

The World as Will and Presentation

Arthur Schopenhauer

1818

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type. —Schopenhauer gives many quotations in Greek and/or Latin; they will be given in English, usually without mention of the other languages. —The division into Books, and their titles, are his; so (in the Books) is the division into numbered chapters, but not their titles, which are added in the present version, as are the occasional cross-headings in SMALL CAPITALS. Footnotes between [square brackets] are editorial; others are Schopenhauer's. In the 'Appendix' on Kant, the chapter-numbers as well as their titles are added in the present version.—The work consisted of two volumes, of which the second is a set of commentaries on the first. Most of the philosophical world's interest has been focussed on the first, which is all that is presented here. —The work's title has most often been given in English as *The World as Will and Representation*; the present version's 'Presentation' follows the 2008 translation by Richard E. Aquila (published by Longman). This has found favour with several writers on Schopenhauer, largely because 'Representation' inevitably carries the idea of a representation *of something*, which is flatly contrary to Schopenhauer's view. Aquila, whose generous help has contributed much to the present version, gives on his pages xii–xvi a different and subtler objection to 'Representation'. From now on, Schopenhauer will be referred to as AS.

First launched: June 2023

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Glossary

accident: Translates *Accidenz*, a technical term meaning ‘non-essential quality’.

affection: Translates *Affektion*. Although German dictionaries don’t support this, it seems likely that sometimes when AS speaks of an *Affektion* of x, he means only a *state* of x.

disinterested: This text uses the word always in its actual, proper meaning, namely that of ‘not *self*-interested’.

exists: This usually translates *da ist*, literally ‘is there’.

GP: Used here as short-hand for ‘Grounding Principle’, which translates *Satz von Grunde*. In English this is usually called the ‘principle of sufficient reason’, following Leibniz’s *raison* and *ratio*. Kant and AS use the German *Grund* (Leibniz did not write philosophy in German). The principle says that everything must have a reason or a cause.

identical: Translates *identisch*. There’s no way to avoid this translation, but quite often AS doesn’t mean ‘identical’ but ‘closely alike’. Similarly with ‘identity’. For example, ‘identical things’ in chapter 14.

individuation-maker: See the explanation early in chapter 23.

Knowledge: This word, with its initial capital, translates *Wissen*, which for AS is abstract knowledge that is exclusively in the province of reason. (He isn’t rigorous about this, however. For example, in chapter 14 he says that history is a case of *Wissen*.) The uncapitalised ‘knowledge’ translates *Erkenntniss*, standing for knowledge generally, of which Knowledge is one species, the others relating to perception, intuition, experience etc.

liberum arbitrium indifferentiae: AS uses this Latin phrase in its meaning ‘freedom to go either way’.

occult qualities: Hidden qualities; by AS’s time the phrase had become a term of derision in the physical sciences, standing for mysterious ‘forces’ for which no explanation can be given.

peculiar: To say that property P is peculiar to individual x or species y is to say that only x or the members of y have P.

penetration: This means ‘*seeing* through’ (German *Durchschauung*), not ‘getting through’ or ‘piercing’.

per accidens: In AS’s use of this scholastic technical term, to say that something happens to x *per accidens* is to say that its cause lies in x’s circumstances, not its own essential nature.

petitio principii: The Latin name for the fallacy of *begging the question* = arguing for a conclusion which is one of the premises. The current use of the phrase to mean *raising the question* is a product of pandemic journalistic ignorance.

positive: Translates *positiv*, which enters into two very different contrasts: **(i)** the positive/negative contrast, and **(ii)** the contrast between institutions that are man-made (*positiv*) and ones that are somehow established by nature without human intervention. Where it is clear that **(ii)** alone is in play, *positiv* is translated by ‘man-made’. In a few places there are indications of **(ii)** but ‘man-made’ doesn’t work right.

Realität: When used as a concrete noun, this is left untranslated because the only tolerable translation for it is ‘reality’, and that is reserved for *Wirklichkeit*. For AS’s distinction between these, see page 13, especially the footnote. When

Realität occurs as an abstract noun, it is translated by 'realness'.

shape: translates *Gestalt*. A better translation would be 'form', but that is used for AS's *Form*; and there are places—e.g. on page 27—where the two have to be kept apart.

speculative: Theoretical, often with an emphasis on non-normative; 'speculative philosophy' on page 34 refers to the whole of philosophy other than ethics and aesthetics.

subject of: Throughout this work, the 'subject of a cognitive state is not •what the state (belief, knowledge etc.) is *about* but rather •the thing that *is in* the state, the thing that believes, knows etc.

Upanishads: The part of the Vedas (see next item) that discuss meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge.

Vedas: A body of religious texts originating in ancient India.

**Book III: The world as presentation: second consideration.
Presentation independent of the GP.
The platonic idea.
The object of art.**

30. Levels and platonic ideas

In Book I the world was depicted as mere presentation, object for a subject; I considered it from its other side in Book II, and found that—looked at in this way—it is will, which is what that world is beyond presentation. In the light of this knowledge, I said that the world as presentation can be called—as a whole and in its parts—the *objectivisation of the will*, meaning that the will has become object, i.e. has become presentation. We also recall that the objectification of will had many—though definite—levels on which, with increasing degrees of clarity and completeness, the essence of will entered into presentation, i.e. was displayed as an object. In these levels we already recognised Plato's ideas, for the levels are just particular species, or original unchanging forms and properties of all natural bodies, both inorganic and organic, as well as general forces that reveal themselves in accordance with natural laws. The totality of these ideas is thus displayed in countless individuals and particularities to which they relate as originals to their copies. The plurality of such individuals can be presented only through space and time, their arising and passing away only through causality, in all of which forms we recognise only the various modes of the GP, which is the ultimate principle of all finitude, of all individuation, and the general form pertaining to presentation so far as it falls within the knowledge of the individual. Ideas, on the other hand, are not covered by the

GP; so neither plurality nor change pertains to them. While the individuals in which it is displayed are countless, and ceaselessly come into being and pass away, the idea remains standing unchanged as one and the same, and the GP has no meaning in respect of it. Since this, however, is the form under which all of the subject's knowledge stands, so far as it is knowledge of an individual, ideas will also lie entirely outside the range of knowledge of the individual as such. So ideas can become objects of knowledge only if the knowing subject's individuality is nullified. Closer and more detailed explanation of this is what will now occupy us.

31. Platonic ideas and Kant's thing in itself

First, however, the following very important comment. I hope that I succeeded in Book I in convincing the reader that what in the Kantian philosophy is called the *thing in itself* and plays a role there as such a significant doctrine

and yet an obscure and paradoxical one, especially because of how Kant introduced it, namely through an inference from something grounded to its ground, which has proved to be a stumbling-block and is indeed the weak side of his philosophy,

when reached by the entirely different path I have taken, is nothing other than *will*, with the sphere of that concept broadened and defined in the way I have indicated. I also hope that after my exposition no-one will object to

identifying •the particular levels of objectification of the world-constituting will with •what Plato called the *eternal ideas* or *unchangeable forms*—the chief part of his doctrine, though also the most obscure and paradoxical, an object of reflection, dispute, ridicule, and admiration on the part of so many and such different thinkers over the course of centuries.

Now if will is the thing in itself, while ideas are the immediate objectivisation of that will on some particular level, then Kant's thing in itself and Plato's ideas (which are to him the only things that really exist) then we find these two great obscure paradoxes from the two greatest western philosophers to be (of course not identical, but) very closely related and distinguished from one another only by a single feature. Despite their inner agreement and affinity, the two great paradoxes *sound* very different because of the extraordinarily different individualities of their authors, which makes them the best commentaries on one another, like two quite different paths to a single goal. A few words will serve to make this clear.

Kant: What Kant says is essentially this: Time, space, and causality are not determinations of the thing in itself, but belong only to its phenomenon, being nothing but forms of our knowledge. And since all plurality and all coming into existence and going out of existence are possible only through time, space, and causality, it follows that they too attach only to the phenomenon and not to the thing in itself. But because our knowledge is conditioned by those forms, the whole of experience is only knowledge of the phenomenon, not of the thing in itself; so its laws can't be made valid for the thing in itself. This extends even to our own *I*, which we know only as phenomenon, not according to what it may be in itself.

Plato: But Plato says this: The things of this world that our senses perceive have no true being: they are always *becoming*, but never *are*; they have only a relative being, all of them existing only in and through their relations to one another; so their entire existence can just as well be called a non-existence. They are consequently not even objects of *genuine knowledge*, for that has to be of something that exists in and for itself and always in the same manner; rather, they are objects of *opinion* arising from sensation. As long as we are limited to perception of *them*, we are like men sitting in a dark cave, so tightly bound that they can't even turn their heads, and by the light of a fire burning behind them see nothing but shadowy images (on the wall in front of them) of real things passing between them and the fire; each seeing the others—and indeed himself—only as shadows on that wall. Wisdom for them would consist in predicting the order of those shadows as learned from experience. The only things that can be called truly existent—because they always *are* and never *become* or *pass away*—are the real archetypes for those shadowy images: they are the eternal ideas, the basic *forms* of all things. . . . They are the only things of which there is any real knowledge, since an object of knowledge must be something that exists always and in every respect (and so in itself), not something that exists and then doesn't exist, depending on how one views it.

It is obvious—and requires no further proof—that the inner sense of the two doctrines is entirely the same, that both explain **a** the visible world as a phenomenon that is in itself nothing and has a meaning and borrowed realness only through **b** what is expressed in it (for Kant the thing in itself, for Plato the ideas); even the most general and most essential forms of **a** that phenomenon are altogether foreign to **b** that which is truly existent according to both doctrines. Kant directly and as a matter of theory denied that

those forms—space, time, and causality—were applicable to the thing in itself. Plato, on the other hand, was not quite so forthright; he *indirectly* withheld those forms from his ideas by denying of ideas something that is only possible through those forms, namely •multiplicity of similar things and •coming into and going out of existence.

To illustrate this remarkable and important accord, suppose that an animal is standing before us, in the fullness of its vital activity, and consider how these two philosophers will describe it.

Plato will say: 'This animal has no true existence, but only a seeming one, a constant becoming, a relative existence that might as well be called a kind of non-being as being. What is truly existent is only •the idea that finds its image in that animal—i.e. •the animal in itself—which doesn't depend on anything, but has being in and for itself, not having become, not coming to an end, but always existing in the same manner. [AS gives the Greek for all the key phrases in this.] As long as we recognise in this animal its idea, it makes no difference •whether we have this animal now before us or its ancestor that lived 1000 years ago, •whether it is here or in a distant land, •whether it shows itself to us in this or that manner, position and action, or (lastly) •whether it is this animal or some other individual of its species. All this is nothing, and relates only to the phenomenon; only the idea of the animal has true being and is an object of real knowledge.' Thus Plato.

Kant would say¹ something like this: 'This animal is a phenomenon within time, space, and causality, which are not determinations of the thing in itself but are the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience that lie within our

knowledge faculty. So this animal—as we perceive it *now* and *here* as an individual within the context of experience, i.e. in terms of the chain of causes and effects—is not a thing in itself but a phenomenon valid only in relation to our knowledge. To know it as it is in itself—and thus independently of all determinations that lie within time, space, and causality—would require a way of knowing that is different from the only one possible for us, through the senses and understanding.'

To bring Kant's terminology still closer to the Platonic, we might have him say:

Time, space and causality are that structure of our intellect whereby what is really *one* actual being of a given kind is displayed to us as a plurality of beings of the same kind, constantly arising and passing away in endless succession.

Apprehension of things by means of and according to that structure is *immanent* [see Glossary]; whereas that which is conscious of the true state of the case is *transcendental*. We get the latter *in abstracto* from the criticism of pure reason,² but in exceptional cases it can also occur intuitively. That last clause is what I have to add—what I am working to explain in this Book III.

If **a** Plato's doctrine and since his time **b** Kant's had been properly interpreted and grasped, if people had truly and seriously pondered the inner sense and content of the two great masters' doctrines, instead of tossing around the technical terms of **a** one of them and parodying the style of **b** the other, they couldn't have failed to discover •to what an extent these two great sages agree, and •that the pure meaning—the ultimate goal—of their doctrines is altogether the same. Not

¹ [The switch from 'will say' to 'would say' is in the original.]

² [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, which is the title of Kant's book, but AS seems not to be referring to that.]

only would Plato then not have been constantly compared with Leibniz, who inherited nothing from him, not to mention being compared with a gentleman of note still living¹, as if in mockery of the shades of that great thinker of antiquity, but in general people would have advanced much further—or rather would not have regressed so shamefully—as they have in these last 40 years. They would not have let themselves be led by the nose today by one windbag and tomorrow by another, and would not have inaugurated the 19th century in Germany, so significant in its portent, with the performance of philosophical farces over Kant's grave (as the ancients sometimes did at the funeral rites for their dead)—to the justified ridicule of other nations, for that sort of thing is utterly unbecoming to the serious, indeed strait-laced, German. 'The contempt that has fallen on philosophy is caused by her having associates and courtiers who are not fit for her dignity; she ought to have attracted legitimate people, not bastards.' [Quoted in Latin and Greek from Plato.]

People followed Kant's words—

'presentations *a priori*'

'forms of perception and thought known independently of experience'

'original concepts of pure understanding'

and so on—and asked whether Plato's ideas, which are indeed also supposed to be •original concepts but also •recollections of truly existing things that were perceived before one's lifetime, were the same as Kant's forms of perception and thought that lie *a priori* in our consciousness. Because of a slight resemblance in their terminology, these two diametrically opposed doctrines—

•the Kantian doctrine of forms that confines the individual's knowledge to phenomena, and

•the platonic doctrine of ideas, knowledge of which precisely denies those forms
—have been subjected to careful comparisons, and discussions and disputes over whether they are identical. It was *eventually* decided that they are not, and that Plato's doctrine of ideas and Kant's critique of reason were in no way in agreement with one another. But enough of this.

32. Platonic ideas are not the thing in itself

Despite the inner accord between Kant and Plato and the identity of •the goal that the two had in mind, or of •the world-view that drew them to philosophy and led them in it, my discussion up to here shows that for me *idea* and *thing in itself* are not outright one and the same thing. Rather, an idea is for me the immediate and thus adequate objectivisation of the thing in itself, which is *will*—will that isn't yet objectified, so hasn't yet become presentation. Kant held that the thing in itself is free of all forms attaching to knowledge as such; so he should have expressly withheld the status of *object* from his thing in itself, which would have saved him from the major inconsistency that was soon found •in his system•. (His not doing so arose from his not seeing that

being-an-object-for-a-subject is the foremost of the forms attaching to knowledge as such, since it is the first and most general form of all phenomena,

this being a mere mistake, which I diagnose in the Appendix.) The platonic idea, on the other hand, necessarily *is* an object, something known, a presentation, which differentiates it from the thing in itself (as nothing else does). It has merely set aside (or rather has not yet acquired) the subordinate

¹ F.H.Jacobi [AS's footnote.]

forms of the phenomenon, all of which fall under the GP, retaining only the first and most general form, that of presentation in general, of being an object for a subject. It is the subordinate forms that multiply ideas into particular and transitory individuals; it makes no difference to an idea how many of those there are. Thus, . . . between •the particular thing that makes its appearance in accordance with the GP and •the thing in itself (which is *will*), stands •the idea, which is the only immediate objectivisation of will because the only form of knowledge as such that it has taken on is that of presentation in general, i.e. of being an object for a subject. So it alone is the most adequate possible objectivisation of will, or of the thing in itself; indeed it *is* the thing in itself, but under the form of presentation. This is the basis for the great accord between Plato and Kant, although very strictly speaking they are not talking about the same thing. . . .

If it is permissible to make inferences from impossible premises: Suppose we no longer knew individual things, or events, or change, or plurality, but in pure unobscured knowledge took in only ideas, only the stepladder of objectivisation of the one will, of the true thing in itself, then our world would be a *timeless present*.¹ . . . Time is merely the individual's divided and dismembered view of ideas that are beyond time, hence eternal; therefore, as Plato says, time is the moving image of eternity.

33. Knowledge and will

As individuals we have no knowledge except what is subject to the GP, and this excludes knowledge of ideas; so it is

certain that if we can rise from knowledge of single things to knowledge of ideas, this can occur only through an alteration taking place in the subject, corresponding and analogous to that great change in the entire nature of the object, [that is, the change from *single thing* to *idea*]. By virtue of this alteration, the subject, now that it knows an idea, is no longer a single individual.

You'll recall from Book II that knowledge in general belongs to the objectivisation of will at its higher levels; and sense-organs,² nerves, brain are—like other parts of organic beings—an expression of will at this level of its objectivisation, and therefore the presentations arising from it are equally determined to the service of will, as a means toward achievement of its [i.e. knowledge's] now more complicated goal, the maintenance of a being with many needs. Thus originally and in its essence, knowledge is entirely in the service of will, and. . . all knowledge that follows the GP remains in a more or less close relation to will. For the individual finds his body to be an object among objects, to all of which he has many relations and references in accordance with the GP, consideration of which always leads back by a shorter or longer path to his body and thus to his will. Since it is the GP that gives objects this reference to the body and thereby to the will, it is also the sole endeavour of will-serving knowledge to get to know objects with respect to relations determined by the GP, and thus to pursue their many relationships in space, time and causality. For it is only through these that objects matter to the individual, i.e. have a relation to his will. So will-serving knowledge takes in nothing about objects except their relations

¹ [*nunc stans* = Latin for 'standing now'.]

² [Correcting a presumed slip by AS. He wrote *Sensibilität* = 'sensitivity'; but his phrase *andere Theile des organischen Wesens*, meaning 'other parts of organic beings', makes it impossible that he meant here to use an abstract noun.]

- at this time,
- in this place,
- under these circumstances,
- through these causes,
- with these effects;

in short, as individual things. If all these relations were eliminated, all objects would also vanish for this sort of knowledge, because they are all it knows of them.

I shouldn't hide the fact that what the sciences regard as *things* are really nothing but their relations: temporal and spatial relations, the causes of natural changes, similarities of shape, motives for events. The sciences differ from ordinary knowledge only in their systematic form, the way they help knowledge through handling all individuals in general terms by bringing them under concepts, and the completeness of knowledge that this brings about. All relations have themselves only a relative existence. For example, all being in time is also non-being. For time is just what enables one thing to have contrary determinations [by being F at one time and non-F at another]. So every phenomenon that is in time is also *not*; [Meaning 'is not in time' or 'does not exist'? The original does not choose between these.] for what separates its beginning from its end is only time, something essentially vanishing, insubstantial, and relative, which I am now calling 'duration'. But time is the most general form of all objects of will-serving knowledge, and is the prototype for all its other forms.

Knowledge remains as a rule always subject to the service of will, having arisen for the sake of this service, indeed having grown out of the will, as it were, as the head grows from the trunk. In animals this subservience of knowledge

to the will cannot be eliminated. In human beings, the elimination occurs only as an exception; I shall examine it more closely in the next chapter. This difference between human beings and animals is externally expressed by the difference in the relation between head and trunk. In lower animals the two are still entirely fused; in all of them the head points toward the earth, where all the objects of their will lie. Even in higher animals the head and trunk are much more *one thing* than in the human being, whose head appears as if freely set upon the body, only carried by it, not serving it. This prerogative of the human is displayed to the highest degree by the Apollo of Belvedere:¹ the head of the god of the Muses stands on his shoulders, gazing so freely far and wide that it appears to be entirely detached from the body, no longer being a servant to it.

34. Losing oneself in nature

[For 'subject' as used here see Glossary.] The possible (though exceptional) move from ordinary knowledge of individual things to knowledge of ideas occurs suddenly, with knowledge tearing itself away from the service of will. In it the subject ceases to be merely individual and is now the pure, will-less subject of knowledge, which no longer pursues relations according to the GP, but rests in constant contemplation of the given object, absorbed in it, without attending to its connections with anything else.

Making this clear requires a detailed discussion, and the disconcerted reader must put up with this attitude until he has grasped the whole thought expressed in this work, and then the attitude will vanish of itself.

¹ [A famous though controversial Greek or Roman sculpture in the Belvedere courtyard of the Vatican. Google 'Apollo of Belvedere' and you'll see how right AS is about how its head relates to its trunk.]

Suppose that someone, lifted by the power of his mind, •abandons his usual way of regarding things which merely pursues relations among them always with the ultimate goal of relating them to his will under the direction of modes of the GP, and thus •no longer considers the *where*, the *when*, the *why*, and the *whither* of things but simply and solely the *what*, does not allow abstract thinking, the concepts of reason, to occupy his consciousness, but devotes the entire power of his mind to perception, becomes entirely absorbed in it and lets his whole consciousness be filled with peaceful contemplation of the natural object that is present to him right then—be it a landscape, a tree, a cliff, a building, or whatever—entirely *losing* himself in this object, forgetting even his individuality, his will, and remaining only as pure subject, as a clear mirror of the object. In this case it's as though the object alone existed, with no-one perceiving it, so that it's no longer possible to separate the perceiver from the perception: the two have become one, his whole consciousness being filled by a single perceptual image. Suppose that the object has been removed to this extent from all relation to anything beyond it, the subject removed from all relation to will: then what is known is no longer the individual thing as such, but rather the idea, the eternal form, the immediate objectivisation of will at this level. So anyone caught up in this perception is no longer an individual, but is a *pure*, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge.

Just now this is a very striking claim, which I know confirms Thomas Paine's saying that 'It is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous'; but it will gradually be made clearer and less surprising by what is to follow. It is also what Spinoza had in mind when he wrote: 'The mind is eternal insofar as it conceives things under the aspect of eternity.'

In such contemplation •the individual thing becomes with a single stroke •the idea of its species, and •the perceiving individual becomes •the *pure subject of knowledge*. The individual as such knows only individual things, the pure subject of knowledge knows only ideas. For the individual is the subject of knowledge in its relation to some particular individual phenomenon of will, and is in the service of the will. This individual phenomenon of will is subject to the GP in all its shapes. All knowledge relating to the individual follows the GP, and that is the only knowledge suited to the purposes of the will. The **knowing individual** and the single thing it knows are always in some place, at some time, and links in the chain of causes and effects. The **pure subject of knowledge** and its correlate, ideas, have passed out of all those forms belonging to the GP: time, place, the knowing individual, and the individual that is an object of knowledge have no meaning for them. When (in the way I have described) a knowing individual is raised to being the pure subject of knowledge, and the thing he is thinking about is raised to being an idea, the *world as presentation* comes entirely and purely to the fore, and the complete objectification of will occurs; for ideas alone are the will's adequate objectivisation. An idea incorporates object and subject in equal manner within itself, since that distinction is its only form. In it, however, the two are of entirely equal weight, and just as the object here is nothing but presentation to the subject, so also the subject, being entirely absorbed in the object of perception, has become this object itself, its entire consciousness being nothing more than the most distinct image of the latter. This consciousness—if one thinks of the totality of ideas (or levels of the objectivisation of will) as running through it in succession—really constitutes the entire world as presentation. Individual things at any time and place are nothing but ideas, multiplied by the GP

(the cognitive form pertaining to individuals as such) and thereby obscured with respect to their pure objectivisation. Just as, with the idea coming to the fore, subject and object are no longer distinguishable in it—since it is only when they completely fill and penetrate one another that ideas, adequate objectivisation of will, the true world as presentation, arises—so also in the same way, the knowing individual and the known individual are as things in themselves not distinct from one another. For with complete abstraction from that true *world as presentation*, nothing remains but the *world as will*. Will is the in-itself of ideas, which objectify it completely; it is also the in-itself of individual things and of the individuals who know them, which objectify it incompletely. As will, beyond presentation and all its forms, it is one and the same in the object contemplated and in the individual who, soaring high in this contemplation, becomes conscious of himself¹ as pure subject. The two are thus in themselves not distinct. For in themselves they are will, which is here self-knowing, and plurality and diversity exist only as *how* this knowledge comes to it, i.e. only in the phenomenon, by virtue of its form, the GP. As little (without an object, without presentation) as I am a knowing subject, but mere blind will, just as little (without me as subject of knowledge) is the thing that I know an object, but mere will, blind pressing. This will is in itself, i.e. beyond presentation, one and the same as mine: only in the world as presentation, whose form is always at least that of subject and object, do we come apart as known and knowing individuals. As soon as the world as presentation is eliminated, nothing remains but mere will, blind pressing. That it attains to objectivisation, becomes a presentation, means that with a

single stroke we have both subject and object. But the fact that this objectivisation is purely, completely, an adequate objectivisation of will means that we have the object as idea, free from the forms that belong to the GP, and we have the subject as pure subject of knowledge, free from individuality and subservience to will.

According to this, anyone who has so far submerged and lost himself in the perception of nature that he is now only a pure knowing subject, is by that fact made immediately aware that he is the condition—and thus the bearer—of the world and all objective existence; for this is now displayed to him as dependent on his own existence. He thus draws nature into himself, so that he experiences it only as a quality of himself. It is in this sense that Byron says:

Are not the mountains, waves and skies, a part

Of me and of my soul, as I of them?

Who then, feeling this, could take himself to be absolutely transitory, as compared to imperishable nature? He will rather be gripped by the state of mind that is pronounced by the Upanishad of the Veda [see Glossary]: ‘All these creatures together am I, and beyond me no being exists.’

35. Ideas distinguished from their phenomena

To get to a deeper insight into the essence of the world, it is unavoidably necessary to learn to distinguish •will as thing in itself from •its adequate objectivisation, and to distinguish •the different levels at which this difference appears more and more distinctly and fully, i.e. the ideas themselves, from •the merely phenomenal existence of these ideas in the forms of the GP, the method of knowledge that individuals are caught up in. Then we will agree with Plato in attributing

¹ [who... himself' could be 'which ... 'itself'. The German doesn't distinguish personal and from impersonal pronouns; this version chooses between them according to what seems natural in each context.]

true being only to ideas, and granting to things in space and time—to this world that is real for the individual—only a seeming, dreamlike existence. Then we will see how one idea reveals itself in so many phenomena and offers its nature only piecemeal, one aspect at a time, to the individuals who are aware of it. We will then distinguish **a** the idea itself from **b** the mode and manner in which its phenomenon falls within the observation of individuals, recognise **a** the former as essential, **b** the latter as inessential. I'll consider some examples of this in matters that range from the most trivial to the grandest.

•When clouds pass, the shapes they form are not essential to them. The essence of the forces that are objectified in them—their nature—their idea—is their being elastic vapours that are compressed by the impact of the wind, scattered, stretched, torn apart; the shapes are only something for the individual observer. •When a stream cascades over stones, the eddies, waves, foam-shapes it displays are inessential to it. Its essence is its conforming to gravity, behaving like an inelastic, highly mobile, formless, transparent fluid; *when it is perceptually known*, this is its idea. Those images are for us only as long as we know as individuals. •Ice on the window-pane forms in accordance with laws of crystallisation. These reveal the essence of the natural force at work in this case, display its idea; but the trees and flowers that are depicted in the ice are inessential and exist only for us.

What appears in clouds, stream, and crystal is the weakest reverberation of the will, which comes into play more completely in plants, more completely still in animals, and most completely in human beings. But only what is essential at all the levels of its objectification constitutes an idea; whereas the idea's unfolding—subject to the shapes of the GP—of multi-faceted phenomena is inessential to it, and lies

merely in the manner of knowledge that individuals have, and is real only for them. The same thing applies to the unfolding of the idea that is the most complete objectivisation of will, [namely, the idea of humanity]; as a consequence, the history of the human race, the bustle of events, the changing times, the various forms of human life in different lands and centuries—all this is only the contingent form of that idea's phenomenon, not of the idea itself . . . and is as foreign, inessential, and indifferent to the idea as are the shapes to the clouds that display them, the eddies and foam-shapes to the stream, the trees and flowers to the ice.

For anyone who has grasped this, and knows how to distinguish will from idea, and idea from its phenomenon, worldly events will have significance not in and for themselves but only as letters in which the idea of humanity can be read. Such a person will not agree with the folk who believe that time may produce something new and significant, that through it or in it something absolutely real may come into existence, or that time as a whole may have its own beginning and end. . . . In the many forms of human life and ceaseless change of events, he will regard as enduring and essential only the idea in which the will for life has its most complete objectivisation, and which shows its diverse aspects in the properties, passions, errors, and strengths of the human race—in selfishness, hate, love, fear, audacity, frivolity, stupidity, slyness, wit, genius, and so on. . . . He will find that it is in the world as in the dramas of Gozzi, in all of which the same characters keep appearing with like intentions and a like fate: the motives and events are of course different in each play, but the spirit of the events is the same. . . .

If we were allowed a clear look into the realm of possibility and over all the chains of causes and effects, if the spirit of the earth were to show us

a picture of the superb individuals, enlighteners of the world, and heroes whom chance had destroyed before the time for their effectiveness had arrived, and then shown us great events that would have altered world history and brought in periods of the highest culture and enlightenment, but which the blindest chance, the most trivial circumstances, prevented from happening, and finally shown us the splendid powers of great men that would have enriched entire ages but which the men—led astray by error or passion, or compelled by necessity—squandered on unworthy and barren objects, or just frittered away in play—
—if we saw all this, we would shudder and lament over the lost treasures of entire ages. But the spirit of the earth would smile and say: ‘The source from which individuals and their powers flow is as inexhaustible and infinite as time and space. . . . No finite measure can exhaust that infinite source. So an undiminished infinity stands ever open for the recurrence of any event or work that was nipped in the bud. In this world of the phenomenon, true loss is as little possible as true gain. Will alone exists: it is the thing in itself, the source of all those phenomena. Its self-knowledge and consequent decisive affirmation or denial is the only *event in itself*.¹

36. Art. Genius. Madness

History follows the thread of events. It. . . derives them in accordance with the law of motivation, a law that determines the will in cases where its appearance is illuminated by

knowledge. At the lower levels of its objectivisation, where the will operates without knowledge, natural science concerns itself with •the laws for the alterations of will’s phenomena, this being *etiology*, and with •what does not change in them, this being *morphology*. This almost endless task is lightened by the aid of concepts, which gather things into generalities so that we may deduce particulars from them. Finally, mathematics is concerned with the mere forms in which ideas make their appearance as elaborated into plurality, i.e. in time and space. All of these, whose common name is *science*, thus proceed in accordance with the GP in its various modes. . . .

What kind of knowledge is concerned with

the aspect of the world that is the only truly essential one, standing beyond and independent of all relations—the true content of its phenomena—that which is subject to no change and is thus for all time known with equal truth, in a word:

ideas, that are the immediate and adequate objectivisation of the thing in itself, of will? It is *art*, the work of genius. It reproduces the eternal ideas that are grasped through pure contemplation, that which is essential and enduring in all the world’s phenomena; and, depending on the material in which it reproduces them, it is visual art, poetry, or music. Its single origin is knowledge of ideas, its single goal is the communication of this knowledge.

Science, following the unresting and inconstant stream of the fourfold forms of reason and consequent, with each goal it reaches it sees further, and can never reach a final goal or attain full satisfaction, any more than by running we can reach the place where the clouds touch the horizon; whereas art is always at its goal. For it plucks the object

¹ This last sentence cannot be understood without acquaintance with Book IV. [AS’s footnote].

of its contemplation out of the stream of the world's course and holds it isolated before itself. And this single thing that was a vanishingly small part of that stream becomes for it a representative of the whole, equivalent to countless things in space and time. It stays with the single thing, it stops the wheel of time, relations vanish for it; its only object is that which is essential, the idea.

So we can characterise art quite simply as **a** *the way of considering things that is independent of the GP*, contrasting it with **b** the GP-guided consideration in experience and science. The **b** latter way of considering things is comparable to an infinite horizontal line, **a** the former to a vertical line intersecting it any arbitrary point. The **b** GP-guided way of considering things is rational, and is the only one that is applicable and helpful in practical life as in science; **a** the one that turns away from the GP is the genius's way of considering things, which is applicable and helpful only in art. The **a** first way is Aristotle's; the **b** second is, on the whole, Plato's. The **a** first is like the mighty storm that . . . carries everything with it; the **b** second like the peaceful sunbeam intersecting the storm's path, entirely unmoved by it. The **a** first is like the countless forcibly propelled drops of a waterfall, constantly changing, never halting for a moment; the **b** second like the rainbow resting still upon this raging turbulence.

Ideas can be grasped only through the pure contemplation described above, entirely absorbed in the object, and the nature of genius consists in a pre-eminent capacity for such contemplation. This requires entirely forgetting one's own person and relationships; so genius is just the most complete objectivity, i.e. an objective orientation of the mind, as opposed to one that is subjective, directed to one's own person, i.e. to the will. Thus, genius is the capacity for

- maintaining a purely perceptual state,

- losing oneself in perception, and
- withdrawing knowledge from service of the will that it existed originally only to serve, i.e.
- entirely losing sight of one's interest, one's willing, one's goals, and thus getting utterly outside one's own personality for a time, so as to remain as a *pure knowing subject*, clear vision of the world.

And this not just for a moment but for long enough—and with as much thoughtful awareness—as is needed to reproduce in reflectively considered art what the artist has absorbed in this way, and 'to solidify in lasting thoughts what hovers before one in a fluctuating appearance' [quoted from Goethe].

It is as if an individual can have genius only if he has come by a measure of knowledge-power that far exceeds what is required for the service of an individual will; the liberated surplus of knowledge now becomes the subject purified of will, the clear mirror of the nature of the world.

This is the explanation of the liveliness—to the point of restlessness—in individuals of genius: the present can rarely satisfy them because it doesn't fill their consciousness. This gives them that character of unresting endeavour, that ceaseless search for objects that are new and worth contemplating; as well as the almost never satisfied demand for others like themselves, up to their level, with whom they might communicate. Whereas an ordinary person, entirely filled and satisfied by the ordinary present, gets absorbed in it, and then—finding his equals everywhere—he obtains that special contentment with everyday life that is denied to the genius.

Imagination has rightly been recognised as an essential component of genius; indeed it is sometimes taken to be identical with it, but the identity claim is wrong, as I shall explain shortly. Firstly, here is why genius requires imagination:

The objects for the genius are the eternal ideas, the persisting essential forms of the world and all its phenomena; but knowledge of ideas is necessarily perceptual, not abstract; so the genius's knowledge would be limited to ideas of objects actually present to his person and dependent on the set of circumstances that bring them to him, if imagination didn't broaden his horizon far beyond the reality of his personal experience and put him in a position to use what little has entered his actual awareness to construct everything else, and so to have almost all of life's possible scenes passing before him. Also, actual objects are nearly always very defective copies of the ideas displayed in them; so the genius needs imagination to see (not what nature has actually constructed in things, but rather) what it has tried to construct but couldn't bring about because of the battle among its forms that was mentioned in Book II, chapter 27. I'll return to this later when I discuss sculpture. Imagination thus broadens the genius's field of vision beyond the objects that are actually available to his person, both qualitatively and quantitatively. For this reason, unusual strength of imagination is required for genius.

But not conversely: even persons wholly lacking in genius can have much imagination. For just as one can regard an actual object in either of two ways—

- a** purely objectively, grasping its idea, as the genius does, or
- b** merely with respect to its relations to other objects and one's own will, according to the GP, as people commonly do,

—so also a mental image can be perceived in either of those two ways:

- a** as a means toward knowledge of ideas, the communication of which is a work of art, or
- b** using the mental image in building castles in the air that gratify one's self-interest and whims, momentarily deluding and delighting them. . . .

He who plays **b** this game is a dreamer. He easily allows the images that delight his solitude to intermingle with reality, and so unfits himself for real life. Perhaps he will write down his imaginative jugglery, producing the commonplace novels of all genres that entertain him and his like and the public at large, with readers dreaming of themselves in the role of the hero and then finding the depiction most '*Gemütlich*'.¹

The ordinary person. . . is (I repeat) altogether incapable of keeping up a frame of mind that is wholly disinterested [see Glossary] in every sense, which is what true contemplativeness is; he can direct his attention to things only insofar as they have some relation to his will, even if a very indirect one. This requires only a knowledge of relations, so the abstract concept of a thing is sufficient and usually even more useful than mere perception, and the ordinary person does not look for long at anything. Rather, he quickly seeks in everything that comes his way the concept under which to bring it and then loses interest in it. So he is quickly done with everything, with

- works of art,
- beautiful natural objects, and
- the view of life in all of its scenes that is truly of significance everywhere.

He doesn't linger on any of those; he seeks only his path in life, or anyway whatever might some day be his path. . . .

¹ [AS means this word contemptuously. It can mean anything in the range of 'pleasing', 'charming', 'enjoyable', 'entertaining'. etc.]

The genius, on the other hand, whose faculty of knowledge is robust enough to enable it to withdraw at times from the service of his will, lingers on the consideration of life itself, tries to grasp each thing's idea, not its relations to other things; for that, he often neglects to consider his own path in life, and usually walks it clumsily enough. [AS goes on to say, not always clearly, that this deep difference between **a** the genius and **b** the ordinary person shows in superficial ways also, notably in their facial expressions. He says that the 'lively and firm' expression of **a** one speaks of his contemplativeness, whereas **b** the other's expression is usually 'stupid or dull' and, when it is not that, it shows him as on the watch for whatever might satisfy his will.]

Since the knowledge that is part of genius, or knowledge of ideas, does not follow the GP, whereas what does follow it imparts shrewdness and rationality in life and brings the sciences into existence, individuals of genius will be burdened with the deficiencies entailed by neglect of the latter kind of knowledge.

But notice: I am going to discuss this only as it applies to these individuals while they are actually engaged in the kind of knowing that is part of genius; which is emphatically not the case at every moment of their life, because the great (though spontaneous) exertion required for will-free comprehension of ideas necessarily relaxes, leaving those individuals, for long intervals, with pretty much the strengths and weaknesses of ordinary people. For this reason, the conduct of the genius has for ages...been viewed as the conduct of a superhuman being distinct from the individual himself, only intermittently taking possession of him.

The aversion that individuals of genius have for directing their attention to the content of the GP will first show itself...as an aversion toward mathematics, for its procedure

is directed toward the most general forms of the phenomenon, space and time, which are themselves only modes of the GP—a procedure that is the outright opposite of the one that seeks out only the content of the phenomenon, the *idea* that is expressed in it apart from all relations. Also, the logical method of mathematics will be repugnant to the genius because it doesn't involve real insight and so cannot give satisfaction. All it offers is a chain of inferences...; so the mental power that it mainly calls on is *memory*, needed so that the person can have available all the earlier propositions to which he is appealing. Experience has also confirmed that great geniuses in art have no capacity for mathematics; no-one has ever been outstanding in both. ·The poet and dramatist· Alfieri relates that he could not even comprehend Euclid's fourth theorem! Goethe is often enough taken to task for his lack of mathematical knowledge by ignorant opponents of his theory of colours. Of course in this case, which involved (not calculating and measuring in accordance with hypothetical data, but) direct knowledge by the understanding of cause and effect, that criticism was so utterly absurd and inappropriate that the critics showed their total lack of judgment, as they also did by their other Midas-pronouncements. The fact that

almost half a century after Goethe's theory of colours first appeared, the Newtonian nonsense is in undisturbed possession of academic chairs in Germany, and people still speak quite seriously about seven homogenous kinds of light and their different refrangibilities

will one day be counted among the great intellectual earmarks of men in general and of Germans in particular.

These materials also explain the equally familiar fact that exceptional mathematicians have little receptiveness for works of fine art, which is naively expressed in the familiar

anecdote about the French mathematician who, after reading Racine's *Iphigenia*, shrugged his shoulders and said 'What does that prove?'. Also, shrewdness consists in a quick grasp of relations according to the law of causality and motivation, whereas the knowledge that is part of genius is not directed toward any relations; so a shrewd person (so far as and while he is so) will not have genius, and a genius (so far as and while he is so) will not be shrewd.

Finally, perceptual knowledge, the domain in which ideas lie, is the exact opposite of the rational or abstract knowledge directed by the GP of knowledge. And it is well known that great genius is seldom paired with pre-eminent reasonableness; on the contrary, individuals of genius are often subject to intense emotions and irrational passions. The reason for this is not the weakness of reason but rather

- partly, the extraordinary energy of the individual of genius, which expresses itself through the intensity of all his acts of will, and

- partly, the fact that a perceptual knowledge through the senses and the understanding overpowers b abstract knowledge, creating a decisive orientation toward the perceptual; and for individuals of genius the supreme energy of perceptions so far outshines colourless concepts that their actions are no longer directed by b the latter but by a the former, making them irrational, pulling them in the direction of the unreflective, of emotions, of passions.

•MADNESS•

Because their knowledge has partially withdrawn from the service of will, in conversation they attend not so much to the other person as to the matter they are talking about, which is vividly present to their mind. Thus they will judge or speak too objectively for their own good, say things that it would be shrewder to leave unsaid, and so on. They end up showing

a tendency towards soliloquies, and can in general show a number of weaknesses that actually verge on madness. It has often been noted that genius and madness have an aspect with respect to which they border on one another, indeed pass over into one another. [AS cites literary examples of this, involving Horace, Seneca, Plato, Democritus, and others, ending with:] And finally Pope says:

Great wits to madness sure are near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Particularly instructive in this respect is Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, in which he shows us not only the suffering, the essential martyrdom, of genius as such, but also its steady passage into madness. Finally, the fact that genius and madness are in immediate contact is confirmed in part by the biographies of men of great genius such as Rousseau, Byron and Alfieri, and by anecdotes from the lives of others. [AS goes on to say that his 'frequent visits to insane asylums' have convinced him that there's a link between madness and very high levels of talent; and he offers a peculiar statistical argument to show that this is non-random. (In the course of this argument, he comments on the rarity of actual geniuses.) After kicking this around a little, he emerges thus:] In the meantime, I will explain as briefly as possible my view about the purely intellectual basis for the relation of genius to madness, for this will help me to explain the real nature of genius, i.e. of the only mental endowment that can produce genuine works of art. But this requires a brief explanation of madness itself.

A clear and complete insight into the essence of madness—an accurate and sharp concept of what really distinguishes the mad from the sane—has not yet been found, as far as I know.

Mad people can't be denied to have reason or to have

understanding; for they speak and understand, they often make perfectly accurate inferences, and as a rule they quite accurately perceive their environment and see the connection between causes and effects. Visions and fantasies of delirium are not ordinary symptoms of madness: delirium distorts perception; madness distorts thoughts. Mad people don't usually go wrong in their recognition of what is immediately *present*; their insane talk always refers to what is *absent* or *past*, and only through these refers to their connection with what is present. So their malady seems to me especially to affect their memory. It's not that they are wholly lacking in it [he gives evidence for that]; but in them the thread of memory is broken, and no uniformly interconnected recollection of the past is possible. Individual scenes from the past are accurate, but there are gaps in recollecting them, which the mad people fill out with fictions that are either

- constantly the same, becoming *idées fixes*, and then it is a fixed delusion, melancholia; or
- or always different, ideas that happen to occur to them at the moment; then it is called folly, *fatuitas*.

That's why it is so hard, when a mad person is brought into a madhouse, to question him about the previous course of his life. In his memory the true is increasingly polluted with the false. He accurately takes in his immediate environment, but it is distorted by its fancied connection with an imagined past. So he identifies himself and others with persons who exist only in his fancied past, no longer recognises many of his acquaintances, and so—for all of the accuracy of his thoughts about things that are individually present—maintains wholly false relations between those and things that are absent.

If his madness reaches a high degree, an utter loss of memory ensues, making him entirely incapable of concern for what is absent or past, and entirely determined by the

mood of the moment combined with the fictions that fill the past in his head; and then, if one's superior power is not constantly made evident to him, one is never for a moment safe from violence or murder at his hands.

A madman's knowledge, like that of animals, is limited to the present; but what distinguishes them is that an animal has no presentation of the past as such, though the past affects it through the mediation of habit. The dog recognises its former master years later—i.e. gets the usual impression at the sight of him—but it has no recollection of that earlier time. Whereas the madman carries a past around *in abstracto* in his faculty of reason; but it is a false one, which exists only for him, whether long-term or just for the moment. The influence of this false past then prevents him from making the use that animals do of the accurately recognised present.

Intense spiritual suffering, unexpected horrific events, often lead to madness; and here is my explanation of why. All such suffering is, as an actual event, limited to the present; so it is only passing, and to that extent never disproportionately difficult. It becomes excessively great only as an enduring pain; but as such it is only a thought, and therefore lies in one's *memory*. Now when such a sorrow, such painful knowledge, is so agonising that it becomes simply unbearable and threatens to overcome the individual, then terrified nature seizes on madness as the ultimate life-preserver. The tormented mind breaks the thread of its memory, fills the gaps with fictions, and so seeks refuge in madness from the mental suffering that exceeds its strength, as when a limb smitten with gangrene is amputated and replaced with a wooden one. As examples, consider raging Ajax, King Lear, and Ophelia. For the only creatures of true genius to which one can appeal here as generally familiar are equivalent to actual persons in their truth; in any case,

abundant actual experience shows us altogether the same thing. A weak analogy of this sort of passage from pain to madness is the fact that we often all, as if mechanically, by means of some loud exclamation or movement, seek to dispel a painful remembrance that suddenly strikes us, to divert ourselves from it, forcibly to distract ourselves.

What I have said shows us that the madman accurately grasps the particular present and many particular bits of the past, but mistakes the relations among them—the big picture—and thus thinks wrongly and talks wrongly. And this is exactly his point of contact with the individual of genius. For the genius also

in abandoning knowledge of relations according to the GP, so as to see and seek in things only their *ideas*, to grasp their true essence in its perceptual expression, in which respect *one* thing represents its entire species and therefore, as Goethe says, one case is as good as a thousand,

loses sight of the big picture. The present scene that he takes in with such extraordinary vividness appears in such a bright light that the other links in the chain withdraw into the dark; and this gives rise to phenomena that have long been recognised as resembling those of madness. That which in particular given things exists only incompletely and weakened by modifications is raised by the man of genius, through his way of contemplating it, to the *idea* of the thing, and thus to completeness. So he sees extremes everywhere, and his own conduct tends to extremes; he doesn't know how to hit the mean; he lacks soberness, and the result is as I have described it. He knows the ideas completely but not the individuals. So a poet may know *man* deeply and thoroughly while having a very imperfect knowledge of *men*; he is easily deceived—a plaything in the hands of the crafty.

37. What works of art are for

I repeat: genius consists in the capacity for •knowledge independent of the GP, and therefore knowledge not of individual things. . . .but of their ideas, and for •being the correlative of ideas, and thus no longer an individual but a pure subject of knowledge; and •I now add that• this capacity •cannot be the exclusive privilege of the genius, but• must be possessed to *some* degree by all human beings. Otherwise they would be no more capable of enjoying works of art than they are of producing them, and would have no receptiveness for the *beautiful* and the *sublime*; indeed those words could mean nothing to them. So we must assume that—unless some people are entirely incapable of aesthetic satisfaction—all human beings have this power of knowing the ideas in things, thereby briefly relinquishing their personality. The genius's only advantage is that he has this kind of knowledge in a higher degree and for a longer duration, which allows him to hold it isolated in his consciousness in the way that is needed if he is to make something that *reproduces* this object of knowledge, this reproduction being a work of art. Through this he communicates to others the idea he has grasped. It is the same idea, unaltered •in the process of reproduction•, so that the aesthetic satisfaction is essentially one and the same, whether it is called forth by a work of art or directly through perception of nature and of life. The work of art is merely a means of making it easier to have the knowledge in which that satisfaction consists. That the idea confronts us more easily through the art-work than directly through nature and reality is solely due to the fact that the artist—thinking now only of the idea and not of the reality—has reproduced only the idea in his work, separating it out from reality and omitting all distracting contingencies. The artist lets us look into the world through his eyes. That

he has these eyes—that he knows the inner nature of things apart from all their relations—is the gift of genius, which is **innate**. But that he is equipped to share this gift with us, to give us his eyes, that is the **acquired** part, the technical side, of art. For this reason, having presented the nature of aesthetic knowledge in its most general outlines, I shall proceed to a more detailed consideration of the beautiful and the sublime, taking nature and art together, no longer isolating art. I shall first consider what happens in a person when the beautiful moves him, when the sublime moves him; it makes no intrinsic difference whether •his being moved derives directly from nature, from life, or •he gets it only through the mediation of art.

38. The subjective side of aesthetic experience

In the aesthetic manner of contemplation we have found *two inseparable components*:

- knowledge of the object not as a single thing but as a platonic idea, i.e. as the enduring form of some entire species of things, and
- the contemplating person's awareness of himself not as an individual but as a *pure will-less subject of [see Glossary] knowledge*.

The condition under which the two components always occur together was abandonment of the method of knowing that is bound to the GP, though this is the only one that is useful for the service of will, as also for science.

And we'll see the pleasure produced by contemplation of the beautiful coming from those two components—which plays a larger part depends on what the object of aesthetic

contemplation is.

All willing arises out of need, thus out of lack, thus out of suffering. So fulfillment puts an end to the suffering; but for every wish that is fulfilled at least ten are thwarted. Further, desire lasts long, its demands go on for ever; fulfillment is brief and scantily measured out. But even final satisfaction is only illusory: every **a** fulfilled desire is at once replaced by a **b** new one; the person concerned knows that **a** the former is an error; so is **b** the latter, but he doesn't *yet* know that about it.¹ No object of willing, once attained, can give lasting satisfaction; it is always like alms tossed to a beggar, getting him through another day of life so as to renew his torment tomorrow.

Therefore, so long as

- our consciousness is filled with our will,
- we are given over to the press of desires with its constant hopes and fears, and
- we are subjects of willing,

we can never have lasting happiness or rest. Whether we give chase or flee, fear disaster or strive for enjoyment, it's essentially the same story: concern for will and its constant demands, whatever form they take, fills and perpetually moves our consciousness; but without *rest* there is no possibility of true well-being. So the subject of willing is constantly on the turning wheel of Ixion, continues to draw its water in the always-leaking vessel of the Danaïds, is the eternally yearning Tantalus.

But when some external cause or inner mood suddenly lifts us out of the endless stream of willing—rips knowledge away from enslavement to will—our attention stops being directed toward motives of willing, and instead grasps •things

¹ [AS means that if the person realises that he was mistaken in thinking that the *satisfaction of* desire **a** was complete in the sense of quelling desire. He knows this because he has seen that **a** *was* immediately followed by a new desire. He hasn't *yet* seen that happen to **b**.]

free from their relation to will, thus without interest, without subjectivity, regarded purely for themselves, entirely given over to •them merely as presentations, not as motives. Then the *rest* that is always sought but never reached on that first path of willing has all at once occurred of itself, and we are utterly content. It is the painless state that Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods. For we are, for that moment, freed from the wretched press of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath of the workhouse of willing, the wheel of Ixion stands still.

This state, however, is just what I described above as

- required for knowledge of ideas,
- pure contemplation,
- absorption in perception,
- losing oneself in the object,
- forgetting all individuality, and
- surrendering the kind of knowledge that follows the GP and takes in only relations.

It is the state in which—simultaneously and inseparably—

- the single perceived thing rises to the idea of its species,
- the knowing individual rises to ·the level of being· the pure subject of [see Glossary] will-less knowledge, and
- neither of them now stands within the stream of time and other relations.

It then makes no difference whether one sees the sunset from the prison or from the palace.

An inner state of mind, a predominance of knowing over willing, can produce this state in any circumstances. This is shown to us by those excellent Dutchmen who directed such a purely objective perception on the most insignificant objects, producing a lasting monument to their objectivity and spiritual repose in ‘still lifes’ which the aesthetic beholder cannot regard unmoved, for they present to him the peaceful,

still, will-free frame of mind of the artist, which was needed to contemplate such insignificant things so objectively, to observe them so attentively, and to repeat this perception so cool-headedly; and as the picture invites the viewer to participate in this state, his emotion is often increased by the contrast between it and the unquiet frame of mind, disturbed by vehement willing, in which he finds himself. In the same spirit, landscape-painters, particularly Ruisdael, have often painted very insignificant country scenes which produce the same effect even more agreeably.

The **inner** power of an artistic nature can accomplish that much entirely on its own. But that purely objective state of mind is facilitated and **externally** enhanced by suitable objects, by the abundance of natural beauty that invites us—indeed urges us—to perceive it. That beauty almost always succeeds in •tearing us (even if only for a moment) from subjectivity, from enslavement to will, and •transporting us into the state of pure knowledge. Even someone tormented by passions, or by hardship and cares, is suddenly quickened, cheered, and uplifted by a single free glimpse into nature: the storm of the passions, the press of desire and fear, and all the torment of willing are then at once quieted in a wonderful way. For at the moment when we, torn away from willing, have given ourselves over to pure will-less knowledge, we have stepped (as it were) into another world where everything that moves our will, and thereby so intensely shakes us, no longer exists. That liberation of knowledge lifts us out of all this as intensely and completely as do sleep and dreams: happiness and unhappiness have vanished; we are no longer an individual but only a pure subject of knowledge. We remain only as the world’s *one* eye that looks out from all knowing beings, but only in humans can it free itself entirely from the service of will—so entirely that all differences in individuality vanish and it makes no

difference whether the gazing eye belongs to a mighty king or a tormented beggar. For neither happiness nor sorrow is carried across that border. So close to us is a domain **a** in which we entirely escape from all our sorrow. But who has the power to maintain himself there for long? As soon as our consciousness connects that purely perceived object with our will, with our person, the magic comes to an end and we •fall back into **b** the •kind of• knowledge dominated by the GP, •no longer recognise the idea but the individual thing, the link in a chain to which we too belong, and •are again given over to all our unhappiness.

Most people, since they entirely lack objectivity, i.e. genius, almost always occupy **b** the latter standpoint. So they prefer not to be alone with nature: they need society, or at least a book. That is because their knowledge remains in the service of will; so they seek in objects only some sort of reference to their will, and with anything that has no such reference, a constant desolate 'It doesn't help me' sounds in their interior like a ground bass; so that they in their loneliness find even the most beautiful surroundings to be barren, dark, foreign, and hostile.

Finally: it is also that blessed state of will-less perception that spreads such a wondrous magic over the past and over distant places, and—by way of self-deception—depicts them in such a flattering light. For when we call to mind days long past, spent in a distant place, our imagination calls back only the objects, not the subject of [see Glossary] will which carries about with it, then as now, its incurable sorrows; they are forgotten, having since then often made place for others. Now, objective perception is just as effectual in recollection as present perception would be if it were in our power to give ourselves over to it in a state free of willing. Thus it happens that—especially when some hardship has made us more than usually fearful—a sudden recollection of scenes from long

ago and far away flits across our minds like a lost paradise. Imagination calls back only the objective, not that which is individually subjective, and we fancy that the objective part stood before us at that past time as purely as its image now stands in our imagination, unobscured by any reference to our will; though in fact the relation of objects to our willing tormented us back then as severely as it does now. We can free ourselves of all suffering from present objects as well as from remote ones, so long as we can •rise to regarding them purely objectively and so •produce the illusion that those objects alone are present, not ourselves. Then—rid of the suffering self—as pure subjects of knowledge we become *one* with those objects, and as foreign as our needs are to them, so foreign are they at such moments to ourselves. Only the world as presentation remains; the world as will has vanished.

I hope that through all these considerations I have made clear how, and how greatly, aesthetic satisfaction comes from the subjective condition, i.e. from •the liberation of knowledge from the service of will, •forgetting oneself as an individual, and •raising consciousness to the pure, will-less, timeless subject of knowledge, independent of all relations. Along with this subjective side of aesthetic contemplation there always enters—as a necessary correlate—its objective side, the intuitive grasp of the platonic idea. But before I turn to a closer consideration of this and of its role in the achievements of art, my purposes in this work require me to give a little time to the subjective side of aesthetic satisfaction, so as to complete my discussion of that with an account of impressions of the *sublime*, which depend on that •subjective• side alone and arise through a modification of it. After that, my treatment of •both sides of• aesthetic satisfaction will be completed with a discussion of its objective side.

But I must first add the following remarks to what I have said. Light is the most gladdening of things; it has become the symbol of all that is good and healthy. In all religions it symbolises salvation, while darkness symbolises damnation. . . . Dante's Paradise would look very much like Vauxhall in London, for all the blessed spirits appear as points of light and are arranged in regular figures. The absence of light immediately makes us sad; its return cheers us. Colours immediately arouse a keen delight, which reaches its highest degree when they are transparent. All this depends entirely on the fact that light is the correlative and condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge of perception, the only knowledge that doesn't in any way affect the will. For sight, unlike the affections of the other senses, cannot directly and through its sensuous effect make the sensation of the special organ agreeable or disagreeable, which is to say that it has no immediate connection with the will. Such a quality can only belong to the perception which arises in the *understanding*, and then it lies in the relation of the object to the will. This is not the case with hearing: sounds can give pain directly, and can also be sensuously agreeable, directly and without regard to harmony or melody. Touch, as all of a piece with the feeling of the whole body, is still more subordinated to this direct influence on the will; and yet there is such a thing as a sensation of touch which is neither painful nor pleasant. But smells are always either agreeable or disagreeable, and tastes still more so. Those last two senses are therefore most closely related to the will, and therefore they are the most ignoble senses, which Kant has called 'the subjective senses'. The pleasure over light is in fact only the pleasure over the objective possibility of the purest and fullest perceptual knowledge, and as such it

may be traced to the fact that pure knowledge—freed and delivered from all will—is in the highest degree pleasant, and of itself constitutes a large part of aesthetic enjoyment. These facts about light explain the incredible beauty we find in the reflection of objects in water. The action of reflected rays of light—

- that lightest, quickest, finest kind of action of bodies on each other,
- to which we owe by far the completest and purest of our perceptions

—is here brought clearly before our eyes, distinct and perfect, in cause and in effect, and indeed in its entirety; hence the aesthetic pleasure it gives us, which is entirely based on the subjective ground of aesthetic satisfaction, and is pleasure in pure knowing and its method.

39. The aesthetically sublime

These considerations are meant to emphasise the subjective part of aesthetic satisfaction, i.e. this satisfaction in so far as it consists in pleasure in mere perceptual knowledge as such, as opposed to knowledge linked with will. They are directly connected with the following explanation of the state of mind that has been called the feeling of the *sublime*.

I have already noted that it is easiest to move into the state of pure perception when objects accommodate themselves to this, i.e. when by their complex but also definite and clear form they easily become representatives of ideas—which is what *beauty* in the objective sense consists in. Above all, *natural* beauty has this property, which enables it to give even the most insensitive people some fleeting aesthetic satisfaction. [AS then offers a bold speculation

¹ [Schwärmerei, which could mean 'wild imaginings', 'fanaticism', or the like.]

(he admits that it ‘borders on wildness’¹) about why we find plants beautiful, followed by a dense and difficult passage the gist of which is given when he goes on:] Thus what distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is this:

- with the beautiful, pure knowledge gets the upper hand without any struggle: the object’s beauty—i.e. the property of it that facilitates knowledge of its idea—has effortlessly cleared from one’s consciousness the will and any knowledge of relations that serve it, leaving the mind as a pure subject of knowledge that doesn’t even remember the will; whereas
- with the sublime, the state of pure knowledge is first achieved by consciously and forcibly hauling the mind up to a level above the will and knowledge referring to it. The person must be conscious not only of achieving but also of maintaining this elevation² which is therefore accompanied by a constant memory of will—not of any particular individual willing, such as fears or desires, but rather of human willing on the whole. . . . If a real individual act of will entered consciousness through some actual personal distress and danger from objects, then the individual will would at once win the upper hand, the repose of contemplation would become impossible, the impression of the sublime would vanish, making place for that anxiety in which the individual’s efforts at self-rescue suppress any other thought. Some examples will do much to clarify this theory of **a** the aesthetic sublime and place it beyond doubt; they will also display the variety of *degrees* of the sense of the sublime. The only difference between **a** that and **b** the sense of the beautiful is that **a** the former involves—along with the pure, will-free knowledge and knowledge of ideas beyond all relations determined by the GP (which it shares with **b**)—an

additional factor, namely the person’s elevation above the known hostile relation of the object contemplated to the will in general. So there arises—according to whether this additional factor is

- strong, loud, pressing, close, or only
- weak, distant, merely indicated

—several degrees of the sublime, indeed of passages from the beautiful to the sublime. It suits my purposes to make the weaker of them first evident in examples, although readers whose aesthetic receptiveness is not great, and whose imagination is not lively, will understand only the succeeding examples of the higher and clearer degrees of the impression of the sublime. If you are one of those, focus on those later examples, and leave to themselves the examples to be cited first, of very weak degrees of the impression in question.

Just as a human being is at the same time **a** tempestuous and dark pressing of the will and **b** eternal, free, cheerful subject of pure knowledge—with their focal points, their opposite poles, being **a** the genitals and **b** the brain—so correspondingly the sun is at the same time **a** source of **b** light—condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge, and for that reason the most delightful of things—and **a** a source of heat, the first condition of all life, i.e. of all the will’s phenomena at its higher levels. Thus **a** heat is for will what **b** light is for knowledge. So light is the greatest diamond in beauty’s crown, and has the most decisive influence on knowledge of any beautiful object: its *sheer presence* is an indispensable condition of beauty; its *presence with a favourable position* heightens even the beauty of the most beautiful. But above all else, the beauty of architecture is heightened by its favour, through which even the most

² [‘elevation’ here translates *Erhebung*, the abstract noun from *erheben*, of which the past participle, *erhaben*, is here translated as ‘sublime’.]

insignificant thing becomes a beautiful object.

If we view in harsh winter the rays of the low-standing sun reflected by stony masses, where they illuminate without warming and so are favourable to **b** the purest kind of knowledge and not to **a** will, the contemplation of the light's beautiful effect on these masses takes us (as all beauty does) into a state of pure knowing. [The rest of this obscure sentence says, in effect, that the lack of **a** warmth serves as a reminder to someone in **b** this state of knowledge of what *will* can do; this prompts him to persist in pure knowing and to turn away from willing; and so he passes from the feeling of the beautiful to the feeling of the sublime. AS admits that this that this is 'a weak example' of his thesis.]

Let us put ourselves in a very lonely place with unlimited horizon, under cloudless skies, trees and plants in motionless air, no animals, no people, no moving waters, the deepest stillness; such surroundings are like a summons to seriousness, to contemplation, pulling entirely free from the will and its neediness. But this is just what imparts to such a scene of desolate stillness a touch of the sublime. Because it provides no object (favourable or unfavourable) for the will that always needs to be striving and achieving, all that is left is the state of pure contemplation; and whoever is incapable of this will be shamefully degraded, prey to the emptiness of inactive will and the torment of boredom. (This provides a test of our intellectual worth, a good criterion of which is the degree of our power of enduring—or even of loving—solitude.) The scene I have sketched provides an example of the sublime at a low degree, for in it

- the state of pure knowing, in its peace and all-sufficiency

is mingled, by way of contrast, with

- a recollection of the dependence and poverty of a will that stands in need of constant action.

This is the species of the sublime for which the sight of the boundless prairies of the interior of North America is celebrated.

Now let such a region be deprived even of plants and show only naked cliffs. Then—with the complete absence of the organic material necessary for our survival—the will at once becomes uneasy, the barren waste takes on a frightful character, our mood becomes more tragic, the elevation to pure knowing occurs with a more decisive tearing away from the interest of the will, and because we persist in the state of pure knowing, the feeling of the sublime comes clearly to the fore.

[AS continues with his crescendo of cases, through to the sense of the sublime that one can get from contemplating a terrific storm at sea, which he sums up thus:] In the unshaken spectator of this scene, the dual character of his consciousness reaches its highest level of clarity: he feels himself to be **(i)** an individual, a fragile phenomenon of will that can be broken to bits by the slightest blow from the forces of nature and at the same time **(ii)** the eternal, restful subject of [see Glossary] knowledge that is the bearer of this entire world, the frightful battle with nature being only a presentation to it. . . . This is the full impression of the sublime. It is occasioned in this case by the sight of a power incomparably superior to the individual, threatening him with annihilation.

In an entirely different manner, this sense of the sublime can arise when a mere magnitude in space and time is made present to an individual's mind, its immensity reducing him to nothing. We can call the previous kind the *dynamical* sublime, and this second kind the *mathematical* sublime, retaining Kant's terminology and his accurate drawing of the line between them (though I diverge from him entirely in my explanation of the inner essence of the mathematical

sublime). . . .

When we lose ourselves in contemplation of the infinite size of the world in space and time, meditate on the thousands of past years that have flowed by and on those to come—or indeed, when the night sky actually brings countless worlds before our eyes, impressing the world’s immensity on our consciousness—we feel ourselves reduced to nothingness, feel ourselves as individual, as animate body, as transitory phenomenon of will, dwindling into nothingness like a drop in the ocean. But at the same time there rises against such a spectre of our own nullity, against such a *lying impossibility*, the immediate awareness that all these worlds exist only in a presentation to us. . . . The magnitude of the world that previously caused us unrest now rests within us; our dependence on it is nullified by its dependence on us.

[AS goes on to say that a sense of the mathematical sublime can be derived from much smaller spaces such as those of the domes of St Peter’s church in Rome or St. Paul’s in London. He doesn’t make clear how or why this is so, unless an explanation is to be gathered from this:] Many objects of our perception arouse the impression of the sublime by virtue of the fact that

- their size or age makes us feel ourselves diminished to nothingness in the face of them, and yet
- we revel in the pleasure of viewing them.

Of such a sort are very tall mountains, the Egyptian pyramids, colossal ruins of great antiquity.

My explanation of the sublime can be extended even to ethical matters, namely to what is called a *sublime character*. If someone has such a character, his will is not aroused by objects that would plainly be suited to arousing it; rather, when these objects are in play, knowledge retains the upper hand. Someone with such a character will regard people

purely objectively, not in terms of how they might relate to his will. For example, he will

- take note of their failings, even of their hatred and injustice against him, without being aroused to hatred;
- see their happiness without feeling envy;
- recognise their good qualities, without wanting any closer connection with them; and
- perceive the beauty of women, without desiring them.

His personal happiness or unhappiness will not affect him strongly; rather, he will be as Hamlet describes Horatio:

for thou hast been
—As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing—
A man, that fortune’s buffets and rewards
Hast ta’en with equal thanks, etc.

For in the course of his own life and its misfortunes, he will look less to his individual lot than to that of humanity in general, and comport himself accordingly more as knowing than as suffering.

40. The stimulating as the opposite of the sublime

Since opposites are mutually illuminating, it may be in order to note here that the real opposite of the sublime is something that may not be recognised as such at first glance, namely the stimulating [*Reizende*, which could mean something more like ‘charming’]. By this I understand *what arouses the will with the immediate prospect of satisfaction*.

Whereas the feeling of the sublime arises when something plainly unfavourable to the will becomes an object of a pure contemplation that can be maintained only if one constantly turns away from the will and rises **above** its interest, the stimulating pulls the beholder **down** from the pure contemplation that is required for any apprehension of the beautiful, subjecting his will to the necessity of stimulation

by objects immediately appealing to it; so the observer no longer remains a pure subject of knowing but becomes the needy, dependent subject of willing. . . . [For these uses of 'subject of, see Glossary]

I find only two species of the stimulating in the domain of art, both of them unworthy of it. **(i)** One is the Dutch kind of still life, which gives the beholder an appetite for the food it depicts and thus brings in the will in a way that defeats aesthetic contemplation. Painted fruit is still allowable, since it offers itself as a further development of the flower and through its form and colour as a product of natural beauty, without the viewer's being downright compelled to think of its edible quality; but unfortunately we often find dishes served up and prepared by artists with illusory naturalism: oysters, herrings, crabs, buttered bread, beer, wine, etc., which is entirely objectionable. **(ii)** In historical painting and sculpture, the stimulating element consists in naked figures whose posture, half-clothed state, and entire treatment is aimed at arousing lewd feelings in the viewer; which nullifies purely aesthetic contemplation and undermines the purpose of art. This fault exactly matches the one I have criticised the Dutchmen for. The ancients, for all the beauty and perfect nakedness of their figures, are almost always free of it, since the artist himself created them in a spirit that was purely objective, filled with ideal beauty, not in a spirit of low subjective desire. So the stimulating is everywhere to be avoided in art.

There is also such a thing as the **negatively stimulating**, which is even more objectionable than the **positively stimulating** just discussed; and this is the **disgusting**. Just like what is positively¹ stimulating, it awakens the will in the beholder and thereby nullifies purely aesthetic contemplation. But

what it arouses is an active aversion and opposition; it awakens the will by presenting it with things it abhors. So it has always been recognised as altogether impermissible in art, though the merely *ugly*, when not disgusting, is allowable in its proper place as we shall see later.

41. Everything is beautiful in its own way

[AS opens this chapter with the remark that the sublime/beautiful distinction lies *within* the subjective side of aesthetic consideration; it's the distinction between two different ways in which someone's (subjective) experience of beauty can be free of contamination by the will. He continues:] With regard to their objects, there is no intrinsic difference between the sublime and the beautiful; for the object of aesthetic contemplation in each is not •the individual thing but •the idea—i.e. an adequate objectivisation of will at a particular level—trying to be revealed in it. Its necessary correlate, which like the idea itself is withdrawn from the GP, is the pure subject of knowledge; just as the correlate of the individual thing is the knowing individual, both of which lie within the domain of the GP.

In calling something x beautiful we mean that x is an object of our aesthetic contemplation, which has a double meaning: **(i)** that in contemplating it we are conscious of ourselves no longer as individuals but as pure will-less subjects of knowledge, and **(ii)** that we recognise in x not the particular thing but an idea, which can happen only if our attention to x is not governed by the GP—does not follow the relation of the object to anything outside it (which is always ultimately connected with relations to our own will)—but rests on the object itself.

¹ [*eigentlich*, which means 'actually' or 'genuinely', but this was presumably a slip.]

The idea and the pure subject of knowledge always enter consciousness together, as necessary correlates, and on their appearance all distinction of time vanishes, for they are both entirely foreign to the GP in all its forms. . . . If I contemplate a tree (for example) aesthetically, i.e. with the eyes of an artist—and thus recognise not it but its idea—it makes no difference whether it is this tree or its predecessor that flourished a thousand years ago, and whether the observer is this individual or any other who lived anywhere and at any time; the particular thing and the knowing individual are abolished along with the GP, and there remains only the idea and the pure subject of knowing, which jointly constitute the adequate objectivity of will at this level. They may be compared to the rainbow and the sun, which have no part in the constant movement and succession of the falling drops ·in a waterfall·. And the idea dispenses not only with time but also with space, for the idea is not this special form that appears before me but its expression, its pure significance, its innermost being, which discloses itself to me and calls on me, and which may be entirely the same though the spatial relations of its form are very different.

Since then, on the one hand, every existing thing can be regarded purely objectively and apart from all relations, and since on the other hand, in each thing will makes its appearance at some level of its objectivisation, and that thing is accordingly the expression of an idea, it also follows that every existing thing is beautiful.

That even the most insignificant thing can be viewed in a purely objective and will-less way and thereby prove itself to be beautiful is attested by the still life of the Dutch. But one thing *x* can be *more beautiful* than another thing *y* in the sense of being easier than *y* is to view in that way; and it can be *most beautiful* in the sense of almost compelling one to view it in that way. This sometimes happens because

relations among an individual thing's parts are so clear, determinate and significant that it gives pure expression to the idea of its species, completely unifying within itself all possible expression of its species, and thus making it much easier for the observer to pass from •the individual thing to •the idea and thereby to pass to •the state of pure contemplativeness. In other cases a thing has the advantage of particular beauty because the idea that speaks to us from within it is at a high level of the objectivisation of will and therefore highly significant and very eloquent. That is why human beings are above all other things beautiful, and the revelation of their essence is the highest goal of art. Human form and human expression are the most significant objects of the plastic and pictorial arts, just as human action is the most significant object of poetry.

But each thing has its own peculiar [see Glossary] beauty: not only everything organic, where beauty is shown by the unity of an individual, but also every formless inorganic thing, even every artifact. For all these reveal the ideas through which the will is objectified at the lowest levels; they provide (so to speak) the deepest, resonating bass tones of nature. Gravity, rigidity, fluidity, light, etc. are ideas that express themselves in cliffs, buildings, bodies of water, etc. Landscape gardening and architecture can only help them unfold their properties clearly, multifariously, and completely, giving them an opportunity to express themselves purely, thereby prompting aesthetic contemplation and making it easier. Inferior buildings and surroundings—neglected by nature or spoiled by art—accomplish this to little if any extent; yet the general fundamental ideas of nature can't entirely vanish even from these. They speak even here to the observer who looks for them, and even inferior buildings and the like can still be viewed aesthetically, [though AS adds that in their case what counts are their materials' general

properties, not the artificial form they have been given.]

·DISAGREEING WITH PLATO·

[AS here notes some disagreements between his view of ideas and Plato's. (i) Plato holds that 'a table and a chair express the ideas of table and chair', whereas AS holds that they 'express the ideas to which voice is already given in their mere materials as such'. It's not clear what this means, and it seems inconsistent with what comes next: (ii) Plato (or anyway the early platonists) denied that there are any ideas of artifacts. Also (iii) 'Plato teaches that the fine arts—painting and poetry—aim to depict not ideas but individual things. AS regards this as a serious error, but thinks it is not likely to lead anyone astray, because Plato clearly connects it with 'his denigration and dismissal of art, particularly of poetry', which is 'well recognised as one of that great man's greatest errors'.]

42. The two sides of the aesthetic experience

I return to my comparison of aesthetic impressions. Knowledge of the beautiful always presupposes—simultaneously and inseparably—a purely knowing **a** subject and the known idea as **b** object. But ·although both of these are always involved, their contributions can be different·. The aesthetic enjoyment will sometimes owe more to **b** the known idea, and sometimes more to **a** the blessedness and spiritual peace of pure knowledge, free of all willing and thus of all individuality and of the pain that comes from it. Which way this pendulum swings depends on whether the intuitively grasped idea is a higher or lower level of the objectivisation of will. In the aesthetic contemplation (in reality or through the medium of art) of

- natural beauty in inorganic and vegetative things, and of

- works of fine architecture,

the enjoyment of pure will-less knowledge will be predominant, because in such cases the ideas that are grasped don't have deep significance or richly expressive content, because they are only low levels of the objectivisation of will. By contrast, when •animals and human beings are the object of aesthetic contemplation or depiction, the enjoyment consists more in the objective apprehension of these ideas, which are the clearest revelations of will. For such things exhibit the greatest multiplicity of forms, the richness and deep significance of phenomena, and most completely reveal the essence of will to us, whether in its intensity, its terribleness, its satisfaction, or (in tragic depictions) its breaking, or even in its conversion or self-nullification, which is the particular theme of Christian painting, as it is in general the case that historical painting and drama have as their object the idea of will that has been illuminated by full knowledge.

I shall now go through the fine arts one by one, completing and clarifying the theory of the beautiful that I have advanced.

43. Architecture

Matter as such cannot be the display of an idea. For we found in Book I that matter is nothing but causality all through; its very existence consists in its causal action. But causality is a mode of the GP, whereas knowledge of ideas essentially excludes the content of the GP. We found in Book II that matter is the common substratum of all individual phenomena of ideas, making it the link connecting ideas with phenomena = individual things. So this is a second reason why matter cannot of itself display an idea. This is confirmed *a posteriori* by the fact that for matter as such no perceptual presentation is possible but only an abstract

concept. A perceptual presentation of it can display only the forms and qualities of which matter is the bearer, and in all of which ideas reveal themselves. This corresponds to the fact that causality (the entire essence of matter) cannot of itself be perceptually displayed, but only some particular causal connection.

On the other hand, every phenomenon of an idea, because as a phenomenon it has entered the form of the GP (or of the individuation-maker), must show up in matter as one of its qualities. So far then matter is the connecting link between the idea and the individuation-maker, which is the.

So Plato was right to propose in *Timaeus* that in addition to ideas and their phenomenon, individual things—the two of which otherwise take in all things in the world—there is also a third thing, *matter*, distinct from each of the others. Every individual is the phenomenon of an idea and is thus material. And every quality of matter is always a phenomenon of an idea, which makes it capable of being viewed aesthetically, i.e. makes possible knowledge of the idea displayed in it. This holds even for the most general qualities of matter without which it is nothing, and the ideas of which are the weakest objectivisation of will. These are: gravity, cohesion, rigidity, fluidity, reaction to light, etc.

Now, when we consider architecture purely as fine art, setting aside its practical goal—

in which it serves will, not pure knowledge, and thus is no longer *art* in my sense

—the only intention we can credit it with is that of making more clearly perceptible some of the ideas that are the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will: **(i)** gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness; the general properties of stone; the primary,

simplest, dullest cases of the visibility of will, the *basso continuo* of nature;¹ and then along with these **(ii)** *light*, which is in a number of respects their opposite. Even at this low level of the objectivisation of will we see its essence revealed in conflict. For the battle between gravity and rigidity is fine architecture's sole aesthetic material; architecture's task is to let the conflict show up with complete clarity in many different ways. It does this by depriving those ineradicable forces² of the shortest path to their satisfaction and detaining them by way of a detour; so that the battle is prolonged and the inexhaustible efforts of both forces are made visible in many different ways.

The entire mass of the building, left to its original tendency, would present a mere *heap*, bound as tightly as possible to the earth towards which •gravity incessantly presses, while •rigidity opposes it—each of •these being an objectivisation of will. But architecture blocks this tendency, this striving, from being immediately satisfied, and allows it only indirectly, by way of detours:

- the beams can press on the earth only through the columns;
- the dome has to be its own support and can satisfy its striving toward the earth only through the mediation of pillars; and so on.

[AS goes on to say that the goal of these blockages and consequent detours is to clearly display 'the innate forces of the bare mass of stone' in their interplay with one another, this being the whole of the purely aesthetic purpose of architecture. (A building's suitability to human needs is a matter of 'practical architecture', and has no aesthetic significance.) He adds:] The column is the simplest of all forms of support, determined purely by its purpose: twisted

¹ [This repeats a musical metaphor that is reported (not given in a detailed translation) early in chapter 28 above.]

² [Presumably AS is thinking of the qualities of gravity, cohesion etc. as forces.]

columns are tasteless; square pillars are less simple than round columns, though they happen to be easier to make. In just the same way, the forms of the frieze, beam, arch, dome are thoroughly determined by their immediate purpose and are thereby self-explanatory. Decoration of capitals etc. belongs to sculpture, not architecture. . . .

For the understanding and aesthetic enjoyment of a work of architecture, it is absolutely necessary to have immediate perceptual knowledge of the weight, rigidity and cohesion of its matter. Our pleasure in such a work would be greatly reduced if we learned that the building material was pumice; for then it would appear to us as a kind of sham building. The effect would be much the same if we learned that what we had taken to be stone was really wood, because that shifts the relation between •rigidity and •gravity, and thereby alters the significance of all the parts, since •those natural forces are revealed much more weakly in buildings of wood •than in buildings of stone•; so that no work of fine architecture can be made out of wood, however thoroughly it imitates the real thing—a fact which no theory but mine can explain. If we were told that a building the sight of which had given us pleasure was made of different kinds of material that •had very unequal weight and consistency but •couldn't be distinguished by the eye, the whole building would become as unenjoyable as a poem in a language we didn't know. This all shows that architecture affects us not just a mathematically but b dynamically, and that what speaks to us through it is not a mere form and symmetry but rather b those fundamental forces of nature, those primary ideas, those lowest levels of the objectivisation of will.

The proportionality of a building and its parts is produced (i) by the immediate purposiveness of every part with respect to the constitution of the whole; in addition (ii) it serves to facilitate a survey and understanding of the whole, and

(iii) finally, proportional figures contribute to its beauty by revealing the lawful character of space as such. All this, however, is only of subordinate value and necessity and in no way the main concern, since even symmetry is not strictly required; after all, ruins are still beautiful.

Works of architecture have a quite particular relation to light: they achieve a double beauty in full sunlight with the blue sky as background, and have an entirely different effect in moonlight. Therefore, when a beautiful work of architecture is to be erected, special attention is always paid to the effects of the light and to the climate. This is primarily because it takes a bright, strong light to make clearly visible all the parts of a structure and the relations amongst them; but I think that light comes into it in another way as well, namely that architecture reveals the nature of light—just as it reveals the nature of things that are as opposite to light as gravity and rigidity are. When it is captured, impeded, reflected by great, opaque, sharply delineated, and variously shaped masses, light most purely and clearly unfolds its own nature and properties; this brings great enjoyment to the beholder, for light is the most delightful of things, as the condition and objective correlate of the most perfect manner of perceptual knowledge.

Because the ideas that architecture brings to clear perception are the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will, and thus have little **objective** significance, one's aesthetic enjoyment of •the view of a beautiful and properly lit building will consist less in the intake of ideas than in the **subjective** correlate of that—introduced along with it—which consists predominantly in the fact that with •this view the beholder is raised from the level of

•the kind of knowledge that belongs to individuals, serves the will, and follows the GP
to the level of

•pure subject of knowing, free from will; so that it consists in that pure contemplation itself, liberated from all the suffering of willing and individuality. In this respect architecture's contrary—the other extreme in the series of fine arts—is *drama*, which brings to our knowledge the most significant ideas of all, so that in the aesthetic enjoyment of it the objective side is altogether predominant.

What distinguishes architecture from the plastic and pictorial arts and poetry is that what it gives us is not a copy but the thing itself. It does not replicate, as they do, the idea that the artist has taken in, so that he is lending his eyes to the beholder; rather, the architectural artist simply prepares the object for the beholder, makes it easier for him to grasp the idea by bringing the actual individual object to a clear and complete expression of its nature.

Unlike works of the other fine arts, works of architecture are seldom produced for purely **aesthetic** purposes. Such purposes are subordinated to **practical** ones that are foreign to art itself. The great merit of an architect consists in achieving purely aesthetic purposes despite their subordination to other purposes that are foreign to them. He does this by

- skilfully adapting them in a variety of ways to their other purposes, and
- rightly judging which form of aesthetic-architectonic beauty is compatible with a temple, which with a palace, which with an arsenal, and so on.

The more a harsh climate increases those demands of practicality—the more rigidly it determines and unavoidably prescribes them—the less leeway there is for the beautiful in architecture. In the mild climates of India, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where the demands of necessity were less and more loosely determined, architecture could most freely pursue its aesthetic goals. Under northern skies it grew rather stunted in this respect; here where keeps, pointed roofs, and

towers were in demand, since it could unfold its own beauty only within the most narrow limits, architecture had the more need to embellish itself with ornament borrowed from sculpture, as can be seen in the case of beautiful Gothic architecture.

The demands of necessity and practicality that put considerable limitations on architecture also give it a powerful support. Because of the extent and costliness of its works and the narrow range of its aesthetic effectiveness, architecture couldn't possibly have survived as purely fine art if it didn't *also* have a firm and honorable place among human occupations as a practical and necessary profession. Lack of the latter is precisely what prevents another art from standing as a sister beside architecture, although in an aesthetic respect it would quite properly be regarded as its counterpart: I mean the fine art of water-conduction. [AS develops this remark, citing the ways in which lakes and fountains etc. 'reveal the ideas of fluid, weighty matter just as much as works of architecture unfold the ideas of rigid matter'. This a fine art, he says, gets no support from the b practical art of water-conduction, because the purposes of a the former usually can't be united with those of b the latter. He cites a fountain in Rome as a rare exception to this.]

44. Horticulture. Animals

What the two arts just mentioned accomplish for the lowest levels of the objectivisation of will is accomplished to a certain extent for the higher levels of vegetative nature by the fine art of horticulture. The scenic beauty of a place rests for the most part on •how many natural objects are to be found together in it, and then on •the fact that the objects are cleanly segregated, come to the fore clearly, and yet are displayed in a fitting combination and variety. These

two conditions are facilitated by the fine art of horticulture; however, it is far from being as great a master of its material as architecture is of *its* material, and thus its effect is limited. The beauty that it shows us belongs almost entirely to nature; art has added little. . . .

The plant world offers itself everywhere for aesthetic enjoyment without the mediation of art, but when it is an object of art, the art is usually landscape painting, the domain of which also takes in the rest of unknowing nature.

With still life and mere painting of architecture, ruins, church interiors and the like, the subjective side of aesthetic enjoyment predominates: our pleasure in it lies less in

- immediate grasp of the ideas displayed, than in
- the subjective correlate of this grasp, pure will-less knowledge;

for when the painter lets us see things through his eyes, we at once obtain a sense of empathy and resonance of the feeling of deep spiritual repose and complete silencing of will that were necessary for knowledge to become so entirely absorbed in those lifeless objects, and to grasp them with such love, i.e. with such a degree of objectivity.

The effect of true landscape painting is also mainly of this sort. But because the ideas displayed in it are more significant and more highly expressive (as higher levels of the objectivisation of will), the objective side of aesthetic satisfaction comes more to the fore and maintains equilibrium with the subjective. Pure knowledge is no longer the main concern; rather, we are equally strongly affected by the idea that the knowledge is knowledge *of*, i.e. by the world as presentation at a significant level of objectification of will.

But a higher level is revealed in animal paintings and sculptures, of which latter we have important ancient remains [of which he lists examples in Venice, Florence, London, and Rome]. In these depictions, the objective side of aesthetic

satisfaction has a marked predominance over the subjective. Each such case, like every case of aesthetic contemplation, involves the peace of the subject who knows these ideas and has quieted his own will; but its effect is not *felt*, for we are occupied by the unrest and intensity of the will that has been depicted. It is that willing, which also constitutes our own nature, that becomes evident to us here, in forms in which its phenomenon is not (as it is in us) governed and tempered by thoughtfulness, but is depicted with starker strokes and clarity that borders on the grotesque and monstrous, but without any dissimulation, innocently and openly, lying there for all to see. That is the source of our interest in animals. The character of species already came to the fore in the depiction of plants, yet showed itself only in the species' forms. With animals it becomes much more significant and is expressed not only in shapes but in action, posture, and bearing, but always only as the character of the species, not of the individual. This knowledge of ideas at higher levels, which painting gives us only indirectly, can be had directly through purely contemplative perception of plants and observation of animals, and especially of animals in their free, natural, and easy state. Objective contemplation of their manifold, wondrous forms and of their doings is an instructive lesson from the great book of nature. . . . We see in it the many levels and manners of manifestation of the will which—one and the same in all beings—wills everywhere the same thing which is objectified as life (as existence) in such endless variation, such diversity of forms, all of which are accommodations to a diversity of external conditions, like ·musical· variations on a single theme. But if we wanted to condense into one phrase an insight into that nature's inner essence, we should use the Sanskrit formula. . . . *Tat twam asi*, which means 'You are this living thing'.

45. Human beauty

The great task of historical painting and sculpture is to display in an immediately perceptual way the idea in which will achieves its highest degree of objectification. The objective side of pleasure in the beautiful predominates here, and the subjective moves into the background. One level down—in paintings of animals—the characteristic coincides with the beautiful: the most characteristic lion, wolf, horse, sheep, bull has always been the most beautiful as well; because an animal has only the character of its species, not an individual character. In the representation of human beings the **a** character of the species is distinct from **b** the character of the individual; the **a** former is now called beauty (entirely in the objective sense), but the **b** latter retains the label 'character'; and a new difficulty arises, namely the problem of how to represent both, at once and completely, in the same individual.

Human beauty is an objective expression that designates the most complete objectification of will at the highest level at which it can be known—the idea of *human being in general*, completely expressed in the perceived form. But much as the objective side of beauty comes to the fore here, the subjective side is still its constant companion. No object so quickly pulls us into pure aesthetic contemplation as does the most beautiful human face and form, at the sight of which we are at once gripped by an inexpressible satisfaction and raised above ourselves and all that troubles us; and for as long as the purely aesthetic pleasure is continued, we stay in this state of pure knowledge in which we are freed from our personality, our willing with its constant pain. As Goethe puts it: 'No evil can touch him who looks on human beauty; he feels himself at one with himself and with the world.'

When nature achieves a beautiful human form, that is

because will has—through fortunate circumstances and its own force—overcome all the obstacles and resistance put in its way by its phenomena at levels that are lower than that of the human. These obstacles include the natural forces from which will must always in the first place wrench the matter belonging to all its manifestations. Also, the higher the level occupied by a phenomenon of the will, the more complex is its form; even a tree is only a systematic aggregate of endlessly repeated sprouting fibres. And up at the top level the human body is a highly complex system of different parts each of which has •a life subordinate to the whole but also •its own individual life, its *vita propria*. The rare condition that leads to beauty—the completely expressed character of the species—occurs when all these parts are precisely adjusted to the whole and to one another, so that nothing is excessive, nothing stunted.

Thus nature. But what about art? It is commonly thought that art imitates nature. But if the artist doesn't come to nature with an already-formed view—arrived at *before experience*—about what is beautiful, what standard can he employ to pick out from among nature's mostly unsuccessful works the ones that are successful and deserve to be imitated? And besides this, has nature ever produced a human being perfectly beautiful in all his parts? This has led some to think that the artist must seek out the beautiful *parts* distributed among a number of different human beings, and out of them construct a beautiful whole—a perverse and foolish opinion!

For the question still arises: how can he recognise that these parts are beautiful and those are not? And we see how far the old German painters got with beauty by imitating nature. Just consider their naked figures!

No knowledge of the beautiful is possible purely *a posteriori*, solely on the basis of experience. Such knowledge is always at least partly *a priori*, but that phrase is ambiguous,

and should be handled with care.

- The modes of the GP that are known to us *a priori* concern the general **form** of phenomena as such, in its grounding of the possibility of knowledge in general—the general, exceptionless **How** of their appearance, from knowledge of which comes mathematics and pure natural science; whereas

- the *a priori* knowledge I am talking about here—the one that makes it possible to depict the beautiful—concerns the **content** of phenomena rather than the **form**, the **What** of their appearance rather than the **How**.

We all recognise human beauty when we see it, and the genuine artist does this with such clarity that he *shows* it as he has never *seen* it, and outdoes nature in his depiction of it. What makes this possible? Solely the fact that *we ourselves are* the will whose adequate objectification is to be judged and discovered here at its highest level. That alone enables us to anticipate—to know in advance—what nature... is trying to display. In the true genius this anticipation is accompanied by such a degree of thoughtfulness that

recognising the *idea* in an individual thing, understanding nature's half-spoken word (as it were) and now clearly pronouncing what nature only stammers forth,

he impresses upon hard marble the beauty of form that went wrong in a thousand of nature's own attempts, and holds it up to nature with the cry: 'That was what you wanted to say!' And the connoisseur echoes 'Yes, that was it!'

Only thus could the Greek genius discover the prototype of the human form and establish it as a canon for their school of sculpture; and only by virtue of such an anticipation is it possible for all of us to recognise the beautiful in individual cases where nature has actually been successful. This anticipation is the ideal: it is the idea so far as it is known *a*

priori, at least half, and it becomes practical for art because it corresponds to and completes what is given *a posteriori* through nature. The possibility of such an anticipation of the beautiful *a priori* in the artist, and of its recognition *a posteriori* by the connoisseur, lies in the fact that the artist and the connoisseur are themselves the 'in-itself' of nature, the will that objectifies itself. For, as Empedocles said, like can be known only by like; only nature can understand itself; only nature can fathom itself; but only spirit can understand spirit.

I have explained human beauty as the fullest objectification of will at the highest level at which it can be known. It is expressed through form; and this lies in *space* alone, and has no necessary relation to *time* (as, for instance, movement does). This lets us say that the adequate objectification of will by a purely spatial phenomenon is beauty in the objective sense. A plant is just such a purely spatial phenomenon of will, because no movement—and thus no relation to time (setting aside the plant's development)—belongs to the expression of its nature; its mere **form** expresses its whole essence and openly exhibits it. But animals and human beings need, for a completed revelation of the will making its appearance in them, a series of **actions**, giving the will's appearance in them an immediate relation to time. All this was discussed in Book II; and now I explain what makes it relevant to my present considerations.

·GRACE·

[AS now sets side by side two different polarities: **a** beautiful/ugly and **b** graceful/not-graceful. Of these, **a** concerns purely spatial phenomena of will, and depends on whether or not the given phenomenon **completely** objectifies it at its particular level; while **b** concerns temporal objectifications of will, and depends on whether or not the given phenomenon

completely and purely corresponds to the will that is objectified in it, exactly expressing it ‘with •no foreign admixture, •nothing superfluous, and •no deficiency.’ He continues:] Just as beauty is any adequate depiction of will through its purely spatial phenomenon, grace is correspondingly the adequate depiction of will through its temporal phenomenon, i.e. through movement and posture.¹ Since movement and posture presuppose the body, Winckelmann has it right when he says: ‘Grace is the peculiar relationship between the acting person and his action.’ So obviously plants can be credited with beauty but not with grace (except in a figurative sense); whereas animals and human beings can be credited with both beauty and grace. . . .

It is a distinctive feature of humanity that (as I said in Book II) [chapter 20] every individual human being displays not only the character of his species but also, separately, his individual character—thus to some extent displaying an idea that is exclusively his own. So the arts whose goal is to display the idea of humanity have to cope not only with

a beauty, as the character of the species, but also with something that is best referred to by the single word ‘character’, namely

b the character of the individual.

But **b** has to be not a merely accidental feature of this individual but rather an aspect of *the idea of humanity* that shows up especially in this individual in a way that contributes to the presentation of the idea. Thus, although character is as such something individual, it must nevertheless be grasped and depicted in *ideal* terms, i.e. bringing to the fore its significance with respect to the idea of humanity in general. . . . Apart from that, the depiction is a *portrait*, a replication of the individual as such with all his contingent

features. And, as Winckelmann says, even the portrait should be the ideal of the individual.

[AS says some complicated things about **a** beauty and **b** character: •how they interact with one another; •how they are variously expressed in the person’s physical appearance and conduct; and •that neither can be present without the other—a depiction with **b** and not **a** is caricature; one with **a** and not **b** is meaningless. He continues:] Sculpture primarily aims at **a** beauty, the character of the species, but its depiction always in some way modifies this by way of **b** the individual character; it always expresses the idea of humanity in a particular, individual manner that highlights one side of it. . . .

The beauty so clearly grasped by the ancients is expressed in several figures with different characters, always grasped from a different side (as it were), displayed in one way in Apollo, in another in Bacchus, in another in Hercules, in another in Antinous. Indeed, the **b** element of character can **limit a** the beautiful and even finally emerge as ugliness (in the drunken Silenus, in fauns, etc.). But if the element of ·individual· character goes so far as to **nullify** the character of the species, it becomes caricature. . . .

In sculpture, beauty and grace are the main concern. The true character of a mind, showing in emotions, passions, alternations of knowing and willing—something that can be depicted only by its expression in face and posture—is the special sphere of *painting*. For although the eyes and complexion, which lie outside the domain of sculpture, contribute much to **a** beauty, they are far more essential to **b** character. Also, beauty is more fully unfolded when regarded from several standpoints, whereas expression—character—can be completely grasped even from a single standpoint.

¹ [This translates *Stellung*, which seems mainly to refer to posture poised on the brink of movement, as in dressage exercises with horses.]

46. Why Laokoön does not scream

[AS includes here, admitting that it is irrelevant to his purposes, his account of why in a famous sculpture 'Laokoön does not scream'. His excuse for slotting this in here is that Lessing wrote a book that kicked off with this question, and answered it by saying that *screaming is incompatible with beauty*. At wearying length AS sifts through the post-Lessing scholarly debate (Winckelmann, Goethe) about the question, marvelling at the 'stupidity' of the answers to the question that have been given by 'such thoughtful and acute men'; and he presents what he rightly says is the 'obvious' right answer: screaming involves noise, and sculptures are silent. He seems unembarrassed by the triviality of this issue.]

47. Clothing in sculpture. 'Clothing' in language

Since beauty along with grace is the main topic of sculpture, it loves the nude, and allows clothing only so far as it doesn't conceal any forms. Sculpture uses drapery not as a covering but as an indirect depiction of form; this kind of depiction puts the understanding to work because it involves perceiving a cause through its effect—the form of the body through the immediately given folds of the garment. So drapery in sculpture is somewhat like foreshortening ·to provide perspective· in painting. Both are indications of something; not symbolic indications but rather ones which (when they are successful) force the understanding to perceive immediately what they indicate, just as if it were actually ·perceptually· given.

A note in passing about the rhetorical arts. Just as a beautiful bodily form is best seen with the lightest of clothing or none at all—

so that a very handsome man, if he had taste and

the courage to follow it, would prefer to walk around nearly naked, clothed only after the manner of the ancients

—in the same way, any ·owner of a· beautiful and well-stocked mind will express himself in the most natural, least involved, simplest manner, trying to communicate his thoughts to others in order to relieve the loneliness he is bound to feel in a world like this. And conversely, poverty of mind—confusion and perversity of thought—will clothe itself in the most far-fetched expressions and the obscurest forms of speech, in order to wrap up small, trifling, insipid, or commonplace thoughts in difficult and pompous phraseology; like a man who lacks ·physical· beauty's majesty and tries to compensate for this with clothing, seeking to hide the insignificance or ugliness of his person under barbaric finery. . . . If he had to go about naked, he would be as embarrassed as many an author would be were he compelled to translate his pompous, obscure book into its trivial, clear content.

48. Subjects of painting

Historical painting has character as a main subject (along with beauty and grace). By 'character' we are to understand the depiction of will at the highest level of its objectification, where the individual (giving prominence to a particular aspect of the idea of humanity) has special significance, and is recognised not through mere form alone but through all his conduct and through the events of knowing and willing (visible in facial expression and gesture) that generate and accompany it.

If the idea of humanity is to be displayed as widely as this, its many-sidedness must be brought before our eyes

through significant individuals, whose significance can be made visible only through a variety of scenes, events, and actions. This is the endless task of historical painting, which tackles it by presenting scenes from every sort of life, both of great and of minor significance. No individual or action can be without significance: in all of them, and through all of them, the idea of humanity unfolds itself more and more; so no event in human life is to be excluded from painting. It is a great injustice to the superb painters of the Dutch school to •prize their technical expertise and (taking only incidents from world history or biblical history to be significant) to •look down on them with disdain because they mostly depicted objects from common life. One should first stop to reflect that an action's inner significance is entirely distinct from its outer significance, and that the two often take separate paths.

- An action's outer significance is the importance it gets from its consequences in and for the actual world; thus •its importance• according to the GP.
- Its inner significance is the depth of insight it conveys into the idea of humanity, bringing to light sides of that idea that are less often brought to the fore, allowing distinctly and decidedly self-expressive individualities, by means of appropriately arranged circumstances, to unfold their unique qualities.

Only the inner significance matters in art; the outer matters in history. The two are utterly independent of one another—they can occur together or either can appear alone. An action that is highly significant for history can be very commonplace in its inner significance; and a scene from everyday life can have great inner significance if it throws a bright and clear light on human individuals and human doing and willing, right down to their most concealed layers. . . . The scenes

and events that constitute the lives of so many millions of people—all their doings, hardships and pleasures—are important enough to be subjects for art, and in their rich variety they are bound to provide enough material for unfolding the many-sided idea of humanity. Even the fleeting moment that art has fixed in such an image (today called *genre* painting) moves us in a special, gentle way. For to fix the fleeting, ever-changing world in the enduring picture of an event which—though single—represents the whole is an achievement of the art of painting by which it seems to bring time itself to a standstill, for it raises the individual to the idea of its species.

Finally, historical and outwardly significant topics of painting often have the disadvantage that what is significant about them cannot be depicted perceptually, but has to be brought in by thought, lest

the **a** nominal significance of the painting be too far removed from its **b** real significance.

The **a** former is the outer significance, which the picture has only as a concept; the **b** latter is the side of the idea of humanity that the picture reveals for perception. For example, let **a** the former be **Moses found by the Egyptian princess**, a highly important moment for history. By contrast, its **b** real significance—the one that is actually given to perception—is **a foundling rescued from its floating cradle by an aristocratic woman**, an occurrence that may be quite commonplace. [AS makes some remarks about •the role of costume in such paintings, •the best choice of historical subjects for them, and •the difference between this and the analogous issue regarding the choice of topics for plays. He then returns to paintings:] Historical subjects are distinctly disadvantageous only when they confine the painter to a field that has been chosen for reasons other than artistic ones, especially when this field is poor in picturesque and

significant objects; when for example it is the history of a people like the Jews—a people small, isolated, opinionated, hierarchical (i.e. ruled by error¹), and living in corners, despised by the great contemporary nations of the East and the West.

Since human migration now distances us from all ancient peoples—just as the earlier shifting of the seabed distances the surface of today's earth from that whose structures are now shown to us only in fossils—it is a great misfortune that the people whose past culture was to serve as the main foundation for our own was not (say) the Indians or the Greeks, or even the Romans, but precisely those Jews. But for the Italian geniuses of painting in the 15th and 16th centuries it was especially bad luck that the narrow circle to which they were arbitrarily restricted for a choice of subjects limited them to all manner of wretchedness. For the New Testament on its historical side is as unfavourable to painting as the Old, and the subsequent history of martyrs and of Church Fathers was a thoroughly unsatisfactory topic. But •paintings whose subject is the historical or mythological² part of Judaism or Christianity must be distinguished from •those in which the true (i.e. ethical) spirit of Christianity is made perceptible through the depiction of persons who are filled with that spirit. These depictions are in fact the highest and most admirable achievements of the art of painting, and only the greatest masters of the art—especially Raphael and Correggio—have achieved them. . . . Paintings of this sort are really not to be counted as historical, for they usually depict no event, no action, but are mere groupings of saints, of the redeemer himself (often still as a child) with his mother, angels, and so on. In their faces—especially their

eyes—we see the expression, the reflection, of knowledge that is directed not towards individual things but towards ideas, knowledge that has completely taken in the entire nature of the world and of life. The other sort of knowledge provides the knower's will with motives and is thus subservient to it, whereas *this* sort of knowledge acts on the knower's will, *quietens* it, creating that complete resignation that is the innermost spirit of Christianity as it is of the wisdom of India—**redemption** through the surrender of all willing, withdrawal, nullification of the will and of the entire being of this world. Thus through their works those eternally praiseworthy masters of art gave perceptual expression to the highest wisdom. And here is the pinnacle of all art, which, having pursued will through all its levels in its adequate objectivisation, i.e. through all the ideas—from

- the lowest level where it is moved by causes, then
- where it is moved by stimuli, and finally
- where motives move it and unfold its nature in so many ways

—it now ends with depiction of its free self-nullification through the one great *quieter*, which comes to it from the most complete knowledge of its own nature.

49. Concepts vs. ideas

All my discussions of art up to here are based on the fact that the artist's goal is to display an *idea* in Plato's sense. (His knowledge of this is the germ and origin of his work; so he must have it before the work is embarked on.) He doesn't aim to display anything else:

¹ [*Wahn*, which can mean 'illusion', 'frenzy' 'madness'.]

² [the shift from 'historical' to 'historical or mythological' is in the original.]

- not individual things, the objects of common apprehension, and
- not concepts, the objects of rational thought and science.

An idea is *a unity that represents a plurality of actual things*, and so is a concept; but despite this similarity, there's a great difference between the two, as will have been made clear enough by what I said in Book I about concepts and in this Book III about ideas. I don't claim that Plato himself was entirely clear about this difference: many things that he says about ideas (including many of his examples) are applicable only to concepts. I shan't pursue this. I'll go my own way, glad when I walk the path of a great and noble mind, but pursuing my own goal rather than following his footsteps.

A **concept** is

- a abstract, discursive, indeterminate within its own sphere and determinate only in its boundaries,
- b accessible and comprehensible to anyone who has reason,
- c communicable through words with no further help, and
- d entirely exhausted by its definition.

On the other hand, an **idea**—though best defined as an adequate representative of a concept—is altogether perceptual and (although representing countless individual things) is a thoroughly determinate. It is not known by the individual as such, but only by one who has raised himself to being a pure subject of [see Glossary] knowledge; something that is above all willing and all individuality. So it is b accessible only to a genius or to someone who (usually with help from works of genius) has raised his power of pure knowing to the state of mind characteristic of genius. So it is not c absolutely but only conditionally communicable, because

the idea contained and reproduced in a work of art speaks to each person only according to the measure of his own intellectual worth. That is why the most superb works of any form of art—the noblest offspring of genius—must remain eternally closed books to the dull-witted majority of human beings. . . . To be sure, even •the dullest acknowledge the works that authorities declare to be great, doing this so as not to reveal their own incompetence.

Yet •they always remain quietly ready to express their condemnation of those works, as soon as they can hope they that they might do so without exposing themselves as dullards. In this way they cheerfully give voice to their long-suppressed hatred of all that is great and beautiful, and of its authors—of that which never spoke to them and thus humiliated them. For a man must have some worth of his own if he is to freely and willingly acknowledge the worth of others. On this rests the necessity of *modesty* in all merit, and the disproportionately loud praise of this virtue, which alone of all its sisters is always included in the eulogy of anyone who ventures to praise a distinguished man, in order to appease and quiet the wrath of the unworthy. What then is modesty but hypocritical humility through which a man—in a world bursting with vindictive envy—apologises for his excellences and merits to those who don't have any? If someone attributes no merits to himself because he doesn't have any, that is not modesty but mere honesty.

An **idea** is a unity broken up into plurality through the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension; it is a *unitas ante rem* [Latin for 'unity before the fact']; whereas a **concept** is a unity restored from plurality by means of abstraction by reason; it is a *unitas post rem* ['unity after the fact'].

The difference between concepts and ideas can be expressed metaphorically as follows. A concept is like a dead

receptacle. . . .from which no more can be taken out (by analytic judgment) than has been placed in it (by synthetic reflection); whereas an idea develops in someone who has comprehended presentations that are new with respect to the concept that has the same name. It is like a living, self-developing organism endowed with procreative powers, which produces something that hadn't been lying packaged within it.

It follows from what I have been saying that concepts—though useful in **life** and serviceable, necessary, and productive in **science**—are always unfruitful for **art**; whereas a grasped idea is the true and single source of every genuine work of art. In its primal force it is drawn only from life itself, from nature, from the world, and indeed is drawn only by a true genius or by someone whose momentary inspiration has risen to the level of genius. Genuine works of art that bear eternal life within themselves arise only from this sort of immediate grasp. Just because the idea is and remains perceptual, the artist is not conscious *in abstracto* of the intention and goal of his work; what floats before him is not a concept but an idea. So he can't give any account of his actions; he works (as they say) from mere feeling, unconsciously, indeed instinctively. By contrast imitators—

imitatores, servum pecus [= 'imitators, servile herd!' quoted from the Latin poet Horace]

—proceed on the basis of *concepts* in art. They take note of what is pleasing and effective in genuine works of art, get themselves clear about it, capture it in a concept (thus abstractly), and then shrewdly imitate it, openly or disguisedly. They suck their nourishment from the works of others as parasitic plants do; and they take on the colour of their nourishment, as octopuses do. This comparison could be carried further:

•Imitators are like **machines** that chop stuff up finely and

mix it all together but can't digest it, so that the borrowed ingredients can always be found again, sifted and separated from the mix; whereas

•a genius is like a **living body** that assimilates and transforms what goes into it. He is indeed educated and cultivated by his predecessors and their works, but his only *immediate* intake is from life and the world itself, through perceptual impressions; so even the highest level of cultivation doesn't detract from his originality.

All imitators grasp *in concepts* the essence of others' exemplary output; but concepts can never impart inner life to a work. The age itself—i.e. the current stupid mob—knows only concepts and clings to them; so it takes up imitative works with quick and loud applause. But after a few years those same works are no longer enjoyable, because there has been a change in the spirit of the times, i.e. in what concepts are dominant, this being the only soil they can take root in. Whereas genuine works of art that are immediately drawn from nature, from life, remain—like nature itself—eternally young and enduringly powerful. For they belong to no age, but to *humanity*, and this has two effects. (i) Their own age, to which they didn't condescend to adjust themselves and whose defects they indirectly and negatively revealed, received them coolly and were slow and reluctant in recognising them. (ii) They can never grow old, but still speak ever fresh and ever new again in even the most distant times. Then they are no longer exposed to neglect and misunderstanding, for they stand crowned and sanctioned by the praise of the few people—appearing singly and rarely in the course of the ages—who are capable of making a judgment, and whose voice in support of these works gradually gives them standing, and is the tribunal that intelligent people are referring to when they

appeal to ‘posterity’. These individuals are the only court of appeal, because the great mob of posterity will always be and remain just as perverse and dull-witted as the great mob of contemporaries always was and always is. We read the laments of great minds in every century regarding their contemporaries: they always sound as if they related to the present age, for the human race is always the same. At every time and in every art, *manner* takes the place of *spirit*, which is always the possession only of individuals. But manner is old clothing, discarded by the most recent and recently recognised spiritual phenomenon. In accordance with all of this, the applause of posterity will usually be won only at the expense of the applause of one’s contemporaries. And conversely.

50. Allegories

If the goal of all art is to communicate apprehended ideas which—because the mind of the artist has isolated them and cleansed them of anything extraneous—can now be grasped by someone more weakly receptive and with no productive capacity; and if furthermore it is objectionable in art to start from concepts; then we can’t approve of a work of art that is intentionally and avowedly dedicated to expressing a concept—which is the case with *allegory*. An allegory is an art-work that **a** *signifies* something other than what it **b** *depicts*; but anything perceptual (and thus any idea) declares itself immediately and completely, and doesn’t need mediating help from something that it signifies. So this ‘something other’ is always a concept. Through allegory, a concept is therefore always supposed to be signified, and consequently the beholder’s mind is directed away from **b** the perceptually depicted presentation toward **a** an entirely different, abstract, non-perceptual presentation that lies

right outside the work of art. In this a painting or sculpture would achieve what writing achieves, except that writing does it much more completely. What I take to be the goal of art, the display of an idea that can only be grasped perceptually, is not the goal here, .i.e. not the goal in allegory. For what is intended here is not the sort of great perfection required in a work of art; all that is wanted is for the beholder to see what the point is; when that happens, the goal is reached—the mind is led away from the perceived work to an abstract concept that was the goal from the start. [AS develops this line of thought, saying that in a beautiful allegorical painting or sculpture, the beauty is one thing and the allegory another; and that what it achieves as allegory could be done as well or even better by writing. He continues:] When an allegorical painting also has artistic value, this is entirely separate and independent from what it achieves as an allegory. Such an art-work pursues two goals at once: **a** the expression of a concept and **b** the expression of an idea. Only **b** the latter can be an artistic goal; **a** the other is an extraneous goal, playfully aiming to have a painting serve also as an inscription, aiming to win favour from those to whom *real art* can never speak. It is like a work of art that is at the same time a practical tool, serving two purposes, e.g. a statue that is also a candelabra or a caryatid, or a bas relief that is also Achilles’ shield. Pure friends of art will approve of neither the one nor the other. To be sure, an allegorical painting can have a lively effect on one’s mind; but the same result would also be brought about under similar circumstances by an inscription. For example, if the desire for fame is permanently and firmly rooted in a man’s nature, and he views fame as indeed his rightful possession, withheld from him only because he has not yet produced the documents of possession, and he confronts *The Genius*

of Fame with his crown of laurels,¹ then his whole spirit will be aroused by it and his forces summoned to action; but the same thing would happen if he suddenly saw the word 'Fame' written clearly and in large print on a wall. Or if a man has announced an important truth which he can't get anyone to believe, a powerful effect would be made on him by an allegorical painting that depicts Time removing her veil and finally revealing the naked truth; but the same thing would be accomplished by the motto: *Le tems découvre la vérité* [French for 'Time reveals the truth'.] For what is really effectual here is always only the abstract thought, not what is perceived. In any case, the move from *idea* to *concept* is always a move downwards.

If I'm right in saying that allegory is a flawed endeavour in the plastic and pictorial arts, serving a purpose entirely foreign to art, it becomes downright intolerable when it gets carried so far that the depiction of contrived and forcibly deployed subtleties sinks to the level of absurdity. Such, for example, are

- a turtle to indicate female seclusion,
- Nemesis looking down into the breast of her robe, indicating that she can see even into what is concealed, and
- Bellori's interpretation of a painting by Annibale Carracci as clothing Lust in a yellow robe because he wanted to indicate that her pleasures will soon fade and turn as yellow as straw.

Now, when between **a** what is depicted and **b** the concept indicated by it

there is no connection grounded in **a**'s falling under **b**
or in an association of ideas between them

but rather

- the signs and what they designate are connected in an entirely conventional manner, through man-made and contingently occasioned rules,

I call this degenerate form of allegory a *symbol*. Thus the rose is a symbol of secrecy, the laurel a symbol of fame, the palm a symbol of victory, the scallop shell a symbol of pilgrims, the cross a symbol of the Christian religion; and I classify with these all cases where something is indicated directly by mere colours, as with yellow as the colour of falsity and blue as the colour of loyalty. Such symbols may often be useful in life, but their value has nothing to do with art. They are to be viewed as just like hieroglyphs, or even like writing in Chinese characters, and really stand in the same class as coats of arms, as the bush that indicates a tavern, the key by which the chamberlain is recognised. . . . Finally, if certain historical or mythical persons, or personified concepts, are once and for all made identifiable by firmly established symbols, then these symbols should really be called *emblems*. Such are the animals of the Evangelists, the owl of Minerva, the apple of Paris, the anchor of hope, etc. In any case, one usually means by 'emblems' simple pictorial depictions, elucidated by a motto, that are meant to lend visibility to a moral truth. The big collections of these by J. Camerarius, Alciatus and others pave the way to poetical allegory, of which I'll say more later.

Greek sculpture is oriented toward perception, thus it is aesthetic; that of the Hindus is oriented toward concepts, therefore it is merely symbolic.

This judgment about allegory—based on my earlier discussion of the inner essence of art—is directly opposed to Winckelmann's view: rather than describing allegory as extraneous to art and often interfering with it, he always speaks

¹ [This refers to a famous painting by Annibale Carracci.]

up for it and regards the 'depiction of general concepts and of non-sensory things' as art's supreme goal. . . . His views concerning what is properly metaphysical about the beautiful have convinced me that someone can have great receptivity and sound judgment regarding artistic beauty yet not be able to provide an abstract and strictly philosophical account of the essence of the beautiful and of art; just as someone can be noble and virtuous and have a tender conscience, deciding individual cases with great precision, without this enabling him to fathom the ethical significance of conduct in philosophical terms and display it *in abstracto*.

Whereas allegory is objectionable in the plastic and pictorial arts, it is most permissible and serviceable in poetry. In the former, allegory leads one towards abstract thoughts and away from the perceptually given things that are the real topic of all art; while in poetry the relationship is reversed: words immediately give concepts, and the main purpose is always to be directed away from concepts and towards perceptual things that must be provided by the listener's ·or reader's· imagination. If, in the plastic and pictorial arts, allegory leads from the immediately given to something else, the latter must always be a concept; but a work of art can't arise from a concept, and communicating a concept can't be its purpose. In poetry, on the other hand, concepts are the immediately given, and we may very well leave them, in order to call up something quite distinct from them, something perceptual in which the poem reaches its goal. It can happen that many concepts or abstract thoughts are indispensable to a poem's hanging together, while the connection amongst them can't be made perceptible; it is then often brought to perceptibility through some example that falls under it. This sort of thing happens with every figurative expression, and with every metaphor, simile, parable, and allegory, which are all ·essentially the same thing·, distinguished

only by how long and elaborate their depictions are. On account of this, similes and allegories work to superb effect in the rhetorical arts. [AS praises a number of examples, including ones from Cervantes, Kleist, Homer, Plato (the cave), Goethe and Swift. He remarks that the allegorical content of a poem can be illustrated by a painting, but the latter has value not as a painting—a figurative work of art—but only as an aid to the poem. He gives examples, and concludes:] Allegories of this sort are always to be classified as poetical rather than pictorial, and to be justified in just those terms. Here too the pictorial execution always remains a secondary affair: all it has to do is to depict its subject in a recognisable way. But just as in the plastic and pictorial arts, so also in poetry, allegory passes over into symbol when there is only an arbitrary connection between •what is presented to perception and •the abstract significance of it. Just because everything symbolic fundamentally rests on convention, symbols have among their other disadvantages that their meaning is forgotten with time, and they then go mute. Who would guess after all, if it were not known, why the fish is a symbol of Christianity? . . .

51. More on the literary arts

If we now turn from pictorial arts to poetry—bearing in mind what I have said up to here about art in general—we will have no doubt that poetry also intends to reveal ideas. . . .and to communicate them to the listener ·or reader· with the clarity and liveliness with which the poet's mind grasped them ·in the first place·. Ideas are essentially perceptual; so if a poem's words immediately communicate only abstract concepts, the intention is still obviously to have the listener perceive life's ideas in the representatives of these concepts, which can only happen with the help of his own imagination.

But if the imagination is to be set in motion towards this goal, the abstract concepts—which are as much the immediate material of poetry as of the driest prose—have to be assembled. . . in such a way that a perceptual representative comes before the imagination, and the poet's words further modify this in accordance with his intention. Just as the chemist obtains solid precipitates from perfectly clear and transparent fluids by uniting them, so the poet knows how to combine concepts in such a way as to get from their abstract, transparent generality a precipitate (so to speak) that is concrete, individual, a perceptual presentation. . . . This is achieved in poetry by the many epithets through which the generality of any concept is more and more limited until we reach the perceptible. [AS illustrates this with examples from Homer and Goethe. And then writes a paragraph about 'the incredibly powerful effect of rhythm and rhyme'. He rather tentatively offers to explain this in terms of the basic place of *time* in our experience, but does not address the implausibility of this as applied to rhyme.]

Because of the generality of the material poetry uses to communicate ideas—i.e. the generality of concepts—it has an enormous range. The whole of nature, the ideas of all its levels, can be depicted by poetry as it proceeds sometimes descriptively, sometimes narratively, sometimes in an immediately dramatic way, according to the idea it has to impart. The plastic and pictorial arts usually surpass it in the depiction of lower levels of the objectivisation of will, because unthinking nature and even merely-animal nature reveals most of its being in a single well-captured moment; whereas human beings—

expressing themselves not through their mere form and facial expression, but through a chain of actions and the accompanying thoughts and feelings

—are the main subject of poetry, and no other art can match

its treatment of this subject, because it can avail itself of *process*, which the plastic and pictorial arts cannot. So revelation of the idea that is the highest level of the objectivisation of will—depiction of humanity in the interconnected series of its endeavours and actions—is the grand subject matter of poetry.

To be sure, experience also teaches us about human beings, as does their history. Yet **more often** about **a** human beings than about **b** humanity, i.e. they do more **a** to provide empirical observations on human interaction, on which we can base rules for our own conduct, than **b** to help us toward a look deep into the inner essence of man. Still, what we get from history or our experience is **sometimes b** a view of the essence of humanity; and when that happens, we have looked at history with an historian's eyes or at ourselves with artistic eyes, in fact poetically—i.e. grasped the idea (not the phenomenon) according to its inner essence (not its relations to other things). One's own experience is absolutely required for understanding of the literary arts, as it is for an understanding of history; for it is, so to speak, the dictionary of the language spoken by both.

History is related to poetry as portrait painting is to historical painting: the former gives what is true in the individual, the latter what is true in general; the former has truth with respect to the phenomenon and can authenticate it on that basis, the latter has truth with respect to ideas, which are not to be found in any single phenomenon but speak out from all of them. The poet *chooses* to depict significant characters in significant situations; the historian has no choice about this, but takes both characters and situations as they come. Indeed, he must view and select events and persons not

•according to their inner, genuine significance, as it is expressive of ideas, but

- according to their outer, seeming, relative significance, with reference to connections, to consequences.

He must consider nothing in and for itself, according to its essential character and expression, but everything according to its relations, in its concatenations, in its influence on what follows, and indeed particularly on his own times. So he won't pass over an intrinsically commonplace action on the part of a king, if it has consequences and influence. On the other hand, he makes no mention of intrinsically significant actions on the part of exceptional individuals, if they have no consequences, no influence. For his treatment of a topic follows the GP, and fixes on **the phenomenon** of which the GP is the form. But the poet grasps the **idea**, the essence of humanity, beyond all relations, outside of all time, the highest-level objectivisation of the thing in itself.

Even in the treatment that historians have to adopt, someone who is looking for it can find and recognise

- the inner essence,
- the significance of phenomena,
- the kernel within all those shells.

But that which is significant in itself and not in its relations—the real unfolding of the idea—is far more accurately and clearly present in poetry than in history. Paradoxical as it sounds, much more real, genuine, inner truth is to be attributed to poetry than to history. The historian is supposed to track individual events exactly according to life, as they unfold in time in many intertwined chains of causes and effects; but he can't have all the facts needed for this; he can't have seen everything or inquired into everything. . . . In all of history, there is more falsehood than truth. The poet, on the other hand, has taken up the idea of humanity from the particular side from which it is to be displayed: what is objectified for him in it is *the essence of his own self*. His knowledge of it is—as I

explained earlier in connection with sculpture—half-way *a priori*; his paradigm stands before his mind firm, distinct, brightly illuminated, and cannot abandon him. Thus he shows us the idea purely and distinctly in the mirror of his mind, and his portrayal is, down to the last particular, as true as life itself. The great ancient historians are poets in particular matters where the facts abandon them, e.g. in the speeches of their heroes. Indeed, their entire mode of treatment of the material approaches the epic. This gives unity to their depictions, and enables them to retain inner truth even where the outer was inaccessible to them or was quite falsified. . . . [AS goes on to say that despite the poetical aspects of good history-writing, we get more of the essential truth about humanity from poets than we do from historians, because even the best historians are only second-rate poets and because as historians they 'have their hands tied'. He continues:] This difference between history and poetry can be elucidated by the following comparison:

- The mere pure historian, steering by the facts alone, is like someone who—without any knowledge of mathematics—studies geometrical figures that happen to come his way, studies their relations by measuring them, and empirically reaches a conclusion that is infected with all the defects of the figures as drawn.
- The poet is like the mathematician, who constructs those relations *a priori*, in pure perception, and expresses them not as they are actually contained in the figure as drawn, but as they are in the *idea* that the drawing is meant to make sensibly perceptible. . . .

For knowledge of the essence of humanity, I must concede a greater value to a biographies (especially autobiographies) than to b history proper, at least as usually managed. There are two reasons for this. (i) The facts can be gathered more

accurately and completely in **a** the former than in **b** the latter. **(ii)** In **b** history proper it is not so much human beings as nations and armies that are engaged in the action; and the individuals who come on the scene appear at so great a distance, with so much pomp and circumstance—as well as being hidden in stiff garments of state or heavy, inflexible armour—that it is really hard to see through all this to the human movement. In contrast with this, a true account of the life of an individual shows within some narrow sphere the conduct of human beings in all its nuances and forms; the excellence, virtue, even the saintliness of particular individuals; the perversity, meanness and knavery of most; the malignity of many. For the inner significance of what is presented, it doesn't matter whether the objects the action revolves around are trivial or momentous, farmhouses or kingdoms. For all these things that in themselves have no significance acquire it only if—and to the extent that—the will is moved by them; a motive has significance only through its **relation to will**; whereas things' **relation to other things** doesn't enter consideration. Just as a circle with a diameter of an inch and one with a diameter of 40 million miles have exactly the same geometrical properties, so also the events and history of a village and those of a kingdom are essentially the same; and one can study and learn about humanity in one as much as in the other. [AS rejects the view that 'autobiographies are full of deception and dissimulation', for intricate and implausible reasons that he sums up thus: 'The person who writes his life story sits for confession before himself, and does this voluntarily. A lying spirit cannot so easily take hold of him here.']

Depicting the idea of humanity, which is the poet's task, can be accomplished in either of two ways. **(i)** The one who is depicted is also the one who is doing the depicting. That's what happens in lyric poetry, in true *song*, where the poet

is only perceiving and describing his own state in a lively manner; so that this genre—on account of its object—has a certain subjectivity built into it. **(ii)** The one who is to be depicted is entirely distinct from the one doing the depicting; as is the case in all the other genres, where the depicter is more or less hidden behind what is depicted, and eventually disappears entirely. [AS develops this theme of poetry as self-portrait, where the 'self' is *men in general*. He concludes:] So no-one may prescribe to the poet that he should be noble and sublime, moral, pious, Christian, or this or that, still less rebuke him for being this and not that. He is the mirror of humanity, and makes us aware of what *it* feels and does.

If we now look more closely into the essence of *song proper*, taking as our examples excellent songs that are pure—

not ones that come close to belonging to some other genre such as romance, elegy, hymn, epigram, etc.

—we will find that the special essence of *song* in the narrowest sense is as follows. The consciousness of the singer is filled with will, i.e. his own willing, often as a released, satisfied willing (joy), but more often as thwarted willing (sorrow), and always as emotion, passion, a shifting state of mind. In addition to this, the singer is led by the sight of nature surrounding him to become aware of himself as a subject of [see Glossary] pure will-less knowing, whose unshakable, blessed repose now enters into contrast with the press of always limited, always needy, *will*. The sense of this contrast, of this interplay, is what is expressed in the song as a whole and what constitutes the lyric state in general. [AS develops this theme in increasingly rapturous terms, citing examples that include 'the immortal songs of Goethe', and concluding that young people are suited for lyric poetry and older ones for dramatic poetry. He then switches away from lyric poetry:]

In the more objective varieties of poetry—especially romance, epic and drama—the goal of revealing the idea of humanity is mainly achieved by two means: **a** an accurate and deeply conceived depiction of **significant characters**, and **b** the invention of **significant situations** in which they unfold. Just as it is the chemist's task not only

a to display simple substances and their main compounds in their pure and authentic state, but also

b to expose them to the influence of reagents so as to make clear and obvious what their special properties are,

so also it is the poet's task not only

a to present significant characters in a way that's as true and faithful as nature itself, but also

b to enable us to know them by bringing them into significant situations, i.e. ones where their special features are completely unfolded and clearly displayed in sharp contours.

In real life and in history, situations of this **significant** kind are rarely brought about by chance, and when they *do* occur they stand alone, lost and concealed in the multitude of **insignificant** ones. The thoroughgoing significance of situations should do as much to distinguish the romance, the epic, the drama from real life as the combination and selection of significant characters. [AS goes on to stress that for their literary work to be effective, characters must square with essential humanity and situations must be credible. He moves (through a very obscure statement about why seemingly very dissimilar works of art can illuminate one another) into an account of the different ways water can behave, including being made to shoot upwards in a fountain, insisting that *all* of these are natural to water, 'true to its character', and concluding:] Human life as it usually shows itself in reality is like water in pools and rivers. But

in the epic, romance, and tragedy, selected characters are brought into circumstances where all their special features are unfolded, where the depths of the human spirit are opened up and made visible in exceptional and significant conduct. Thus poetry objectifies the idea of humanity, a special property of which is that it reveals itself in the most highly individual characters.

Tragedy is rightly regarded as the summit of the poetic arts, both for the magnitude of its effect and for the difficulty of achieving it. For all my treatment of these matters it is very significant—and worth bearing in mind—that the goal of this highest kind of poetry is to depict the frightful side of life, that it brings before us

- the nameless pain and misery of humanity,
- the triumph of malice,
- the mocking mastery of chance, and
- the hopeless fall of the just and innocent;

for this provides a significant hint as to the nature of the world and of existence. It is **the conflict of will with itself** that is here, on the highest level of its objectivisation, most completely unfolded and comes frighteningly to the fore. It is made visible in the suffering of humanity, which is now introduced •partly by chance and error appearing as rulers of the world, personified as Fate, because of their insidiousness which comes close to looking purposive, and •partly by humanity itself, through the cross-purposes of willful endeavour on the part of individuals and through the wickedness and perversity of most of them. It is one and the same will that lives and makes its appearance in all of them, but whose phenomena fight and lacerate one another. In this individual it appears powerfully, in that one more weakly; brought (in some people more, in others less) to reflection and softened by the light of knowledge; until eventually in individual cases, purified and heightened by suffering itself,

this knowledge reaches the point where the phenomenon, the veil of Maya, no longer deceives it. It sees through the form of the phenomenon, the individuation-maker, and the egoism resting on it dies out; so that from now on one's previously so-powerful motives lose their force, and are replaced by complete knowledge of the essence of the world, working as a quieter of the will and bringing forth resignation, abandonment not merely of life but of the entire will to life itself. Thus we see in tragedy the most noble individuals in the end, after lengthy battle and suffering, renouncing forever the goals they had so intensely pursued until then and all life's pleasures, or willingly and joyfully abandoning life itself. [He gives examples from Calderon, Schiller, Shakespeare, and Voltaire. Then:] By contrast, the demand for so-called 'poetic justice' rests on a complete misunderstanding of the nature of tragedy, indeed of the nature of the world. In all its banality, that demand makes a brazen appearance in the individual critiques of Shakespeare's plays that Dr. Samuel Johnson has provided, naively complaining of their complete neglect of it. The neglect, to be sure, is there; for what were the Ophelias, the Desdemonas, the Cordelias guilty of? But only the banal, optimistic, protestant-rationalistic, or (strictly speaking) Jewish view of the world will demand poetic justice. . . . The true sense of tragic drama is the deeper insight that what the hero atones for is not his own particular sins, but original sin, i.e. the guilt of existence itself. . . . As Calderon wrote: 'The greatest offence of a human being is to have been born.'

. . . .Depiction of a great misfortune is all that is essential to tragedy, and the many paths by which the poet brings about this misfortune fall into three groups. (i) It can happen through the extraordinary malice—bordering on the extreme limits of possibility—of the character who is the author of the misfortune: for example Richard III, Iago in *Othello*, Shylock

in *The Merchant of Venice*, Franz Moor in Schiller's *The Highwayman*, Phaedra as depicted by Euripides, Creon in *Antigone*, and the like. (ii) It can also happen through blind fate, i.e. chance or error: a true paradigm of this species is Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* or *The Women of Trachis*, and in general most of the tragedies of the ancients belong in this category; modern examples include *Romeo and Juliet*, Voltaire's *Tancred*, Schiller's *The Bride of Messina*. (iii) The misfortune can be brought about merely through interpersonal situations, through relationships, so that there is no need for any (iii) monstrous error or unheard-of coincidence, or for any (i) character approaching the limits of humanity in his evil. Rather, morally ordinary characters in quite common circumstances are set against one another in such a way that their situation compels them, knowingly and with their eyes open, to inflict the greatest injury on one another without either of them being entirely in the wrong. This third species seems to me much preferable to the other two; because it shows us the greatest misfortune not as an exception—not as something brought about by (iii) rare circumstances or (i) monstrous characters—but as something coming easily and unaided from the conduct and characters of human beings, as almost *essential* to them, and just by that fact brings misfortune frighteningly close to us. And if in the other two species we get a glimpse of (iii) monstrous fate and (i) horrific malice as terrifying powers, but only threatening us from afar, so that we ought to be able to escape without flight into renunciation, the third species shows us those powers, destructive of happiness and life, as something we are vulnerable to at any moment, with the greatest suffering coming from •entanglements that could in their essentials be in store for us, and from •acts that we might well perform and so wouldn't be a basis for us to complain of injustice; then, shuddering, we feel as if we

were already in hell. This third species, however, is the hardest to bring off successfully, because in it one has to produce the greatest effects with the least deployment of means and moving causes, merely through their position and distribution; so in many of the best tragedies the poet finds some way around this difficulty. . . .

52. The special case of music

Having considered all the fine arts in the general way that is suitable to my point of view,

- starting with the fine art of architecture, whose goal is to make clear the objectification of the will at the lowest level of its visibility, where it shows itself as the dull, unknowing striving of masses in conformity to law, yet even at that level reveals will's internal division and battle, namely between gravity and rigidity, and
- concluding with tragedy, which at the highest level of the objectification of the will makes its conflict with itself evident with frightful magnitude and clarity,

we find that one of the fine arts has inevitably been left out because there was no suitable place for it in the structure of my account. It is *music*, which stands entirely apart from all the others. We don't see in it the copying or replication of any ideas of beings in the world; yet it is such a grand and altogether noble art, has such a powerful effect on our innermost being, is so entirely and deeply understood by us as a perfectly universal language whose clarity surpasses even that of the perceptual world, that we certainly have more to seek in it than 'an unconscious arithmetical activity in which the mind is unaware that it is counting' [AS quotes this in Latin], which is how Leibniz regarded it. He was right about that insofar as he was considering only its immediate

and external significance, its shell; but if that were all there is to it, the satisfaction it provides would have to be like what we feel when we solve a mathematical problem; it couldn't be—as it is—that inner pleasure with which we see a voice given to the deepest recesses of our nature. From my standpoint, therefore, looking to the aesthetic effect, music must be credited with a much deeper and more serious significance, referring to the innermost essence of the world and of ourselves. . . . Music relates to the world as a depiction to what is depicted, as a copy to the original; that this must be so is something we can infer by comparison with the other arts, all of which have this character and have an effect on us that is on the whole like music's, except that music's is stronger, quicker, more imperative, more infallible. Its relation as a copy to the world must also be a most inner one, infinitely true and accurately hitting its mark, because it is understood at once by everyone and displays a certain infallibility by virtue of the reducibility of its form to entirely determinate, numerically expressible rules, from which it can't deviate without ceasing to be music.

Nonetheless, this point of comparison between music and the world, the respect in which music relates to the world by imitating or replicating it, is very obscure. Music has been practised throughout the ages without anyone's being able to account for it [i.e. to explain how music can imitate the world]: content to understand it in an immediate way, we have forgone any abstract comprehension of this immediate understanding.

Having immersed my mind in the impression music makes in its many forms, and then returned to reflection and the system of thought expressed in the present work, an insight came to me regarding its inner essence and its copy-relation to the world. The account I arrived at is entirely satisfying for me personally and satisfactory with respect

to my inquiry, and will surely be just as illuminating for anyone who has agreed with my view of the world up to here. But I recognise that it is essentially impossible to prove that it is true, because it •takes as a premise that music is a presentation of something that can never itself be a presentation, and •views music as a copy of an original that can never itself be immediately presented. So all I can do here at the conclusion of this third Book devoted mainly to a consideration of the arts is to expound what is to me a satisfactory insight regarding the marvelous art of tones, and must place acceptance or rejection of my view at the mercy of how the reader is affected on the one hand by music, on the other hand by the entire and single thought communicated by me in this work. Beyond this, I take it to be necessary, for the possibility of genuine agreement with the account of the significance of music that I am going to give, that one be familiar with the entirety of the thought set forth in that account, and that one often reflect on it while listening to music.

Adequate objectification of will is to be found in (platonic) ideas. The goal of all the arts other than music is to arouse knowledge of those ideas through display of individual things (i.e. individual works of art), which is possible only through a corresponding alteration in the knowing subject. So they all objectify the will only in a mediated way, namely, through ideas. [AS now gives us an obscure sentence the gist of which is that music, alone among the arts, 'by-passes ideas' and thus ignores the phenomenal world and could exist if there were no such world. He continues:] Thus music is not (as the other arts are) an image of ideas; rather, it is *an image of the will itself*, the will of which ideas are the objectivisation. Just for this reason, music has a much more powerful and penetrating effect than any of the other arts, for the others speak only of shadows, whereas music

speaks of the essence of things. Since it is the same will that is objectified both in ideas and in music—though in two entirely different ways—there must be a parallelism, an analogy between •music and •the ideas of which the visible world is the appearance; a parallelism, not of course an immediate similarity. This is an obscure topic; so my exposition of it is obscure. It will be made easier to grasp by a proof of the analogy (or parallelism) I have spoken of.

In the deepest tones of harmony, in the bass, I recognise •the lowest levels of the objectification of will, •inorganic nature, •the mass of the planet. It is well known that all the upper tones—freely moving and more quickly fading—arise through secondary vibrations of the deep bass with whose resonance they always lightly co-resonate, and it is a law of harmony that along with a bass note only the upper tones should be sounded that actually sound of themselves along with it (its *sons harmoniques*) through secondary vibrations. This is analogous to the fact that the totality of bodies and the organisation of nature must be regarded as having arisen through a step-by-step development out of the mass of the planet. . . .

There is a limit to how far down the scale tones are audible. This corresponds to •the fact that no matter is perceptible without form and quality, i.e. without the manifestation of some ultimately inexplicable force in which an idea is expressed, and more generally to •the fact that no matter can be entirely without will; so that just as any tone must have a certain level of pitch, any portion of matter must have a certain degree of expression of will.

So that in harmony the bass notes are for us what inorganic nature is in the world, the crudest mass that all things rest on and arise and develop from.

Then further, in the totality of the voices of the ripieno producing the harmony—between the bass and the leading

voice performing the melody—I recognise the total sequence of levels of the ideas in which will is objectified. Those standing nearer to the bass are the lower of these levels, bodies that are still inorganic but already expressing themselves in many ways; those lying higher represent to me the plant and animal worlds.

The particular intervals of the scale are parallel to the particular levels of the objectification of will, ·i.e.· to the particular species in nature. Deviation from arithmetical exactness in an interval. . . .is analogous to individuals deviating from the type of their species. Indeed, impure discords, which yield no particular interval, may be compared to the monstrously malformed offspring of animals of two species, or of a human being and an animal.

These bass and ripieno parts that make up the harmony don't have the connected way of moving possessed by the high voice singing the melody; it moves quickly and lightly in modulations and runs, while the other two have a slower movement and are not connected in themselves. The deep bass moves most slowly, the representative of the crudest mass. Its rising and falling occurs only by large intervals—in thirds, fourths, fifths—never by a single tone, unless it is a bass inverted by double counterpoint. This slow movement is essential to it ·not only ·for representative reasons but· also ·physically: a fast run or trill in the low notes ·is so far from physically possible that it· cannot even be imagined. The upper voices of the ripieno, which are parallel to the animal world, move more quickly but still without melodic connection and meaningful progression. The disconnected movement and law-governed determination of all the voices of the ripieno are analogous to the fact that in the whole reasonless world, from the crystal to the most complete

animal, no being

- has a truly inter-connected consciousness making its life a meaningful whole,
- undergoes a succession of mental developments, or
- perfects itself by culture.

Rather, everything ·in the reasonless world· exists always in the same way according to its kind, determined by fixed law.

Finally in the melody—that is

in the high, singing main voice that directs the whole and with unrestrained freedom displays *one* thought from beginning to end. . . .

—I recognise the highest level of the objectification of will, the intellectual life and striving of the human being. Just as

- the human being alone, because he is gifted with reason, looks constantly forward and back on the of his reality and of countless possibilities, and so achieves a thoughtfully aware and thereby interconnected course of life as a whole, so also, correspondingly,
- melody alone has a significant, intentional interconnection from beginning to end.

It records, therefore, the history of the intellectually enlightened will. This will expresses itself in the actual world as the series of its deeds; but melody says more, it records the most secret history of this will, pictures every excitement, every effort, every movement of it, everything that reason collects under the wide and negative concept of *feeling*,¹ and that it cannot pin down any more narrowly through its abstract concepts. Therefore it has always been said that music is the language of feeling and of passion, as words are the language of reason. . . . [AS quotes Plato and Aristotle saying things to that effect.]

Now just as

¹ [For the negativeness of the concept of feeling, see chapter 11.]

•the essence of a human being consists in the fact that his will strives, is satisfied and strives anew, and so on for ever; so that his happiness consists only in the rapid movement from desire to satisfaction and from that to new desire (because the absence of satisfaction is suffering, and the absence of a new desire is empty longing, languor, boredom), so also, correspondingly

•the essence of melody is a constant deviating, digressing from the keynote by a thousand paths, moving not only to the harmonic intervals, to the third and the dominant, but to every tone, to the dissonant seventh and the augmented intervals, but always pursuing an eventual return to the keynote.

On all of these paths the melody expresses the different *efforts* of will and also—by eventually finding its way back to a harmonic interval, and especially to the keynote—expresses its *satisfaction*. The invention of melody, the revelation in it of all the deepest secrets of human willing and feeling, is the work of genius, whose operation lies more open to sight here than elsewhere; *here* it is far from any reflection and conscious intention, and could be called ‘inspiration’. Concepts are unfruitful here, as they are everywhere in art. The composer reveals the innermost being of the world, and speaks the deepest wisdom, in a language that his reason does not understand; just as a hypnotised person reveals things that he has no concept of while awake. So with the composer more than with any other artist, the human being and the artist are entirely separate and distinct. Concepts show their poverty and their limits not only in composing but even in explaining music; but I will nonetheless try to develop my analogy-based account of this wonderful art.

Just as the quick passage from desire to satisfaction and from that to new desire is happiness and well-being, so quick

melodies with no big digressions are cheerful; slow melodies that lead into painful dissonances and meander back to the keynote only after several measures are sad, this being analogous to the sadness of delayed, impeded satisfaction. The only analogue of *languor*—the delay of a new stirring of the will—would be a sustained unvarying keynote, the effect of which would soon be unbearable; monotonous and inexpressive melodies come close to this. The short, comprehensible phrases of quick dance music seem to speak only of easily achievable common happiness. By contrast, the *allegro maestoso*, with grand phrases, long passages, broad digressions, speaks of a grander, nobler striving after a distant goal and its eventual achievement. The *adagio* in a minor key speaks of the suffering that belongs to grand and noble striving that scorns all petty happiness. But how wonderful is the effect of *minor* and *major*! How amazing that the change of a semitone—the entry of the minor third instead of the major—at once and inevitably forces on us an anxious, painful feeling from which the major then just as quickly releases us. . . .

The inexhaustibility of possible melodies corresponds to the nature’s inexhaustibility in the diversity of its individuals, physiognomies, and ways of life. The switch from one key to an entirely different one, entirely destroying the connection with what has gone before, resembles *death*, because with death the individual comes to an end. But the will that appeared in this individual lives after him as before him, appearing in other individuals, though their consciousness has no connection with his.

In expounding all these analogues of music, however, one should remember that music has no direct but only a mediated relation to them, since it never gives voice to the phenomenon, but only the inner essence, the in-itself of all phenomena, will itself. Music does not express this or that

individual and particular pleasure, this or that instance of sorrow or pain or outrage or joy or merriment or peace of mind, but pleasure itself, sorrow itself, pain itself, outrage itself, joy itself, merriment itself, spiritual repose itself. . . . That is why our imagination is so easily excited by music and now tries to give form to that invisible yet lively and mobile spirit-world—one that speaks to us so directly—and to invest it with flesh and bone by embodying it in an analogue. This is the origin of song with words and eventually of opera—the text of which should never leave its subordinate position and become the main concern, with the music a mere means for expressing it. Treating words and music in that way would be a major blunder, a terrible perversity. For music everywhere expresses only the quintessence of life and its events; it never pays attention to the individual events themselves. This generality is what gives it its great value as a panacea for all our sufferings. Thus, when music too greatly seeks to attach itself to words and model itself on events, it is trying to speak a language that is not its own. No-one has kept himself so free of this fault as *Rossini*: his music so clearly and purely speaks *its own* language that it does not need words and has its full effect when performed with instruments alone.

In accordance with all of this we can regard •the phenomenal world (or nature) and •music as two different expressions of the same thing, which is thus itself the only thing mediating the analogy between the two. . . . So when music is viewed as an expression of the world, it is a language with the highest degree of generality, relating to the generality of concepts in much the same way as concepts relate to individual things. But its generality is of a quite different kind from the empty generality of abstraction, and is united with thorough and distinct definiteness. In this it is like geometrical figures and numbers, which, as general forms of all possible objects of experience and applicable *a priori*

to all of them, are not •abstract but are •perceptual and thoroughly determinate. All possible endeavours, excitations, and expressions of will—all those internal human processes that reason gathers under the broad negative concept of *feeling*—are expressible by the countless possible melodies, but always

- with the generality of mere form, without the substance,
- with respect to the *in-itself*, not with respect to the phenomenon,
- as it were, the innermost soul of the phenomenon, without the body.

This inner relationship between music and the true essence of all things enables us to explain

- the fact that when music is suited to some scene, action, event or environment, it seems to reveal to us the latter's most secret meaning, presenting itself as the clearest and most accurate commentary on it; and
- the fact that to someone completely absorbed in listening to a symphony it's as though he were seeing all the possible events of life and the world passing by; yet when he thinks about it he can't specify any similarity between the play of tones and the things that passed through his mind as he listened to them.

For music (I repeat) differs from all the other arts in not being a copy of the phenomenon—or (more accurately) of an adequate objectivisation of will—but a direct copy of the will itself, and therefore exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, and as the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon. So we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will. That is why music makes every scene of real life and of the world appear with higher significance in proportion as its inner spirit is captured by

the melody. It is also why music can be used to turn

- a poem into a song,
- acting on stage into a pantomime, or
- both into an opera.

Such particular pictures of human life, set to the universal language of music, are never tied to it or correspond to it with stringent necessity; rather, they relate to it only as an arbitrarily chosen example relates to a general concept. In the determinateness of the real, they represent what music expresses in the universality of mere form. For melodies are to some extent like general concepts, an abstraction from the actual. So this actual world of particular things provides the object of perception, the special and individual, the particular case, both to **a** the universality of the concepts and to **b** the universality of the melodies. But these two universalities are in a certain way opposed to each other; for

- a** concepts contain particulars only as the first forms abstracted from perception—as it were the outer shell of things—so that they are, strictly speaking, abstracta; whereas
- b** music gives the inner kernel that precedes all forms, i.e. the heart of things.

This relation can be expressed in the language of the schoolmen by saying the concepts are the *universalia post rem*, music gives the *universalia ante rem* and the real world the *universalia in re* [Latin for ‘universals after the thing’, ‘before the thing’, ‘in the thing’.] To the universal significance of a melody to which a poem has been set, it is quite possible to set other equally arbitrarily selected examples of the universal expressed in that poem. . . . That’s why the same composition is suitable to many verses, which is what makes street-songs possible. But (I repeat) a relation is possible between a com-

position and a perceptible representation because the two are simply different expressions of the same inner essence of the world. . . . The composer’s ability to link them must have come from the direct knowledge of the essence of the world, unknown to his reason; if instead it comes from his consciously trying to imitate features of the world of which he has conceptions, his music won’t express the inner essence of the will¹ itself but will merely give a poor imitation of its phenomenon. The latter is what happens in all openly representational music, such as Haydn’s ‘The Seasons’ and many passages in his ‘The Creation’, where phenomena of the external world are directly imitated; also all battle-pieces. Such music is to be entirely rejected.

The inexpressible inwardness of all music—by virtue of which its passage is to us like an entirely familiar yet eternally distant paradise, entirely intelligible yet so inexplicable—rests on the fact that it reproduces all the stirrings of our innermost essence, but entirely apart from reality and far from its torments. Similarly, its essential seriousness, which entirely excludes anything comic from its immediately proper domain, is to be explained by the fact that music’s object is not presentations, the only things in relation to which deception and absurdity are possible; rather, its immediate object is *will*, which is in its essence the most serious thing of all, as that on which everything depends.

Even the repetition signs, along with the *da capo* [= ‘start again from the beginning’], attest to how contentful music’s language is. These repetitions would be unbearable in works in the language of words, but are most beneficial in music; for to grasp music fully one has to hear it twice.

If in this account of music I have succeeded in making

¹ [The shift from ‘inner essence of the world’ to ‘inner essence of the will’ is AS’s.]

clear the fact that music pronounces in a highly general language the inner essence, the in-itself of the world (which with reference to its clearest manifestation we think of in terms of the concept of will), doing this with the greatest determinateness and truth, and using only mere tones as its material; and if I am right in my view that philosophy is a complete and accurate repetition and expression of the nature of the world in the most general concepts. . . . then anyone who has entered into my way of thinking will not find it so very paradoxical if I say that if someone succeeded in providing a perfectly accurate, complete and detailed explanation of music, thus a detailed conceptual repetition of what it expresses, this would at once also be a satisfactory conceptual repetition and explanation of the world. . . . and thus would be true philosophy. . . . And if we finally connect this view with my earlier account of harmony and melody, we'll find a mere **moral philosophy with no explanation of nature** (such as Socrates would introduce) to be analogous to **melody without harmony** (which Rousseau desired); whereas a mere **physics and metaphysics without ethics** will correspond to mere **harmony without melody**.

Allow me to offer some further remarks about the analogy between music and the phenomenal world. We found in Book II that the highest level of the objectification of will, namely the human being, could not make its appearance alone and out of context, but presupposed the levels just below it, and which presuppose others still deeper; in just the same way, music—which, like the world, immediately objectifies will—is complete only in full harmony. The high leading voice of the melody can make its full impression only if accompanied by all the other voices, right down to the deepest bass, which is

to be viewed as the origin of them all. The melody even enters into the harmony as an integral part of it, and vice versa. And just as music pronounces what it aims to pronounce only in the complete whole of its voices, so does the will¹ find its complete objectification only in the unification of all the levels revealing its nature in countless degrees of increasing distinctness.

[AS now presents a further 'most remarkable' analogy. He says that the world's being 'a constant battleground' among individuals corresponds to something in music, namely the fact that a certain conflict is intrinsic to music because 'a completely pure, harmonic system of tones is not even arithmetically possible'. We can spare ourselves his technical reasons for this.]

I would like to say more, regarding how music is perceived—namely, simply and solely in and through time, to the entire exclusion of space and with no input from any knowledge of causality or, therefore, from the understanding; for tones make their aesthetic impression just as effects, without our reverting to their causes as we do in the case of perception. But I shan't go on about this, because I may already have gone into too much detail in this third Book. [AS goes on to justify this possible excess, saying that it won't be objected to by anyone who has grasped and accepted his views about the value of art, summed up in this:] If the entire world as presentation is only the visible aspect of the will, then art is the clarification of this visibility, the *camera obscura*, showing us objects more purely and giving us a better grasp of them. The play within the play, the stage upon the stage in *Hamlet*.

•The pleasure we get from everything beautiful, •the

¹ [AS here characterizes the will as *eine und außerzeitliche* = 'one and extratemporal'; this is an often-repeated part of his doctrine; it's not clear why he chooses to repeat it here.]

consolation that art provides, and •the enthusiasm of the artist that enables him to forget the cares of life—

this being the advantage of the genius over others, which alone compensates for •the suffering that has increased in proportion as his consciousness has gained in clarity, and for •his desolate loneliness among men of a different race

—all of this rests on two facts. **(i)** As I'll show in chapters 57–59, the *in-itself* of life, will, existence itself, is constant suffering, partly pitiful and partly terrifying. **(ii)** As presentation alone—purely contemplated, or copied by art, free from pain—it confronts us with a drama full of significance. This purely knowable side of the world, and its replication in any sort of art, is the artist's element. Contemplation of the ·theatrical· play of will's objectification holds him captive. He dwells in it, does not tire of contemplating it and replicating it in his depictions, and in so doing he himself bears the costs of staging the play, i.e. he is himself the will that is thus objectified and remains in constant suffering. This pure, true, and deep knowledge of the nature of the world now becomes a goal *in itself* for him; he stops at it. So it does not become for him—as we'll see in the Book IV [chapter 68] that it does for the saint who has reached a state of resignation—a quieter of the will; it does not permanently but only momentarily redeems him from life, so it is not for him a path out of life but only a temporary consolation within it; until his forces, strengthened by this and finally tired of the play, come to grips with harsh *Realität*. The St. Cecilia of Raphael may be regarded as a representation of this transition. To the real, then, I now turn in the following Book.