensuous images<sup>13</sup>) which they take for reality (514a-515c). They also try to remember which shadows "habitually pass by earlier, later, or together" and they try "to predict from these things what is going to happen" (516c-d). This corresponds to what we called the cognitive function of imagination, involving sense perception, memory, and habitual associations of certain kinds of events with one another. Our immediate apprehension of the world through sense perception is interpreted in accordance with patterns derived from our memories of prior experience.

The inferiority of cognitive imagination to reason is that the objects of imagination are constantly changing individuals which differ from one another in an unlimited number of ways and therefore cannot be defined or become the objects of abiding knowledge. Only paradigms (or universals: 596a) like the Platonic forms can be the direct objects of concepts and are subject to definition. Imagination, insofar as it presupposes sense perception, can perhaps give us knowledge of the *presence* of individuals (or at least of their sensuous qualities) but this is a philosophically trivial kind of knowledge. Knowledge about the *meaning* of individual things is inaccessible to imagination, since imagination is confined to appearances. Knowledge of relations is equally impossible since imagination in this sense has no means of distinguishing

necessary connections from coincidental ones, relying instead only on "habitual associations." Because cognitive imagination cannot distinguish necessity from mere coincidence, or the essential from the accidental, it is the ground not only of art but also of sophistry, a comparison that the *Republic* makes explicit (596d). The *Euthydemus* abounds with examples of the way that sophistry collapses such distinctions.

Aristotle, in contrast to Plato, defends the importance of cognitive imagination, which he calls not *eikasia* but *empeiria* (experience):

Experience comes about in people from memory [of sense perceptions], since many memories of the same thing can eventuate in one experience. And it appears to be nearly the same as rational knowledge (*epistêmê*) and craft (*technê*); however it is through experience that rational knowledge and craft come about. ... Craft comes about when, from many conceptions taken from experience, one universal understanding comes about regarding similar things. For to understand that when Callias was suffering from a particular disease he was helped by a particular remedy, and the same with Socrates and many individuals, this is experience; but to understand that it helps all people of a certain type, defined as one kind, who are suffering from a particular disease ... this is craft. With regard to practical matters experience does not seem to differ at all from craft; in fact we see that those with experience are more successful than those who have a rational understanding without experience. The reason is that experience is a knowledge of individuals while craft is one of universals, and all practical matters and processes are concerned with individuals. ... But at the same time we believe knowledge and understanding to derive more from craft than experience, and consider those with craft to be wiser than those with experience, since wisdom always follows from knowledge. This is because the former know the cause and the latter do not. Those with experience know *that* something is so but do not know *why*; the others know *why* and apprehend the cause.<sup>14</sup>

Although experience, or what I have called cognitive imagination, does not grasp causal or universal principles as rational knowledge does, its grasp of individuality makes it more valuable than reason in certain ways. This mode of cognition has been defended subsequently by Pascal, as the "intuitive" mind which he distinguishes

from the "mathematical" mind,<sup>15</sup> and perhaps even more strongly by Schopenhauer, who calls it "understanding."<sup>16</sup> It also corresponds to the first term of Russell's distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, a distinction which subsequently has often been used to distinguish aesthetic cognition from rational, although the terminology sometimes differs.<sup>17</sup>

Cognitive imagination, then, refers to our experiential acquaintance with the world before it is interpreted in accordance with the universal categories and causal principles of reason. It is a "feeling" for what is happening rather than a conceptualization of it. *Aesthetic* imagination arises on the basis of cognitive imagination, but the former has distinctive features that set it apart; just as aesthetic experience is generally distinguished from ordinary experience.<sup>18</sup> The events of aesthetic experience are the substance of art, while the events of ordinary experience are the substance of report and history. At times the two overlap but the difference between them is fundamental. As a function of imagination rather than reason, the experience furnished by the aesthetic imagination at work in art is one of individuals rather than universals; but unlike the ordinary experience furnished by cognitive imagination, the individuals represented in art refer beyond themselves to something universal. Although they cannot refer to the universal directly, as reason can, they refer to it indirectly, by metaphor. Aristotle gives this aspect of art its classical formulation:

It is evident from what we have said that the poet's function is not to state what happened but what sort of thing might happen, i.e. what is possible as being likely or necessary. The historian and poet are different not because one speaks in verse and the other does not (for one might set Herodotus' work into verse but it would nonetheless be history whether in verse or not); but they differ in this, that one states what happened and the other what might happen. Accordingly poetry is more philosophical and important than history, for poetry states what is more universal, while history states things in terms of individuals. The universal, with respect to what sort of things particular sorts of people will likely or necessarily say or do, is what poetry aims at while applying proper names to it: an individual statement, such as what Alcibiades did or experienced.<sup>19</sup>

The special character of aesthetic imagination can be seen in the origin of the arts (whether myth, song and poetry, dance, instrumental music, painting, or sculpture) in religious ritual and ceremony. The fact that the immediate cognitive experience of such events was meant to refer to something of a different nature than itself, in this case something divine, shows it as metaphorical. The metaphorical character of art is emphasized by the stylized distortion of normal vocal inflections in song, of speech patterns in poetry, of normal bodily movements in dance, and of physiognomy in painting and sculpture, all of which have the effect of preventing us from regarding the aesthetic experience literally, as ordinary experience (this is one reason why art is so often considered akin to madness). Artists sometimes experiment with removing this discontinuity, and produce paintings without frames, that may be mistaken for part of the wall; sculpture that can be mistaken for ordinary objects lying around; or plays in which the actors may be mistaken for members of the audience, or in which members of the audience are incorporated into the play. If such a work completely succeeded in destroying the boundary between ordinary and aesthetic experience it would be indistinguishable from ordinary experience and consequently unsuccessful as a work of art. What these works accomplish is to remind us forcefully and unexpectedly of the (inevitable) discontinuity precisely by challenging it. If there were no overt discontinuity between the art work and ordinary experience, we would have no need of art.

Art reacts against our ordinary experience not as an end in itself but as a means of displaying the extraordinary and calling it to our attention. If Plato is correct in claiming that art does not operate effectively at the level of our ordinary utilitarian cognition of the world, we have seen that it nevertheless does have a special facility for revealing the principles that are the matrix of that ordinary experience, both those that pertain to the person and those that pertain to the world experienced by him.

The metaphoric nature of aesthetic imagination means that what distinguishes the making of art works from the making of non-aesthetic products is the artist's intention that we not merely see or hear or even use his work, but that we see or hear something *in* it, that we have a

certain kind of experience that is different from the cognitive act of apprehending it alone. When we regard something as a work of art we regard it as meant to evoke such an experience. If it succeeds in doing so then what is disclosed in the experience may be called the truth that it reveals—regardless of whether we have any independent way of knowing whether this is what the artist intended.

#### IV. AESTHETIC IMAGINATION

The preceding discussion shows how art is able to achieve the four kinds of cognition distinguished in section 2. Taking the four in reverse order, let us first note that it is in the sphere of "significance" that the metaphoric power of art prevails, for it is by virtue of metaphor that we pass from the visible realm of particulars to the unseen realm of something ultimate. As we saw in connection with Kant's doctrine of aesthetic ideas, art deploys images in such a way as to prevent our taking them literally, and to force our thoughts beyond definite concepts to an indefinite significance.

Since art is based on imagination rather than reason, it is especially suited to focus on the primitive qualities underlying our experience, for that experience, as we have seen, originally takes the form of the sensuous *images* that we perceive as things. But this function of art is usually subordinated to the first or the fourth: emotion or significance.

Art's expression of cultural values, too, is usually subordinate to other ends, and is, to an important degree, inadvertent. The choice of the images which are to constitute a work of art will inevitably be guided by the cultural matrix within which the aesthetic experience is born. The images will display this origin unavoidably and usually unconsciously.

The connection between imagination and the emotions is more complex, although no less intimate. Cognitive imagination was distinguished from reason in that it provided cognitive "feelings" rather than concepts. There is a close connection between feelings in this sense and the sense in which feelings are synonymous with emotions.

Emotions, like imagination, are contrasted with reason, the former as irrational, the latter as pre-rational. The contrast is based on the fact

that both imagination and the emotions relate to the world at the level of concrete individuality whereas reason operates at the level of universal concepts abstracted from the concrete and individual. We saw this to be true of imagination in that the images of our experience always intend concrete particular things. Emotions, too, belong exclusively to the world of individuality.<sup>20</sup> An emotion is always an event, a changed condition, and can therefore occur only in the changing realm of particulars, not the timeless realm of universals. We feel emotion when we as individuals are affected by other individual persons or things. This passivity of individuals toward one another is implicit in the names that we apply: "emotion" (being "moved from" our previous state), "affect" (the sense of something being "done to" us), "passion" (being acted upon), and "feeling" (the sensation of that which impinges on our body).

Emotions are the qualitative reflection in our consciousness, of how we as particular individuals are affected at particular moments by other individuals; whereas reason is concerned with the general in abstraction from individuality. The individuation inherent in both imagination and emotion is why we cannot communicate adequately in concepts either our experience (cognitive imagination) or our emotions. It is neither possible to learn from someone else's experience in quite the way one learns from one's own, nor to experience someone else's emotional state of mind. Conceptual knowledge, on the other hand, is readily communicable.

Emotion and imagination are not only analogous but inseparable. Emotion can occur only as a product of the realm of experience apprehended by the (cognitive) imagination. Conversely, because the experiences furnished by the imagination "happen" to us, they are necessarily affective. Since in cognitive imagination what we perceive is other individualities in relation to ourselves, and since this relation is the basis of emotion, cognitive imagination (experience) always implies emotion. If imagination is the way experience is cognized, and emotion is the way we are affected by the experience furnished in imagination, then imagination and emotion can be related as counterparts: the active and passive modes of consciousness toward experience. The active mode is the presentation within consciousness, by means of

cognitive imagination, of the *experience* by which we are affected. The passive mode is the emotional consciousness of how we are *affected* by the experience.<sup>21</sup> It is this complementary nature of emotion and imagination that explains why emotion is not only a suitable object, but the most recognized object, of aesthetic cognition.

#### V. THE PLATONIC CRITIQUE

Plato came too early for the historical consciousness that leads to the conception of art as the expression of the spirit of a culture, but the importance of the other three areas of aesthetic cognition was both recognized and emphasized by him. Why then is he so dismissive of art's value? He knew that the criticisms of art advanced in the *Republic* were not the whole story, but he believed that it was important to assess art's value against the background of its limitations. His criticisms are serious and pertinent, and need to be taken into account.

The critique in Book x of the *Republic* comprises a total of seven arguments in support of three main contentions: 1) art does not necessarily involve knowledge, 2) art is inferior to rational knowledge because it is grounded in the inferior, irrational side of our nature, and 3) art has a bad influence on us because it strengthens that part of our nature.

The first thesis is supported by the first four arguments. 1) The artist imitates everything, which implies, since no one can know everything, that art does not spring from knowledge of reality (596c-597a). 2) The work of art is three times removed from reality—after the form and the physical thing (597b-598c). 3) If poets like Homer, who wrote about war and society, had true knowledge of the nature of these things they would have offered useful advice for fighting wars or improving society and education; but they did not do so (598d-601b). 4) The imitator is three times removed from the truth of the thing—after the user of it and the maker of it (601b-602c). All four arguments are pertinent in their own terms, i.e., if art is imitation. The third is pertinent even if art is not imitation. Judging by the length of the third argument, which is more than twice that of any other, and by the fact that it is the only argument supported by experiential evidence, this argument may be

the one which Plato considers the most important. Nevertheless it is obvious that all the arguments are answerable if there is a significant sense of aesthetic knowledge which is neither a form of imitation nor of the practical wisdom that the third argument takes as its criterion.

The second thesis is supported by the fifth and sixth arguments, which portray art in terms of the two kinds of "irrationality" discussed earlier in the *Republic*. In Book iv the lower parts of the soul, appetite and spiritedness, were contrasted with reason (*logos*) as its inferiors; and in Books v, vi, and vii sense perception was similarly distinguished from and declared inferior to reason (in an epistemic rather than telic sense: *nous* rather than *logos*). In Book x these two kinds of irrationality are shown to be characteristic of art. The fifth argument shows, with special reference to painting, that art is irrational (anoetic) in that it is committed to sense perception rather than reason (602c-603b). The sixth argument shows, with special reference to dramatic poetry, that art is irrational (*alogon*) in that it concentrates on emotion rather than reason (603b-605c).

It is clear from the fifth and sixth arguments that Plato recognized the importance of art with respect to the first and third kinds of aesthetic cognition: human feeling and sense perception. This did not, however, improve his opinion of art. On the contrary, the prominence of emotion and sense perception in art is what makes art a danger: neither of the two deserves to have intrinsic importance attached to it, and attentiveness to them can undermine the authority of reason and distract us from the primacy of the intelligible. Moreover, the bond between emotion and art leads to the third thesis, the most serious charge against art, developed in the seventh argument (605c): because of this bond, highly emotional people are the most popular subjects for art, and the empathy for them that art (especially poetry and music) produces in us undermines the authority of reason within our own character (605c-606d).

In the case of the remaining kind of aesthetic cognition, "significance," Plato both recognized and appreciated the transcendent power of beauty and art. This is especially true of their moral significance, which is not limited to the extrinsic fact that art can be used as a medium for rhetoric and therefore for moralizing. It is in



this latter sense that the relationship of art to morality is usually discussed. Both Plato and Tolstoy, for example, advocate the tailoring of the conceptual content of art to moral purposes. But since this involves the introduction of extrinsic concepts into art it does not demonstrate anything about the non-conceptual, specifically aesthetic thinking that we are concerned with here.

There are at least two important senses in which moral truth can be *intrinsically* reflected in aesthetic thinking, and beauty serve as a symbol of goodness. First, in terms of their structure. Both morality and beauty appear as harmonious adaptations of the parts to the whole. Morality involves the subordination and instrumentality of one's desires to the overriding purpose of the morally good, while in beauty all particular details are similarly subordinated and harmonized in the unity of the aesthetic experience. Second, in terms of the nature of the experience itself. Both are suspensions of self-centered instrumental value in favor of intrinsic value. Morality replaces the egocentric point of view, in which behavior is evaluated only in terms of self-interest, with a disinterested point of view. The aesthetic experience as well removes us from the realm of desire and elevates us above our private concerns to an experience felt as valuable in itself.<sup>22</sup>

Plato repeatedly acknowledges this correspondence between the beautiful and the moral. In the *Symposium*, for example, Diotima says that whoever beholds true beauty will give birth to true virtue (212a); and the *Timaeus* (29a-30b) begins with the claim that the beauty of the cosmos is an image of the creator's goodness.<sup>23</sup> The basis for this is similar to the first of the two analogies above. What mediates between beauty and morality is conceived by Plato as harmony: since musical harmony "has motions akin to the revolutions within us of our soul" it allies itself to wisdom "as a co-fighter against the disharmoniousness of the revolution of the soul which has come about in us, to bring it into order and concordance with itself," i.e., a state of moral virtue.<sup>24</sup> In the *Republic* it is the harmony and rhythm of music and poetry that influence the pre-cognitive soul to virtue (401b-402a). And on the conceptual level the highest study on the way to the apprehension the nature of goodness is that of harmony (530d-531e). Finally, when

the soul attains virtue this means that the three elements of the soul—corporeal desire, spirited competitiveness, and reason—are in "harmony" with each other (442c, 443e). Why then does Plato not regard art more highly?

Philosophy attains its universality by means of abstraction from particularity. Art, by contrast, employs no methodical transition from the particular to the universal but conveys its meaning in a metaphoric or symbolic leap between the two. Philosophy accordingly looks at the particulars of the everyday world in a literal way, as concrete instances of universal principles. The artist looks at them in a metaphoric way, as symbolic of something beyond themselves. The philosopher's knowledge of general principles is therefore also an indirect knowledge of the particulars of our experience, since the two are intrinsically related and therefore commensurate with each other. But a metaphor need only be extrinsically related to what it symbolizes (an owl is not wise), so artists may know how to make compelling metaphors without understanding the intrinsic nature of the particular kinds of things from which they make the metaphors.

Audiences, however, do not always make this distinction. If they are impressed by artists' ability to turn their materials into effective metaphors, they tend to accord to the artists an understanding of the intrinsic nature of that material itself. Because part of Homer's greatness as a poet is his ability to use scenes of war and social relationships to evoke a sense of the significance of our lives, he was assumed to be an expert on war and society. To put it differently, if he has a sensitivity to the significance of our experience, and the skill to evoke this significance for us by means of images, it does not follow that he has the *conceptual* comprehension of the world that would enable him to apply his wisdom to the practical requirements of life. As early as the *Ion* Plato showed concern about the ease with which effective artistic evocation is confused with adequate cognition of the materials from which the metaphors are created.<sup>25</sup> His arguments disputing the cognitive power of art result, then, not from his being confused about the true vocation of art, as is sometimes claimed, but from the desire to expose a confusion not of his making, which follows rather from the metaphoric nature of art itself.

On the other hand, although philosophical

rationality is not open to such confusion because its procedure is abstractive generalization rather than metaphor, the status of the general concepts that it employs is problematic. The kinds of things that art employs for its metaphors are at least given directly in experience, but concepts are not. Although they are *occasioned* by sensation, they are somehow furnished by reason rather than the senses. Unlike the individuals given in sense experience, there is no consensus as to *which* concepts (if any) are "given" and which derivative.<sup>26</sup> Plato, for example, considered the primary forms of reality to be what we call values (the good, the beautiful, the just). For Aristotle they are the species of substance, of which values are merely properties. For Spinoza they are the principles of nature. In fact it may be that any original thinker is original precisely by virtue of seeing the world in terms of a new conceptual scheme. Accordingly, whichever rational principles we single out as primary may be considered arbitrary from another point of view, and therefore as reflecting not only reality, but our own priorities and interests as well.

From a nominalistic point of view the situation is more problematic still. If nothing in reality corresponds to a general term, it is not merely a question of whether one set of concepts can be shown to be less arbitrary and therefore more legitimate than others, but whether *any* concept is a legitimate representation of reality. In his early fragment "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" Nietzsche writes:

A nerve stimulation first transformed into an image! First metaphor. The image is copied into a sound! Second metaphor ... Every word immediately becomes a concept ... because it must serve to fit simultaneously innumerable more or less similar cases, which strictly speaking means never the same, and therefore just dissimilar cases.<sup>27</sup>

Wittgenstein subsequently extended the critique of language to grammar.

The impossibility of giving a uniquely satisfying answer to the questions of whether general principles accurately reflect the nature of reality at all and, if so, which ones are primary and which derivative, does not show the attempt to be misguided and unjustified. Plato was well aware of such limitations. Both by the indirect style of his presentation, and by deliberate aporiae

and warnings of incompleteness, he discourages us from taking his models in a dogmatic way.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless he continued to make use of them because to reject such models leads to a complementary problem. If there are no realities (forms) corresponding to the universal concepts involved in rational knowledge, then this knowledge is not "of" reality at all, except insofar as universal concepts "refer" to individuals in an incidental way. But if the relationship between knowledge and its real objects is only incidental then there is once again a discontinuity between knowledge and reality. The problem of universals can never be definitively resolved because these two versions of it form an indissoluble dilemma, upon one or both of whose horns any proposed solution finds itself impaled. Either the universals referred to by concepts are real, in which case we are faced, like Plato, with the separation of what is given in experience (individual things) from their essential nature (forms); or they are not real, in which case we are faced with the separation of the concepts by which we know reality, from the reality to which they refer. One can avoid such dilemmas by means of various post-Kantian epistemologies in which the question of a match between concepts and reality does not arise. But the price of such positions—a radical revision of what we mean by "the world"—is not one that everyone is willing to pay.

It might seem that this argument against the validity of concepts undercuts literary art forms as much as rational philosophy, for they too depend on language, and therefore concepts. However literature's use of language makes no claim to objective literalness, whereas conceptual thinking gives the impression of employing neutral concepts that literally convey reality. Words become literature and pictures become art only when they succeed in conveying something beyond what they literally denote. In philosophy too there is always something beneath the surface, something more than can ever be explicitly said, but (except where a philosopher may intentionally dissimulate his views) this is normally a *limitation* of philosophy, which it seeks to overcome as far as possible. In the arts it is a deliberate goal, and a work of art whose full meaning is reducible to a literal statement tends to be dismissed as rhetoric or didacticism rather than art. The arbitrary metric and assonant con-

ventions of poetry are intended, in part, to prevent us from reading it as an instrumental statement of literal meanings. The poet rejoices in ambiguity where the philosopher strives for clarity. Metaphors describe one thing in terms of something else that is different from it, and thereby force us to see it in terms that are not literally applicable to it.

It is sometimes argued that a metaphor only establishes an elliptical analogy between the realm of the subject and that of the predicate, and that by unpacking the analogy one can reduce metaphors to literal (although abbreviated) conceptual descriptions. But, as the following two examples show, metaphor can be much more than this.

1. Homer, *The Odyssey*:

He sang then how the sons of the Achaians left  
their hollow  
hiding place and streamed from the horse and  
sacked the city,  
and he sang how one and another fought through  
the steep citadel,  
and how in particular Odysseus went, with godlike  
Menelaos, like Ares, to find the house of  
Deiphobos,  
and there, he said, he endured the grimmest  
fighting that ever  
he had, but won it there too, with great-hearted  
Athenes aiding.  
So the famous singer sang his tale, but Odysseus  
melted, and from under his eyes the tears ran  
down, drenching  
his cheeks. As a woman weeps, lying over the  
body  
of her dear husband, who fell fighting for her city  
and people  
as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and  
children;  
she sees him dying and gasping for breath, and  
winding her body  
about him she cries high and shrill, while the men  
behind her,  
hitting her with their spear butts on the back and  
the shoulders,  
force her up and lead her away into slavery, to have  
hard work and sorrow, and her cheeks are wracked  
with pitiful weeping.  
Such were the pitiful tears Odysseus shed.<sup>29</sup>

This is more than an analogy. It does not say

simply that Odysseus wept like a woman, or even like a woman being led off to slavery in the wake of the destruction of her city. It reminds us besides that, like her, Odysseus has watched his companions die, has long been exiled from his own homeland, and has been reduced to the status of a beggar. Beyond this it suggests that he is weeping also out of pity for those whose lives he destroyed, and out of shame for his part in it. It is in fact the first sign of the return of the gentleness for which Odysseus is so often remembered by those he left behind in Ithaca, and which led him to attempt (unsuccessfully) to evade the expedition to Troy, but which in the meantime had fallen victim to the brutalizing effects of war. Homer's pregnant simile suggests all these things and more, but not if we try to reduce it to an analogy.

2. Shakespeare's 73rd Sonnet begins:

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds  
sang.

At first Shakespeare seems simply (or rather, circuitously) to be establishing an analogy of relations: as autumn is to a year, so is old age to a person. But if this were the case, any other metaphor built upon a similar analogy of the end of a time-cycle should function just as well, such as, "The fourth week of the month in me behold," or "Behold in me the Saturday of the week." What is missing in these cases? The problem is not that the shorter periods of time seem more trivial; for the next quatrain goes on to say:

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

The reason that "year" and "day" work as metaphors here, but "week" and "month" do not, is that the former are pregnant with images that we associate with death: coldness ("boughs that shake against the cold") and darkness ("black night ... death's second self"). If we removed the associations these metaphors would be no more effective than the others. If, for example,

we celebrated the new year in March as the Romans did, how effective would it have been for Shakespeare to compare old age to the end of the year by writing: "That time of year thou may'st in me behold./ When buds upon the trees begin to swell?" What makes Shakespeare's autumnal image compelling is the confluence of the end of the year, the onset of coldness, and the dying of the leaves. Although what the first stanza invokes is the year, the dominant image is the tree—which is not dying, but whose skeletal appearance is another symbol of death.<sup>30</sup> The only thing actually dying is the leaves. If we wanted a straightforward analogy we might write, "The autumn leaf thou may'st in me behold./ Which, withered yellow, red, or brown, doth hang." A decent analogy but hardly a powerful metaphor, precisely because it is straightforward and conceptualizable. What gives the metaphor its power is the running together of diverse images (dying leaves, cold weather, the skeletal tree, the ending of a year) in defiance of conceptual clarity.

The greatest metaphors are of this kind, too pregnant with associations to be reduced to conceptual analogies. Even those metaphors that can be so reduced are something more than concepts. The very fact that analogies force us to see one thing in terms of another, to join together two diverse sets of associations, already gives them a certain ambiguity and tension. Analogies may be concepts but they are imaginative concepts rather than purely rational ones. It is for this reason that most philosophers resort to analogies only when a more straightforward explanation eludes them.<sup>31</sup> If it were otherwise, literature might readily be reduced to rational concepts, which would show its original form to be mere posturing, as those insensitive to poetry believe it to be. But although works of art make use of concepts, they cannot be reduced to them. There are exceptions to this, especially among didactic poets like Pope, but for that very reason didactic poetry is not usually considered true art so much as rhetoric or propaganda.<sup>32</sup>

We might say then that literature, which properly makes no claim to literal truth, is more conscious of its limitations than is philosophy, which does make such a claim but which, due to the arbitrary nature of concepts, cannot succeed. Art, in other words, holds on to the ambiguity and mystery of our experience of the

world, while philosophy in its quest for clarity abstracts from the ambiguous origin of its concepts and thus obscures it. Accordingly Nietzsche, after the passage quoted earlier, goes on to say that (conceptual) "truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that they are such, metaphors which are used up and have become sensuously impotent, coins which have lost their image and are now regarded only as metal, no longer as coins" (p. 314). This view has since been echoed by Heidegger and his successors, in their claim that the technical terminology of metaphysics is nothing but empty husks whose vital core has long since been forgotten.

The ancient conflict between poetry and philosophy thus amounts to these alternatives. Art captures something of the original ambivalence and richness of experience, but at the expense of clarity and of an intrinsic relationship between the fugitive significance that it evokes and the world of particulars from which it draws its metaphors. Philosophy, on the other hand, makes possible a conceptual and methodological clarity and an intrinsic relationship between the particular and general, but only by arbitrarily singling out some aspects of experience as fundamental. The choice is between an oversimplified but powerfully illuminating clarity, and an ambiguous but inexhaustible intimation of significance. They are alternatives that do not admit of one right answer, but represent alternate priorities of thinking, differing perspectives whose disparity is neither reducible to something more basic nor unifiable within a higher synthesis.

It may be that Plato is right in regarding art as cognitively inferior to conceptual knowledge in practical empirical matters, as the third and fourth arguments of *Republic* x claimed. But in terms of the elusive *foundations* of reality, or at least of our experience of reality, art furnishes as important a mode of cognition as does philosophy. Plato, however, was aware of this, as we have seen. Moreover, the numerically central argument, argument four, is an implicit reminder of the one-sidedness of the cognitive critique. To show the inferiority of the imitator to the user and maker of an object, the example that Plato devotes the greatest attention to is that of the flute (601d-602a), which is best known by the player, next best by the maker, and least by the imitator, whether painter (601c) or poet (602a). The very example designed to show the

cognitive inferiority of poets and painters, gives the palm to a musician, as if to remind us that there is more to the question of aesthetic knowledge than meets the eye. In order to determine the quality of a flute the musician must be able to discern the nature of the good with respect to tone, which is one of the few pure pleasures of the material realm,<sup>33</sup> and with respect to accuracy of pitch, which reflects the Pythagorean *harmonia* that is the audible analogue of the cosmic principle.<sup>34</sup> Poetry and painting are capable of achieving something at least analogous to this insofar as they create beauty.<sup>35</sup>

In the final analysis I think we must conclude that for Plato the most decisive factors were not cognitive but political (the context of the *Republic* is, after all, pre-eminently political). The *Republic* brings out what was implicit in Socrates's trial: that the models of reality brought forth by philosophy are at the literal level incompatible with those brought forth by (mythopoetic) poetry. This is an inevitable result of the difference between abstractive and metaphorical thinking. If one takes literally the images handed down by the poetic legislators of Hellenic culture, the philosophers are in constant danger of morality-threatening error. One of the goals of the *Republic* is to reverse that priority and show that, judged by the concepts of philosophy, it is the poets who are continually in danger of such error, both for cognitive and psychological reasons. Cognitively, the discontinuity between particular and universal in metaphors enables art to serve as rhetoric, camouflaging ignorance and error in seductive guises.<sup>36</sup> Psychologically, the emotive character of art undermines the rationality which is synonymous, in Plato, with virtue. This was the *Republic*'s most serious charge against art (605c-606d). The *Republic* is an answer to Socrates's accusers, an assertion that the natural ruler and educator is reason, and the true danger art. For this reason Plato deliberately plays down the cognitive value of art, while surreptitiously indicating the limitations of his critique.

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1. In the *Republic* the artist is compared to a most marvelous sophist (596c). In the *Sophist* sophistry is described by analogy with the artist, and in terms that precisely echo the description of the artist in the *Republic*: compare *Sophist* 233a-234c with *Republic* 596c-599a. For an extended treatment of the connection between art and sophistry in Plato, see J. Mitscherling, *The Image of the Second Sun: Plato's View of Poetry* (University of Guelph, dissertation, 1983).

2. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, book I, §6-16.

3. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 42; *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1960), p. 41. Also see Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, trans. A. Maude (Oxford University Press, 1930) and Cyril Welch, *The Art of Art Works* (Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis, 1982), chapter 3. Francis Sparshott in *The Structure of Aesthetics* (University of Toronto Press, 1963), chapter x, gives a bibliographical discussion of related views.

4. Even art forgers, who make a conscious effort to free themselves from the mannerism of their own time, cannot escape it. Future generations of art experts detect the traces of the forger's period which remain invisible to his contemporaries.

5. Not in the sense now applied to repetitive composition techniques like those of Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

6. Perhaps the earliest antecedent of this is the first movement of Claude Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915), although its passionate romanticism has more affinity with nineteenth than with twentieth century traditions. A more immediate precursor is Elliot Carter's *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy for Woodwind Quartet* (1950), especially etudes 3 and 7. John Cage's *4'33"* (1952), in which the performer maintains unbroken silence for the indicated time, might seem to be another example, but since the intention of the work is not the silence itself but the incidental sounds made by the audience and environment, it is an aleatory rather than strictly minimalist work. As with minimalist painting the technique did not become popular until the 1960s. For example Krystoff Penderecki, *Sonata for Cello and Orchestra* (1964), beginning; Gyorgy Ligeti, *Cello Concerto* (1966), first movement; Morton Feldman, *False Relationships and the Extended Ending* (1968).

7. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §51, 53. In one place he claims that the play of sensations is not a species of beauty at all but merely of pleasure (§14). He later softens this by allowing that there is such a thing as a "beautiful play of sensations," to be distinguished from merely agreeable sensations (§51).

8. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work in Art," German pp. 46-49, English pp. 45-48.

9. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §49.

10. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work in Art," German pp. 20-30, English pp. 33-34.

11. *Ibid.*, German p. 41, English, p. 41. The same is true of the poem by C.F. Meyer that Heidegger cites, "The Roman Fountain," that presents an image of that which, itself at rest, supports and invests what is perpetually in flux:

The jet ascends and falling fills  
The marble basin circling round;  
This, veiling itself over, spills  
Into a second basin's ground.

The second in such plenty lives,  
Its bubbling flood a third invests,  
And each at once receives and gives  
And streams and rests." (Ibid., trans. Hofstadter, German  
p. 35, English p. 37.)

12. In traditional Western thought it is to be found in Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer, for example, as well as among contemporary philosophers such as Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. G. Grabowicz (Northwestern University Press, 1973), Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (Princeton University Press, 1953), Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. E.S. Casey, et al. (Northwestern University Press, 1973) and Albert Hofstadter, *Truth and Art* (Columbia University Press, 1965). It is also to be found in the traditions of India. See K.C. Pandey "Indian Aesthetics" in *History of Philosophy East and West*, vol. 1, ed. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1952), chapter xvii; and Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (N.Y.: Pantheon, 1946). And in the tradition of Taoism see Chang Chung-yuan, *Creativity and Taoism* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1970); and Lin Yutang, *The Chinese Theory of Art* (London: Heinemann, 1967). And in the tradition of Zen Buddhism see D.T. Suzuki, "Painting, Swordsmanship, Tea Ceremony," in *Zen Buddhism* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956).

13. Compare *Theaetetus* 156a-157c.

14. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, A. 1. 980b28-981a30.

15. Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, § 1.

16. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will*, § 6.

17. John Hospers, for example, uses Moritz Schlick's *Erlebnis/Erkenntnis* (experience/knowledge) terminology (*Meaning and Truth in the Arts* [1946; reprint, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1964], p. 234). Dufrenne in *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, distinguishes *connaissance* from *savoir* (p. 378). The same distinction is at work in the contrast between conceptualization and expression in Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as a Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, 2d ed., trans. D. Ainslie, (London: Macmillan, 1922). R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938) and Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (N.Y.: Scribners, 1953) and in John Dewey's characterization of art as experience, *Art as Experience*, (1934; reprint, N.Y.: Putnam, 1958).

18. Dewey (*Art as Experience*, chapter 3) attempts to collapse this distinction through the intermediating concept of having "an experience." Although he shows that the concept of "an experience" can be made continuous with that of aesthetic experience, ordinary experience remains as discontinuous from the former as it was from the latter.

19. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451a36-b11.

20. The individualizing quality of emotion is brought out nicely by Homer in Book xxiii of the *Odyssey*, when he shows Penelope unable to recognize Odysseus with certainty until she provokes him to anger.

21. This dichotomy has its *rational* analogue in the active mode of "conceptual thinking," in which consciousness makes present to itself the object of its interest, and the passive mode of "understanding," in which the results of the thinking are reflected back onto ourselves. Emotion is the effect upon our consciousness, of the experience presented

in imagination; understanding is this effect of the thought presented in concepts. Understanding in this sense refers to our passive relationship *per se* to the object of thought, rather than the term's common sense of the *successful* apprehension of the object. Even confusion and frustration belong to the *category* of understanding because they must be conceived in terms of the *intention* to understand. Understanding in this general sense analogically corresponds to emotion generally, and includes deficient cases (confusion) just as emotions include negative cases (pains) as well as pleasures. The analogy is obscured by the fact that the term "understanding" applies both to the general faculty (the "understanding") and to its positive condition ("to understand"). No corresponding ambiguity attaches to the term "emotion," whose positive and negative conditions (pleasure and pain) have different names from itself.

22. It is on the basis of this resemblance that Kant was able to compare beauty and morality in terms of "disinterestedness," Schopenhauer to compare them as suspensions of willing, and Heidegger to contrast art with equipment in terms of the instrumentality of the latter and the self-subsistence of the former. Kant in fact gives four comparisons, evidently (although not explicitly nor always clearly) based on the four moments or categories of the understanding that he uses as the organizing principle of the work: 1) Modality: The beautiful pleases immediately (i.e., apodictically hence necessarily) in intuition, as morality does in concepts; 2) Quality: The beautiful pleases apart from all interest, as morality pleases apart from empirical interest; 3) Relation: The freedom of the imagination in judgements of beauty is in conformity with the understanding's conformity to law, as the freedom of will in morality is in conformity with the laws of reason; 4) Quantity: The subjective principle which estimates beauty is regarded as universal, as is the objective principle of morality. The second is the argument referred to above, but the third seems to be the one that Kant considers most important, for he returns to it at the end of the section. (*Critique of Judgement*, § 59)

For more recent discussion of the connection between beauty and morality see Hofstadter, *Truth and Art*, p. 212 and Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1974), pp. 246-247.

23. Compare *Phaedrus* 247c-249e.

24. *Timaeus* 47c-d.

25. See Kenneth Dorter, "The *Ion*: Plato's Characterization of Art" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 32 (1973): 65-78.

26. See H. Gadamer, *Die Begriffsgeschichte und die Sprache der Philosophie* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1971) and Hilary Putnam *Reason, Truth, and History* (Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp. 201-202. There is even something problematic about the givenness of sensible particulars, since different languages, cultures, and individuals regard individual things in sometimes very different ways. Thus Putnam argues that "we must have criteria of rational acceptability to even have an empirical world ... [T]he real world' depends upon our values (and, again, vice versa)" (p. 135). Nevertheless universals are always more problematic than particulars because whatever is problematic in particulars attaches to universals as well, in addition to the specific difficulties characteristic of the universals alone.

27. Nietzsche, "Über Wahrheit und Lüge in einem ausser-

moralischen Sinn" in *Werke in Drei Bände*, vol. 3, ed. Karl Schlechta (1873; reprint, Munich: Carl Hanser, 1956), pp. 312–313.

28. This is done most explicitly in the *Parmenides*, which, as I have argued elsewhere, is not a recantation of the theory of forms but as a more forceful reminder of the metaphorical and analogical basis of such models. Kenneth Dorter, "The Theory of Forms and *Parmenides* I," in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3; Plato, eds. John Anton and Anthony Preus (SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 183–202.

29. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Lattimore, book viii, lines 514–531.

30. Human limbs "shake against the cold"; tree limbs shake with the wind, warm or cold. There is a deliberate running together (not merely an analogy) of the images of the defoliated tree and the frailty of old age.

31. See Plato, *Republic* 506d–e, *Phaedrus* 246a.

32. It is hard to see how Pope's "Solitude," "Know Then Thyself," and "An Essay on Man" are works of art to any greater extent than the metric philosophy of Parmenides, Empedocles, or Lucretius—except that the concepts they express are too conventional to merit the title of philosophy.

33. Compare 'smell' at 584b.

34. See *Republic* 530d, 616c–617c, and *Timaeus* 47c–e and context.

35. See *Republic* 601a–b, 401c–402a, and *Phaedrus* 250b–d.

36. Not only because of metaphor: The poet, "when he speaks in meter, rhythm, and harmony, seems to speak very well, ... so great a fascination do these by nature possess. However, when the statements of the poets are stripped of the colors of music, and are spoken by themselves, I think you know how they appear" (*Republic* 601a–b).