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School of Humanities

Poetry for Poetry's Sake: A Defence

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is an attempt to defend the view that the value of a poem may be intrinsic: that a poem may be valuable for its own sake. Against the backdrop of the debate between A.C. Bradley and Peter Kivy, which reflects a fundamental conflict between the upholders of the intrinsic and instrumental values of poetry, the aesthetic theories of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger are examined, and it is argued that they constitute a 'medium-centered tradition' of philosophizing about poetry. There are a detailed treatment of Kant's neglected concept of aesthetic ideas, a discussion of Collingwood's notion of 'expression' and concepts of 'medium' and 'tradition', and an elucidation of Heidegger's innovative conception of the artwork as an interplay between the world and the earth. The medium-centered approach is treated as a philosophical expression and justification of the literary critical maxim that poetry be read for its own sake. It is also shown how this approach connects the unique value of a poem with its being derived from the creative play with the medium, with its nature as a work of art. Thus, since it delineates the realm of poetry in terms of its medium, not purposes it serves or its institutional setting, it is demonstrated that this approach does justice to the peculiar genius of poetry. The theories of poetry of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger not only save Bradley's position but open up a space for discussions of larger themes such as the claim that what a good poem offers is distinct from the readymade intellectual content.

CONTENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

OWA 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Martin Heidegger, 1971, in *Poetry, Language and Thought*, (trans.) A. Hofstadter, (Harper and Row: New York)

INTRODUCTION

The immediate context for this thesis was provided by Peter Kivy's critical assault (in his book, *Philosophies of Art: An Essay in Differences*[1]) on A. C. Bradley's well-known lecture, 'Poetry For Poetry's Sake'[2]. While reading Kivy's critique, I strongly felt that he is rather mistaken in his perception and evaluation of the philosophical points that Bradley makes about the nature and value of poetry. These initial impressions induced me to look for ways to combat Kivy and to defend Bradley.

Kivy designs a brief historical narrative that purportedly shows how and when versions of 'the form-content identity thesis' - the thesis that the poem's form and content are inseparable from each other - began to be put forward. He seems to presuppose that such a story of origin would considerably reduce the stature of Bradley's thesis, if not refute it altogether. But this is an instance of the genetic fallacy. A water-lily does not lack beauty and strength to survive on account of its being rooted in mud. And, on Kivy's own reading of history, it is not mud from which Bradley's theory springs. Kivy is keen to indicate that Bradley's thesis displays marked affinities to Kant's conception of aesthetic ideas and Collingwood's theory of expression. So I feel the need to pay close attention to the aesthetic theories of Kant and Collingwood. My reading of the two aestheticians shows that their theories cannot be dismissed in the manner adopted by Kivy. Bradley's main thesis about poetry, in a nutshell, is that the value of a good poem lies in the experience that it gives us. This is its poetic value. Malcolm Budd has recently propounded a similar position in his monograph, *Values of Art*[3]. According to Budd, the poem's value as a poem does not reside in the thoughts it expresses; it lies in the imaginative experience the reader undergoes while reading the poem. If the poem's value existed in the significance of thoughts it expresses, the poem could be put aside. But the poem cannot be put aside for our experience of it is intrinsically worthwhile. Thus, Budd connects the poem's insubstitutability with the intrinsically valuable experience it offers.

While trying to delineate his position, Budd contrasts it with the New Critic

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[1] Kivy 1997
[2] Bradley 1909
[3] Budd 1995

Cleanth Brooks' view. Brooks is also all for the insubstitutability of a good poem, but, in Budd's view, his reasons are not convincing. I cannot agree with Budd. For, although Brooks does not directly say that the poem's value lies in the experience offered by it, he does emphasize the dimension of experience which matters the most in poetry. On various levels Brooks opposes the view that a paraphrase can capture the essence of a poem. This thread in Brooks' thought comes closer to Bradley's opposition to the division of a good poem into form and content. Thus, though from a certain viewpoint Bradley's and Brooks' positions seem to concur, in the eyes of a contemporary aesthetician, whose position is very much similar to Bradley's, Brooks' position seems to belong to a different plane altogether. I felt the urge to disentangle this philosophical situation.

Kivy labels Bradley's emphasis on the inseparability of a poem's form and content "the 'no-paraphrase' claim". But not only Brooks and Bradley, the two of the most influential literary critics in the twentieth century, but also Kant and Collingwood, two of the greatest aestheticians, regard the tendency to treat a paraphrase as a re-statement of the essence of a poem as heretical.

In Kant's theory of fine art, we find a fascinating concept of aesthetic ideas. A poem, however nice and elegant it may be, may lack the animating spirit. In Kant's view, it is aesthetic ideas that impart spirit to a poem. Kant defines an aesthetic idea thus: "By an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] *concept*, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it."[4] Though they are by nature thought-provoking, aesthetic ideas in the poem cannot be reduced to a determinate thought or concept and hence cannot be fully captured by another set of words. That is, the aesthetic ideas that a good poem exhibits do not permit us to reduce it into, let alone to replace it by, a paraphrase. Thus, Kant's view can be considered as a positive philosophical attempt to substantiate by means of his appeal to aesthetic ideas the claim regarding the insubstitutability of good poems.

In his *Principles of Art*, R. G. Collingwood defines art as expression[5]. By writing a good poem, the poet expresses his own as well as the readers' emotions. In this sense, the poem is an *expression*: the particular emotion in particular words. The

[4] Kant 1987, 49: 182
[5] Collingwood 1938

poet and the readers are on an even keel as far as the emotion is concerned; but it is the poet who solves the problem of expression. To solve the problem of expression is to arrive at the particular words which would help him to become conscious of his inchoate emotion. Thus, arriving at the particular words is an integral part of coming to realize the nature of emotion. In other words, the emotion expressed by certain words is inseparable from them; the poem, as an expression, as art proper, is insubstitutable. It is no wonder, then, that Collingwood maintains that we cannot extract *the* meaning of a work of art, for there exists no such thing[6].

Thus, Kant's doctrine of aesthetic ideas and Collingwood's theory of art as expression can be viewed as two different philosophical accounts of the insubstitutability of a good poem. Also, they can be seen as two distinctive answers to the question: *What* do we experience when we undergo the intrinsically valuable imaginative experience while reading the poem that is emphasized by Bradley and Budd?

While contending that a good poem is just unparaphrasable, Bradley does not deny the possibility and usefulness of the activity of paraphrasing poems. Is this, then, just a verbal quibble? Not at all. Bradley and others who sympathize with him wish to make a fundamentally important point: A good poem is not a set of words that conveys a fixed and definite thought or meaning which can be fully captured by another set of words. That is, a good poem is *not* a vehicle. A vehicle is dispensable; it can be put aside once the thought or the meaning has been grasped. But a good poem cannot be put aside; it has no substitutes, no alternatives. In this thesis, I attempt to suggest one way in which we can answer the question *why* a good poem is insubstitutable.

On Kivy's historical narrative, which forms the backbone of his critique of Bradley, theorists who regard unparaphrasability as the essential feature of poetry claim that poetry supplies us with a special kind of knowledge which is superior, spiritually uplifting, ineffable and, most importantly, which is not a province of natural or social sciences. As knowledge provided by the poem is too elusive to be articulated in words, the poem is unparaphrasable; what it proffers us can be proffered by it alone. So argue these thinkers. Thus, the form-content identity thesis can be explained away once we see its link with the claims about special poetic

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[6] Ibid., 311

knowledge. So argues Kivy. I attempt to show that theorists like Kant or Bradley do not advance their claims concerning the unparaphrasability of a poem in order to enhance the epistemic status of poetry.

I must also explain here my reasons why I add Martin Heidegger to the group of aestheticians implicated by the Bradley-Kivy debate. The principal ideas in Heidegger's essay, 'The Origin of the Work of Art'[7], appear to me to share the spirit of the aesthetic theories of Kant and Collingwood. Most importantly, the individual reader's experience of a poem plays a large part in the philosophical accounts of the insubstitutability of the poem developed by Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger. Kant calls the harmonious interaction of the imagination and the understanding induced by the poetic experience *play*. For Collingwood to read and understand a poem is to *become a poet* for the reader expresses his own emotions in the poet's words. And, Heidegger develops novel concepts of 'world' and 'earth' to call our attention to the *happening* within the poem. What is common to these three models of the individual reader's experience of a poem is that they do not treat a poem as a fixed, definite and closed statement; they view a poem as a fluid, dynamic and lively composition.

The fundamental difference between a closed statement and an open-ended composition is that the former is *devised* whereas the latter is *derived.* A statement is devised in the sense that it comes into being by an employment of means according to a preconceived end. A poem, on the other hand, does not come into being as a result of the manipulation of means to achieve a foreseeable end. A poem is a work of art, *not* a product of craft. The tendency to regard a paraphrase as a perfect re-statement of what the poem expresses leads us to view poetry as a vehicle, as a craft-product. A good poem, however, is not a vehicle. As noted before, in order to contend this, Bradley claims that a good poem cannot be paraphrased. The 'vehicle view of poetry' implies that the thought or meaning that the poem conveys is ready beforehand and it is then put into an appropriate, beautiful or effective verbal garb. But we can manufacture anything in such a fashion. For example, a poet, in order to prove himself a genius, produces eccentrically fanciful stuff. However, as Kant shrewdly notes, such a poet fails to prove himself even a true or good poet, he only succeeds in producing original nonsense. If poetry were merely a matter of devising, if poetry were a mere craft, such a producer of original nonsense would certainly

[7] Heidegger 1971

have been rated as an extraordinary poet. The basic propensity of a good poem to make sense, to be intelligible is pivotal. How is a true poet at once novel and original, and intelligible to his readers? According to Collingwood, the true poet enables his readers to express their own emotions. On Heidegger's view, the true poet displays to the readers the happening of a truth as the strife between the world and the earth. And, in Kant's theory, the true poet shows the readers an unperceived aspect of nature through the play of aesthetic ideas. Now, it is not that the readers take into account the poet's aims and intentions, and so look at the poem in a particular way. Rather, the poem is of such a nature that it naturally becomes an indispensable expression of their emotions. In other words, the poem flashes at the readers as something that is magically derived from the familiar medium and so objectively available to them through their subjective exploratory experiences just as the poet's.

The aesthetic theories of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger are, thus, implicitly or explicitly centered around the concept of 'medium'. In their view, a poem is *arrived at* by an action upon and through the medium. The composition of a poem is a matter of discovery. The poet is neither strictly bound like a craftsman nor endlessly free like a manufacturer of nonsense. The poet feels the constraint that his medium exerts on his activity.

Both Kant and Heidegger prefer to express this insight in a slightly mystical way. They seem to say: A poem *comes* into being; it *is not brought into* being. Kant and Heidegger seem to contend that to say that the poet has composed a truly good poem is almost equivalent to saying that it has naturally arisen from the medium, and in this sense it is a *gift* from the medium itself. The medium, which may be used up by a craftsman, is allowed by the poet to emerge and shine on its own.

For the upholder of the intrinsic value of a poem, mere refutation of the vehicle view is not enough. He also has to show that the unique value of a poem derives from the poem's being an act upon the medium. However, it is the fate of the thinkers like Kant, Bradley, Collingwood and Heidegger that they have first to battle against some or other form of the vehicle view which continually tries to assimilate poetry to a species of craft. Therefore I have incorporated in the thesis the Bradley-Kivy debate as a reflection of the constant war between the two diametrically opposed approaches to poetry.

Thus in this thesis I argue that (i) the unparaphrasability of good poems

points towards a fundamentally important point about the nature of poetry; (ii) it is possible to explain the uniqueness of a poem in a different way from claiming that it gives us a special kind of knowledge; and, (iii) Kant, Collingwood, Heidegger and the literary critic Bradley form the tradition of a medium-centered approach to poetry.

CHAPTER 1

Poetry for Poetry's Sake

"Hamlet was well able to 'unpack his heart with words', but he will not unpack it with our paraphrases."[8]

1.1 Introduction

In this opening chapter, I consider A. C. Bradley's famous lecture 'Poetry For Poetry's Sake'. The choice of this text may sound somewhat old-fashioned. Though Bradley is still regarded as one of the finest critics of Shakespeare, his views on poetry as expressed in this lecture are dubbed as a kind of 'formalism', and, thereby, simply disposed off. This is the case at least in most of the university departments of literature. However, a philosopher cannot afford to discard a view by merely labelling it.

Moreover, I believe that Bradley's views on poetry, though expounded around the beginning of the twentieth century, are still relevant, especially in the hullabaloo of thinking about poetry in instrumental or institutional terms. Bradley holds that a good poem is to be valued for its own sake. The poem may serve practical purposes, but the fulfilment of those purposes is not what is truly poetic about it. The poem's value as a poem lies in the experience it offers. The main objective of this chapter is to explicate and interpret this claim.

Bradley's lecture is also a classic example of the typical philosophical traps a defender of the intrinsic value of a poem may fall into. While expounding his central claim, Bradley is led to maintain that the identity of form and content is the essence of poetry or that we cannot state in other words the meaning of a poem. These typical philosophical traps that Bradley could not avoid generate the space the critics can capitalize on[9]. So, I also try in this chapter to show that Bradley's espousal of the view that a poem is for its own sake remains valid despite its getting beclouded at times by such apparently unsupportable claims.

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[8] Bradley 1909, 20

[9] Peter Kivy is a representative of such critics. We shall consider his critique of Bradley in the next chapter.

1.2 The poem for its own sake

Let us at once turn to Bradley's view of poetry. Bradley starts off with the experience that a good poem gives us:

> "... an actual poem is the succession of experiences - sounds, images, thoughts, emotions - through which we pass when we are reading as poetically as we can. Of course this imaginative experience ... differs with every reader and every time of reading: a poem exists in innumerable degrees."[10]

A striking feature of this initial claim is its liberalism. Firstly, the imaginative experience the reader undergoes is not one and the same definite experience; its quality depends upon how poetically one reads the poem. Secondly, the object of experience is not merely the meaning; it also has aspects of sounds, images and emotions. And, thirdly, the reader's contribution is not negligible: the same poem may be experienced differently by different readers.

Here one is reminded of a crucially similar idea that we come across at the beginning of Kant's 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment'. While emphasizing the role of the spectator in aesthetic apprehension, Kant says:

> "... in order for me to say that an object is *beautiful*, and to prove that I have taste, what matters is what I *do* with this presentation within myself."[11]

Bradley's conception of the imaginative experience of a poem also bears resemblance with Collingwood's conception of 'total imaginative experience'. When we listen to a poem, according to Collingwood, we undergo not only "a specialized sensuous experience" like hearing but also "a non-specialized imaginative experience", which consists of sounds, sights, tactile and motor qualities, and even scents[12].

Such an imaginative experience, which is a product of an interaction of the

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[10] Ibid., 4

[11] Kant 1987, 2: 46 the latter emphasis added

[12] Collingwood 1938, 147-48

poem and the reader's poetic reading of it, is, Bradley claims, "an end in itself, is worth having on its own account, has an intrinsic value"[13]. The *poetic value* of a poem, that is, its value *as* a poem, lies in the intrinsic worth of the imaginative experience it offers. The poem may, for instance, convey instruction to the reader or bring fame to the poet, but this is its ulterior, non-poetic value. The consideration of ulterior ends may take the poem out of its own atmosphere; it may taint our poetic reading of it. Therefore, in order to attend to the poetic value of the poem, one has to read it poetically. To read a poem poetically is to understand that " its nature is not to be a part, nor yet a copy, of the real world ... but to be a world by itself, independent, complete, autonomous; and to possess it fully you must enter that world"[14].

Thus, as the poetic value of a poem, that is, its value as a poem lies in our complex, rich and fertile experience of it, which cannot be had without it, the poem is to be valued for its own sake. This is, in my view, the principal intended meaning of Bradley's formula 'poetry for poetry's sake'.

It may be argued here that what Bradley really maintains is not that the poem is to be valued for its own sake but for the experiences it gives us, and so he is also an instrumentalist in a certain sense. But this kind of objection rests on the assumption that the poem and its experience are quite distinct and separate things. That is, it overlooks Bradley's stress on the poem's unfolding itself to the reader through his poetic reading of, or imaginative engagement with, it. Bradley seems to suggest that to undergo the imaginative experience offered by the poem *is* to savour its intrinsic value. The poem is not something that can become available independently of a poetic reading that eventuates in an imaginative experience.

Moreover, the distinction between the 'experience aroused by the poem' and the 'experience *of* the poem' can also be helpful in replying to such objections. A poem may be written in order to evoke a certain state of mind. In that case, the poet writes the poem whose end - the reader's certain state of mind - lies outside the poem. On the other hand, a good poem is meant to be experienced for its own sake. Although we have to resort to such expressions as the experience 'given', 'offered', 'provided' or 'supplied' by the poem, this linguistic surface should not mislead us to think that the poem which is meant to be experienced for its own sake and the

[13] Op. cit., 4
[14] Ibid., 5

experience 'given' by it have the same relationship as that between a pot-boiler Bollywood movie and the viewer's getting excited while watching a fight in it. Collingwood describes attempts to characterize art on the basis of the latter kind of phenomenon a 'stimulus-reaction theory of art'[15]. In Bradley's scheme too, the poem is not an artefact designed to give a certain kind of experience to the reader. The reader's experience of the poem is mediated, that is, it is not divorced from the process of attending to the words of the poem. Thus, a good poem is not a means to realize an end that is outside itself, but is an end in itself.

1.3 Form for form's sake?

Bradley is keen to protect this formula from a rampant misapprehension. He notes that the general reader would readily get offended by this thesis: he would think that this is a disguised doctrine of 'form for form's sake'. The hypothetical general reader in Bradley's lecture retorts:

> "It is of no consequence what a poem says, so long as he [the poet] says the thing well. The *what* is poetically indifferent: it is the *how* that counts ... You are telling me that the poetic value of *Hamlet* lies solely in its style and versification, and that my interest in the man and his fate is only an intellectual or moral interest."[16]

The general reader inclines to take Bradley's thesis to mean that a poem is just to be enjoyed and relished for its own sake; poetry is more about immediate hedonistic pleasures than some deep insights. The general reader thinks that he is being asked to focus on the pretty form instead of the profound content. In other words, he feels that "he is being robbed of almost all that he cares for in a work of art"[17].

The concepts of form and content have been so predominant in criticism and theory of poetry that any new doctrine immediately gets translated in their terms, and thereby transformed. The general reader unconsciously resorts to the same tactic.

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[15] Op. cit., 30
[16] Op. cit., 7-8
[17] Ibid.

However, these concepts are terribly ambiguous. In order to satisfy the general reader's queries, we need to get clear about them. Hence, Bradley devotes a large part of the lecture to indicating a way through the murky terrain dominated by these concepts.

Bradley first makes a distinction between the 'subject' and the 'substance' of a poem. The subject of a poem is "generally something, real or imaginary, as it exists in the minds of fairly cultivated people ... The subject of Shelley's stanzas *To a Skylark* would be the ideas which arise in the mind of an educated person when, without knowing the poem, he hears the word 'skylark'."[18] The subject is outside the poem; it is something the poem is about. Obviously, anything - a tree, a tear, a heap of rubbish, poverty, war, God - can be a potential subject, and there could be several poems written on one subject. A subject can be said to be an inchoate cluster of potential meanings before the poet touches it. As the subject is outside the poem, its opposite is not what is commonly called the form but the whole poem. Now, as to the substance: "Those figures, scenes, events, that form part of the subject called the Fall of Man, are not the substance of *Paradise Lost*; but in *Paradise Lost* there are figures, scenes, and events resembling them in some degree. These ... may be described as its substance, and may then be contrasted with the measured language of the poem which will be called its form."[19]

The subject is outside the poem whereas the substance is inside the poem. The substance is what the poet has done to or with the subject that appeared to him as an inchoate cluster of potential meanings. It is a common mistake to confuse what the poem is *about* and what is *within* the poem. And the word 'content' is used to denote both the things. Bradley's distinction, though not world-shaking, warns us against this frequent confusion. The form of a poem - the measured language - is to be contrasted with the substance, not with the subject. Thus, Bradley provides us with the three clearly defined categories: subject, substance and form.

Can we now answer the general reader's question? Is Bradley's formula a version of the doctrine of 'form for form's sake'? Does Bradley mean that the only worthwhile element of a poem is its form and the substance its negligent accompaniment? Would Bradley reply in this fashion: "No, I am not for the doctrine of form for form's sake, for I believe that the substance is as important as the form"?

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[18] Ibid., 9

[19] Ibid., 12

Bradley would *not* reply in this fashion. For it is the general reader, not Bradley himself, who, while attempting to understand Bradley's thesis by translating it into a familiar idiom, employs the duality of form and content, and so Bradley has to clear up the jungle of ambiguities and offer clear definitions. To repeat, Bradley's chief positive thesis is that a poem is intrinsically valuable. As the form and the substance are within the poem, the question whether Bradley's thesis applies primarily to form or substance is just redundant; for him the poem as a whole is valuable.

On Bradley's own view, the poem does not consist of two parts - form and substance. It is a unity. Rather, a poem is an instance of good, pure or genuine poetry insofar as it exhibits such unity. Form and content are analytical categories invented by us to think about the poem from different viewpoints; they are not real, ontological parts of the poem. Bradley suggests that the best way to overcome the distinction is to consider them as sides or aspects of the same thing. Form and substance are two aspects of the

> "one thing from different points of view, and in that sense identical. And this identity ... is no accident; it is of the essence of poetry in so far as it is poetry."[20]

It is curious that what seemed to be an incidental matter, a matter that only required a bit of clearing up, now provides Bradley with the 'essence of poetry'. Eyebrows will be raised at Bradley's use of the word 'essence'. Such pronouncements may lead us to think that the sole purpose of Bradley's lecture is to put forward the thesis that a poem's essence lies in the identity of its form and content. However, we must keep in mind that such pronouncements are part of his negative undertaking. That is, they are made while trying to nullify the possible misapprehension that he detects the poem's value in its pretty form and not in its profound content.

It seems to me that the thread to be picked up from here is that although a bad poem may easily be divided into the form and the substance, a good poem defies such an easy split.

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[20] Ibid., 15

1.4 The poem as creation

But why does Bradley feel it necessary to maintain that a good poem is a perfect unity of its form and substance? He turns to the artistic act of the poet:

> "Pure poetry is not the decoration of a preconceived and clearly defined matter: it springs from the creative impulse of a vague imaginative mass pressing for development and definition. If the poet already knew exactly what he meant to say, why should he write the poem? The poem would in fact be already written. For only its completion can reveal, even to him, exactly what he wanted. When he began and while he was at work, he did not possess his meaning; it possessed him. It was not a fully formed soul asking for a body: it was an inchoate soul in the inchoate body ... The growing of this body into its full stature and perfect shape was the same thing as the gradual self-definition of the meaning. And this is the reason why such poems strike us as creations, not manufactures, and have the magical effect which mere decoration cannot produce. This is also the reason why, if we insist for the meaning of such a poem, we can only be answered 'It means itself.'"[21]

The poet does not know fully and clearly what he means to say before he composes the poem. And this is the reason why he undertakes the composition at all. What the poet wants to express is shaped in the act of composition. Writing a poem is not to put into decorative words the known meaning; it is rather an endeavour to know that meaning. The product of the former kind of activity Bradley calls a 'manufacture' and that of the latter kind of activity a 'creation'[22].

This view of poetic creation poses a fundamental challenge to the dualism of form and substance. For it implies that there is no readymade substance which is filled in the bare, empty form. And there is no readymade form to be stuffed in such a way. The form is composed in order to see what the poet wants to say. Therefore, a good poem, which is a creation and not a manufacture, is not the sum of a discernible

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[21] Ibid., 23-24

[22] This account of poetic creation shows a remarkable affinity with Collingwood's concept of expression, which we shall consider in Chapter 4.

form *and* a discernible substance. Consequently, the contentions as to whether the value of a poem resides, primarily or wholly, in the form *or* the substance, are to be regarded as either false or nonsense[23]. Bradley says:

> "... when you see some one smile, those lines in the face which express a feeling, and the feeling that the lines express ... are to you one thing, not two, so in poetry the meaning and the sounds are one: there is, if I may put it so, a resonant meaning or a meaning resonance."[24]

So, on Bradley's view, it is *heretical* to consider that the value of a poem lies in either the substance or the form. For they do not exist in the poem; they are products of our interpretative, literary-critical act.

We have seen that the substance of a poem is what the subject 'becomes' in the poet's act of composition. On the other hand, the form has been so far described as 'words', 'the measured language' or 'sounds'. However, as noted earlier, there is no such thing as a mere form, that is, an empty form in which a substance can be filled. Bradley observes that although style or versification - two of the things that can be said to belong more to the side of form rather than substance - may have an appeal or charm of its own, in our experience of a poem it is not apprehended by itself; it is "expressive also of a particular meaning.". He goes further and maintains that what we apprehend in a poetic experience can be called "an expressed meaning or a significant form." He goes still further and declares that "All form is expression"[25]. The construction of a form is an integral part of what Bradley calls in the above-quoted passage about poetic creation "the gradual self-definition of meaning." Unless the poet has constructed such an expressive form, the substance or meaning does not come into being at all. And this is why in a truly good poem symbols are equivalent with the thing symbolized and that equivalence makes us exclaim, "That is the thing itself"[26].

1.5 The poem and its paraphrase

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[23] Ibid., 14
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 18-19
[26] Ibid.

If the poem is the thing itself, then, Bradley says, "in true poetry, it is, in strictness, impossible to express the meaning in any but its own words, or to change the words without changing the meaning."[27] What he says in this context about the famous pronouncement of Hamlet's is worth quoting:

> " ... [L] et me take a line certainly very free from 'poetic diction':
>
> *To be or not to be, that is the question.*
>
> You may say that this means the same as 'What is just now occupying my attention is the comparative disadvantages of continuing to live or putting an end to myself.' And for practical purposes - the purpose, for example, of a coroner - it does. But as the second version altogether misrepresents the speaker at the moment of his existence, while the first does represent him, how can they for any but a practical or logical purpose be said to have the same sense? Hamlet was well able to 'unpack his heart with words,' but he will not unpack it with our paraphrases."[28]

Bradley may seem to concern himself in this passage with the problem of paraphrase. By 'the problem of paraphrase' I mean the philosophical question whether a poem can be paraphrased or not. That is, whether a paraphrase, however accurate, can capture the full meaning of a poem[29]. Of several possible positions regarding this, I list here three prominent ones:

1. A poem cannot be paraphrased at all. (Strong negative thesis)
2. Well, a poem can certainly be paraphrased, but not even a good paraphrase can capture the whole meaning of a poem. (Weak negative/positive thesis)
3. Why not? A good paraphrase tells you what the poem means; it captures the whole meaning of it. (Strong positive thesis)

Bradley appears to hold a weak negative/positive thesis. He concedes that for 'practical' or 'logical' purposes, the meaning of another set of words can be said to be the same as the meaning of Hamlet's expression. But the other set of words,

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 20

[29] The two major contributors to the debate surrounding this problem are Cleanth Brooks and Stanley Cavell. I discuss their views in the last sections of this chapter.

"misrepresents the speaker at the moment of his existence." So, according to Bradley, though a paraphrase can tell us roughly or crudely what the poem means, it is not that faithful or reliable for it might misrepresent what the poem expresses or block other ways of making sense of it. Accordingly, Bradley would sometimes incline towards a strong negative thesis but would always be opposed to a strong positive thesis.

Thus Bradley holds the 'weak negative/positive thesis' as far as the problem of paraphrase is concerned. However, Bradley only *seems* to deal with the problem of paraphrase; his real concern is something different. He enters the debate about paraphrasability via his insistence that in a genuine poem, form and substance are inseparably integrated, that a genuine poem is the thing itself.

As we saw above, according to Bradley, a poem is *created* by the poet. Creation is different from manufacture. Manufacturing something is to act in accordance with an end, plan, method and strategy. On the other hand, creation occurs in the dark: there is no light of an end to be achieved or a method to be followed. As the form and the substance are thinkable or observable aspects of the created poem, none of them is ready before the creation. They *arise* in the process of creation. If the poet would have composed a little different form, a different meaning would have arisen. However, it is the meaning whose revelation the poet yearns for, forces him to create a particular form. Thus it is the form that means. The poem's meaning is not only presented but shaped by its form. The unity of form and substance, that is, the poem itself, is, to use Bradley's own words, a resonant meaning, an expressed meaning or a significant form. We cannot consider the poem's meaning without paying attention to its form. And, there is no such thing as a meaning-neutral or meaningless form. The crucial point to be garnered from this is that what we ordinarily call form is not secondary or negligible; it is not detachable from the so-called more important part - the substance - of the poem. In this way, there can be no substitute for the poem's form. We cannot express the same meaning in different words. For the very idea of 'the same meaning' (which is a consequence of the posing of the form-content dualism) proves outlandish here.

We can see now more clearly that in the above-quoted Hamlet passage Bradley's primary aim is to argue for the intimate interdependence and ultimate inseparability of form and substance. However, as the substance of a poem is commonly taken to be its meaning as distinct from the words, Bradley seems to be

dealing with the problem of paraphrase. Bradley appears to maintain that a paraphrase will not do if we want to know what Hamlet wants to unpack; we need to attend to what he says himself in the Shakespeare play. The 'what' of the poem, the substance of the poem, cannot be grasped and appreciated *without* paying attention to the form. Now all this is valid in relation to the form-content dualism which our reflective, theoretical minds posit. If our minds were not so coloured or prejudiced by the dualism, Bradley's formula that to experience the poem poetically is the only way to appreciate what is truly poetic about it, would have done the task single-handedly - the task of making us see that poetry is for the sake of poetry.

Let us notice it carefully that the form-content[30] identity claim is not exactly the poem's unparaphrasability claim, but the former is likely to be taken as, or reduced to, the latter. To say that the poem's form and content are so intimately interlinked that they cannot be prised apart, as does Bradley, is to draw our attention to the intense interaction between, and the simultaneous arising of, form and content in the creation of the poem. This contention does not necessarily involve or imply the claim that a poem cannot be paraphrased at all. However, it is tempting to lump these two claims together, or, even, to treat them as one and the same claim.

Let us now briefly recapitulate our discussion of Bradley's thoughts on the nature of poetry. Bradley starts off with the thesis that a poem's poetic value lies in an intrinsically worthwhile experience it provides us. This means that the point, purpose or worth of poetry does not lie outside the poem; the poem expects us to regard and respect it as an end in itself. Since this thesis may be taken as a shallow hedonistic theory asking the readers to consume the prettiness of the form alone and just neglect the content, Bradley embarks on a long digression in order to shed light on the muddled doctrines about form and content. He offers us three concepts of subject, substance and form. Bradley makes it clear that his thesis of poetry for poetry's sake does not hint at the doctrine of form for form's sake. For he does not believe that form and substance are the real components of the poem; they are academic, non-real items invented by the reflective mind. The poem is not a form plus a substance; it is a unity, and so it cannot be divided. Thus, we find that the cautious and vigilant Bradley, by the cunning of the pervasive form-content dualism,

[30] It might seem that I sometimes just forget Bradley's delineation of the term 'substance' and stick to the conventional term 'content'. I do so knowingly and purposely. I use 'content' whenever I refer to the common, conventional use of the form-content dualism. And, I use 'substance' whenever I want to refer to Bradley's views.

has been led and trapped in the muddled terrain. Bradley declares the indivisible unity of form and substance as a mark of a poem's genuineness, of its being a true example of poetry. The poem's words are commonly seen as its form and its meaning as its substance. So, inevitably, Bradley's form-substance identity thesis appears to be a version of the unparaphrasability thesis. The poem's form and substance cannot be separated means that its substance, that is, its meaning cannot be put into a different set of words. However, in my view, Bradley is not much interested in maintaining a strong negative thesis as far as the problem of paraphrase is concerned. He is more interested in maintaining that the poem's form shapes its substance; we cannot appreciate the substance without attending to the form. In this sense, a poem is a unity of form and substance; it is the thing itself, not a replaceable version of something else.

1.6 The poem and its meaning

Thus far we have assumed that by 'the substance of a poem' Bradley means its 'meaning', which is contrasted with the words that make up the poem. But, if we assume so, Bradley's thesis about the form-substance unity turns out to be too adamant. What does it mean to say that the meaning is shaped by a certain set of words, and therefore cannot be expressed by other sets of words? As it is perfectly possible to paraphrase any poem, that is, to re-state what it means, it cannot be true that the poem's words alone can express what they mean.

However, we must be aware of the fact that being a verbal entity, a poem is more vulnerable than other arts like painting or music to be taken as a meaning encoded in a set of words. When a question like 'What does Beethoven mean by his symphony?' is raised, we are not asked or expected straightforwardly to *separate* the content from the form. However, when a question like 'What the poem means (or what the poet meant by his poem)?' is raised, the stance adopted while answering it is rather different. The meaning of the words that constitute the poem is taken as its detachable content and the words as the forgettable form. It is of course possible to state in words what a painting means or how it is significant. But such a 'paraphrase' is not an articulation of the pure content as totally distinct and separate from the bare form that is used to present the content. Although a lot of criticism of arts, in the preliminary stages, consists in paraphrasing an artwork, the idea of paraphrase of a

poem is considered to be *equivalent* to the idea of lifting up the sacred content from the mundane form. This is disastrous. For this conception of paraphrase in terms of a clear-cut distinction between form and content does not leave room for the reader or critic to regard the poem as a work of art. The poem is reduced to a message or a meaning. However, this means *neither* that a poem does not have a meaning *nor* that a poem's meaning is unstatable or ineffable. This means that a poem is not, or does not have, *the* meaning which our paraphrase can fully capture. This also means that the poem is not worthwhile only because it contains a detachable content. Moreover, this means that the so-called meaning is only one aspect of the poem. And, finally, this means that picking up the so-called content or grasping the meaning is only a superficial way of reading poetry; in order to see its true significance, a poem needs to be experienced poetically. Recall Bradley's insistence that a poem is meant to be read for its own sake.

This is a proper juncture to see what Bradley has to say about artistic meaning:

> "Poetry ... is not, as good critics of painting and music often affirm, different from the other arts; in all of them content is one thing with the form. What Beethoven meant by his symphony, or Turner by his picture, was not something which you can name, but the picture and the symphony. Meaning they have, but *what* meaning can be said in no language but their own: and we know this, though some strange delusion makes us think the meaning has less worth because we cannot put it into words. Well, it is just the same with poetry."[31]

Bradley wants us to see that a poem, though verbal, is as *wordless* an artwork as a painting or a symphony. The words of a poem, though they look precisely like words in everyday language, behave like colour tones. The colour that a painter puts on the canvas is physical *material* but the painter is interested in it for its tone which would provide him with an element of his *medium*.[32] Similarly, the poet composes with or through the 'tones' of words. A word is not merely a physical mark or sound; meaning - denotative as well as connotative - is its integral part. So when the poet

[31] Ibid., 25

[32] I shall discuss the concept of medium shortly.

composes with words, he regards (and respects) meaningful words as potential elements of his medium. In other words, he is not interested in words devoid of meaning. A poem is fundamentally a play of meanings; not a sequence of words. Thus, Bradley's view, from the very beginning, is in opposition with the separation between 'meaning' and 'mere words'. A poem, on Bradley's view, is, like a painting, a composition of elements of the medium, and, therefore, its overall meaning cannot be stated in other words, nay, rather in words. That is, in order to know that meaning you must not look for and focus on the swiftly detachable content but read and experience the poem poetically. It is fascinating that Bradley calls in the above passage a painting's or symphony's composition its 'language'. The poem's language is a composition and a painterly or musical composition is a language.

1.7 Bradley's critics

I shall now consider two critical reactions to Bradley's lecture advanced by T. Redpath and Severin Schroeder. Redpath's paper appeared in the first half of the twentieth century and is now part of a widely read anthology[33]. Schroeder's paper was published only a few years ago[34]. These two treatments (along with that of Kivy's) indicate the need felt by philosophers to react to the content and the influence of Bradley's lecture. One of these reactions, that of Redpath's, is, in my view, way off the mark. The other reaction, that of Schroeder's, though insightful, seems to me lacking in something. So I try to supplement and enhance it using some conceptual tools offered by Virgil Aldrich in his book, *Philosophy of Art*[35]. Schroeder's interpretation of Bradley supplemented by my use of Aldrich's concepts will hopefully show why and how Bradley is still important and relevant.

Let us first see Redpath's take on Bradley:

> "... some philosophers and aestheticians certainly seem to feel driven to think of *poems* as *experiences*. This may perhaps be due to some phobia that otherwise they would have to consider them as marks on paper, or mere sounds in the air ... Another acute writer who seems to have suffered from it

[33] Redpath 1965
[34] Schroeder 2001
[35] Aldrich 1963

was A. C. Bradley. Bradley writes: 'Poetry being poems, we are to think of a poem as it actually exists; and, without aiming here at accuracy, we may say that an actual poem is a succession of experiences - sounds, images, thoughts, emotions - through which we pass when we read as poetically as we can.' What Bradley has done here is simply invent or take over an artificial sense of the word 'poem', to connote a succession of experiences. This must be what he has done, if we are to interpret his remark charitably: since otherwise what he would be saying would be nonsense. This can easily be seen. For I take it that what we read 'as poetically as we can', is a *poem*. And, if so, he would be saying that 'an actual poem is a succession of experiences through which we pass when we read a succession of experiences through which we pass ...' and so on, *ad infinitum*, which would seem to be absurd. But there is no need to be caught in the dichotomy that a poem is *either* marks on paper (or sounds in the air) *or* experiences. There is a third alternative, namely, that a poem is *words*, symbols functioning within a language system. The poem can, and does indeed, in my view, consist of *words*. The *meaning* of the poem, on the other hand, may well be experiences, and indeed, that is my suggestion."[36]

Whether or not Bradley suffers from any phobia is too difficult a matter to decide, but it is as clear as a sunny day that Redpath does not read the words under consideration carefully. He would not have otherwise missed how the alert Bradley qualifies his statement: 'without aiming here at accuracy'. Not just this. Bradley supplies a note to his lines quoted by Redpath. In that note he seems to anticipate Redpathean readings: "The purpose of this sentence was not, as has been supposed, to give a definition of poetry. To define poetry as something that goes on in us when we read poetically would be absurd indeed. My object was to suggest ... that it is futile to ask questions about the end, or substance, or form of poetry, if we forget that a poem is neither a mere number of black marks on a white page, nor such experience as is evoked in us when we read these marks as we read, let us say, a newspaper article; and I suppose my hearers to know ... how that sort of reading

[36] Op. cit., 156-57 all emphases as in the original

differs from poetical reading."[37] Later in the same note, Bradley raises three sample questions that a poetics would have to tackle if we accept his description of a poem in terms of a series of experiences as a *definition* of poetry. Therefore, if Redpath would have read these words of Bradley's with care, he would not have got the chance to declare Bradley's description as 'absurd'. Nor would he have introduced the artificial dichotomy between 'marks' and 'experiences', and offer us his ingenious third alternative that "The poem can, and does indeed, in my view, consist of *words*". As Bradley does not aim to give a strict definition, his claim to the effect that a poem is a succession of experiences does not eventuate in an absurdity as argued by Redpath. Logic is not enough; many times wakeful commonsense comes in handy. Bradley's claim can be better understood, as indicated above[38], in terms of its similarity to Kant's and Collingwood's concepts regarding the appreciator's active role in aesthetic experience and the complex and multifaceted nature of that experience.

For Bradley a poem is neither marks on a paper nor a kind of experience that is evoked in us when we read a newspaper article. There is a world of difference between ways of reading that a newspaper article and a poem demands from the reader. In order for a poem to be appreciated as a poem and not as something else, say, as a piece of instruction, it is necessary that it be read in a particular way. So, a poem, if it is a genuine poem, demands a poetic way of reading; and, at the same time, unless we read a poem poetically, we cannot perceive its poetic value. This might seem circular but Bradley appears to contend that unless we gear ourselves into a poetic mode, the poem would not emerge as an *aesthetic object*. When we read a poem poetically, it manifests itself as an aesthetic object.

So, Redpath is not entirely wrong. He points to this - to the poem's emerging as an aesthetic object - when he says that though a poem cannot be experiences, the *meaning* of a poem may be experiences. Thus, to develop Redpath's inadvertent, cursory suggestion, the meaning of a poem is *what it is experienced as*. I want to bring in here Virgil Aldrich's neglected novel notions of 'aesthetic object' and 'aesthetic perception'.

1.8 The poem as an aesthetic object

[37] Op. cit., Note A, 29
[38] On page 3

Take a duck-rabbit figure made so famous by Wittgenstein. Sometimes it looks as a duck's head and sometimes as a rabbit's head. The figure, the design on the page remains the same; only its apparent aspects change. And, the change of aspect is very much dependent upon our perceptiveness, our ability to notice and discern. This phenomenon suggests Aldrich a few fertile things.

> "The same material thing may be perceptually realized either as a physical object or as an aesthetic object. This refers to two modes of perception different in category."[39]

Aldrich terms seeing the material thing as a physical object 'observation' and seeing it as an aesthetic object 'prehension'. He gives us an example of prehension:

> "Take for example a dark city and a pale western sky at dusk, meeting at the sky line. In the purely prehensive or aesthetic view of this, the light sky area just above the jagged sky line protrudes toward the point of view. The sky is closer to the viewer than are the dark areas of buildings. This is the disposition of these material things in aesthetic space ..."[40]

Ordinarily, we would not grant that the sky is closer than the buildings in the city but it is true experientially, in the prehensive mode of perception. Aldrich calls the ordinary perception 'observation' and aesthetic perception of the above kind 'prehension':

> " ... under observation, the characteristics of the material thing are realized as "qualities" that "qualify" it, while for prehension, its characteristics are realized as "aspects" (objective impressions) that "animate" it."[41]

Note that aspects are *objective* impressions, not subjective fancies or impositions. They belong to the material thing as it is prehended as an aesthetic

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[39] Aldrich 1963, 21
[40] Ibid., 22
[41] Ibid.

object. The material thing reveals itself as a prehended aspect. This precludes the possibility that an aesthetic object be taken as a mental object.

One chief merit of Aldrich's theory is that he destabilises our notion of physical object. Things like tables and chairs and pitchers and pens, Aldrich reminds us, are not physical objects basically, but materials, pure potentials which are 'perceptually realized' as our ordinary physical objects. An implication of this destabilisation is that aesthetic objects are not fanciful or less real entities. There is a mode of perception other than observation which equally objectively reveals aesthetic objects. One feature of observation must be noted: its ubiquitous nature, its pervasiveness, its ordinariness. It is taken for granted as *the* way of looking at things. One can begin prehending things if and only if one evades or suspends observing them.

Now let us get back to poetry and Bradley.

First, when Bradley emphasizes that the poetic value of a poem lies in the experience it gives us, he has in mind the poem's emergence or arising as an aesthetic object. So, not the succession of individual images, thoughts, or sounds but the whole, the gestalt they constitute is the 'material' base that is realized as an aesthetic object, as an object of poetic reading.

Second, as to the meaning of a poem. Bradley wants us to see that *what* Beethoven means by his symphony or Philip Larkin by his poem is nothing but the symphony or the poem. And this 'what' of the poem or symphony ought not to be named. It ought not to be named because it is not intended to be observed but to be prehended. Focusing on and extracting the poem's meaning is to condone the gestalt, and, thereby, not to let the poem reveal itself as an aesthetic object. Putting the extracted meaning into other words is to 'observe' the poem as "a preconceived and clearly defined matter" instead of prehending it as a mercurial yet objective aspect of "a vague imaginative mass pressing for development and definition." To focus on meanings is not an invalid or incorrect way to read a poem. But that is to refuse that the sky is closer than the buildings; not to let the poem's novel aspects dawn upon us.

Third, since what we experience is the poem itself as an aesthetic object, we simply overcome the form-substance or form-content or any other dichotomy. Not the poem's individual constituents but the whole they eventuate in serves as the potential that is realized as an aesthetic object. This lets us see that the poem is a rich

and complex phenomenon that may yield various aspects and diverse interpretations.

1.9 The poem's transitive and intransitive meaning

So far, so good. Don't look for meanings; experience the poem as an aesthetic object. But does this mean that a poem does not really mean anything? The question of meaning still nags at us. Let us keep it in mind and turn to Schroeder's reaction to Bradley.

Schroeder writes in his article 'The Coded-Message Model of Literature':

> "The triviality that typically results from an attempt to paraphrase the Meaning of a work of literature led A. C. Bradley to the famous (or notorious) claim that in art, form and content are identical, so that a work's content cannot be stated in another form. In this, Bradley seems wiser than those who seek to match the extraordinary impression a work makes on them with an extraordinary interpretation. His denunciation of the 'heresy' of paraphrasing poetry rightly acknowledges that all attempts to account for a work's aesthetic significance by extracting from it a message are doomed to failure. But at the same time, Bradley is still in the grip of the misconstrual of aesthetic meaning as transitive. We cannot *paraphrase* the work's message, but it is there for the appreciative reader to understand. Nor is it ineffable, for the author has succeeded in expressing it: 'What that meaning is *I* cannot say: Virgil has said it'. Now what is unsatisfactory about Bradley's doctrine is not that he talks of a poem's meaning while refusing to say *what* that meaning is. The problem is rather that he continues to talk as if there was a meaning of the kind that is normally given by paraphrase ..."[42]

In order to understand the shortcoming of, or lapse in, Bradley's doctrine that Schroeder is trying to delineate, we have to familiarize ourselves with various strands that he weaves together in this passage.

The principal aim of Schroeder's paper is to refute the view that a literary work's literary-aesthetic significance resides in a hidden meaning that is accessible

[42] Op. cit., 226-27

to innovative interpretative strategies alone. Schroeder's main target is a cluster of structuralist theories that treat poems as intellectual puzzles[43], as messages encoded in a secret language. Schroeder's own view regarding the value of a poem is, to borrow the words of Wittgenstein that he uses, that a work of art "does not aim to convey *something else*, just itself."[44]

Inspired by Wittgenstein, Schroeder distinguishes between two types of meaning or meaningfulness. A bed of pansies is not only attractive and pleasing to look at but seems meaningful. However, when we ask ourselves '*What* meaning does it display?' we feel helpless, we cannot spell it out. It is certain that the pattern of flowers is not meaningless but at the same time it is equally certain that its meaningfulness is not susceptible to "such expression in our [language-] game as 'This pattern has the meaning so and so'".[45] The bed of pansies has an "intransitive" meaning as opposed to the usual "transitive" meaning which we can state as an answer to the question 'What meaning?'. That is, we *use* the word 'meaning' transitively or intransitively. Schroeder contends that poems and literary works are intransitively meaningful.

Schroeder further offers three ways in which the concept of intransitive meaning can be made sense of. First, when we say about something that 'It means a lot to me', we mean that it is dear to me, I *value* it. So, a thing's being meaningful intransitively can be seen as its being valued for its own sake. Second, we experience some things like a tune or a face as expressive of something, *as if* they say something and we understand it. But we cannot articulate what it says; for it does not say anything beyond itself. This is due to their being striking configurations or gestalts. Third, in a good work of art, no single element seems arbitrary or incidental; everything appears to fit in and make sense. Thus, the word 'meaning', when it is used intransitively, can mean: 1.Value; 2.Gestalt; 3.Fittingness.

These are not three distinctly separate denotations; they can be mixed up. Schroeder employs the word 'Meaning', with capitalized 'm', to denote the intransitive type of meaning; and, he uses the word 'meaning', with small 'm', to denote the ordinary, transitive meaning.

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[43] 'Puzzle' is the name given by Collingwood to one of the six versions of the theory of art as psychological stimulation. It stimulates intellectual faculties for the mere sake of their exercises: Collingwood 1938, 29-36

[44] Op. cit., 211

[45] *Ibid.*, 223

Now, with this conceptual framework at his disposal, Schroeder is all set to attack the coded-message model of literature:

> "Naturally one would like to account for a literary work's *Meaning*, its aesthetically valuable characteristics, and so one does explain the work's *meaning* - its content ... Trying to explicate aesthetic qualities we often don't even know where to begin; so we tend to fall back on what is common practice in the realm of language: interpretation, the paraphrase of linguistic meaning."[46]

Although Schroeder appears to use here 'interpretation' and 'paraphrase of linguistic meaning' as nearly synonymous, we can take them as two distinct but interrelated modes of dealing with the poem. Paraphrasing a poem requires focusing on the obvious meanings of the poem whereas interpreting it requires digging deep for the non-obvious, secret meanings by means of interpretative strategies. However, both these types masquerade as attempts to explicate the Meaning, the intransitive aesthetic meaningfulness of the poem. Schroeder is rather kind-hearted to describe them as failed or flawed attempts to explicate the aesthetic value. But Bradley terms such attempts as 'heresies'. On Bradley's view, it is heretical to stick to *either* the obvious-or-hidden meaning (substance) *or* the form to locate the poetic value of a poem. Thus, according to Schroeder, the proper object of a literary inquiry is the Meaning of a poem, not its meaning or so-called content. Consequently, in Schroeder's judgment, Bradley's foundational claim is insightful: paraphrasing a poem, extracting its meaning or message is not a proper way to appreciate its aesthetic worth. At the same time, Bradley does not fall prey to the coded-message model of literature. He does not posit a mysterious, core, and essential meaning of a poem that eludes paraphrases. Paraphrase is just not the way to understand poetry.

However, Schroeder is not wholeheartedly happy with Bradley's view. Although Bradley catches a glimpse of the intransitive meaningfulness of a poem - this is most manifest in his comments, which we considered above, to the effect that a poem itself, like a painting or symphony, is the only way in which its meaning can be uttered - "he is still in the grip of the misconstrual of aesthetic meaning as

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[46] Ibid., 225

transitive." Bradley rightly recognizes that a paraphrase of the content cannot render the poem aesthetically available; it rather fatally damages that possibility. But he still appears to think that there is in the poem a profound, unparaphrasable meaning which the poet has expressed ('Virgil has said it') and which the reader is supposed to contemplate and reflect upon. What that meaning is the reader or critic cannot say, though. This acute observation is worth pursuing further.

As Schroeder guesses, Bradley definitely appears to be in the grip of something. However, that something is not, as Schroeder thinks, the notion of meaning in the ordinary, transitive sense, but, I contend, the messy form-content dualism itself. Recall that Bradley is fearful that his formula 'poetry for poetry's sake' would be easily taken as a disguised doctrine of 'form for form's sake'. As this fear looms large, Bradley has to declare that both form and substance are equally important, but we must remember that they are a unity and the substance cannot be expressed by any other form. If Bradley had devoted more space to characterizing further the experience given by a good poem than he expends while refereeing the form-content duel, he would have been led to put forth an innocent or uncontroversial but more systematic theory of poetry. Maybe, without the declaration of the form-content identity, Bradley's lecture would not have been such a hot thing as it has been throughout the century.

To return to Schroeder's criticism. As for the notion of intransitive, aesthetically rich meaning of the poem, the hypothetical common reader would have felt the same as he feels after reading Bradley's recommendation that a poem is meant to be read for its own sake. The common reader would retort again: "Now you are telling me to concentrate on the intransitive meaning at the cost of the transitive meaning. Now you ask me to savour something which is nothing but the masked form. But this time the masked form is at least superficially related with meaning. See, the meaning, the content matters; even you, the shrewd proponent of formalism, concede this!" Now the ball is in our court: we have to decide whether Bradley is all for - and *only* for - the intransitive meaning of a poem or does he also champion some kind of transitive meaning too? Or, is he, as Schroeder argues, really at least partially in the grip of transitive poetic meaning?

One thing is quite clear that Bradley never wants to do injustice to the intuition of the common reader of poetry that the meaning (or content) of a poem is of supreme importance. However, Bradley perceives that ascribing supremacy to the

poem's transitive meaning does injustice to the *art* of poetry. Experiencing the poem as an aesthetic object is the first prerequisite for beginning to appreciate it as a work of art. Extracting a meaning can be an obstruction in the appreciator's way.

1.10 Is the poem intransitive?

Now, the crucial question is, does not a poem, even a genuine, good, paradigmatic poem, have a transitive meaning which we can state, elaborate, comment on, interpret in various ways? Does a good poem only have an intransitive, experiential, aesthetic meaningfulness?

The notion of the intransitive use of 'meaning' bears an interesting resemblance to Kant's concept of 'purposiveness without purpose'. To conclude the Third Moment of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful', Kant writes, "*Beauty* is an object's form of *purposiveness* insofar as it is perceived in the object *without the presentation of a purpose*."[47] We consider a tulip - Kant's own example - beautiful because while perceiving it we encounter a purposiveness which we do not refer to, or seek to explain or understand in terms of, a certain purpose served by the flower. The flower seems to possess meaning or significance just in virtue of its shape. However, it does not have any definite meaning. Thus the flower's appearing to be meaningful without conveying any determinate meaning Kant describes as purposiveness without a purpose. An artwork, a product of artist's deliberate and directed activity, has a purpose. However, if it does not exhibit such meaningfulness or purposiveness as does a tulip, it could not present itself as a worthy candidate for aesthetic appreciation. In Wittgenstein's and Schroeder's example, pansies are natural beautiful objects, but the beds they are part of are man-made. These artificial beds seem to say something although one cannot state what that is. Wittgenstein delineates this as the intransitive use of the word 'meaning'. Does Bradley want his common reader to accept that a poem is beautiful because it is intransitively meaningful as a tulip or bed of pansies?

I think we can answer this question in a satisfactory way if we pay attention to Bradley's distinction between subject and substance. To recapitulate, the subject is what a poem is about and the substance is what the subject becomes within the poem

[47] Op. cit., 17: 84

through the poet's creative poetic act. Before the poet touches it, the subject is a cluster of vague, potential meanings; general notions and conceptions in people's mind. So, the subject and the substance resemble each other to some extent or at least in appearance. Now, Bradley claims, the substance is not separate from the form, and so we cannot grasp the substance without bothering about form. In other words, in order to grasp the substance properly we need to pay attention to the form.

We can develop one sympathetic line of thought that would lead us to the form-substance inseparability thesis. It seems that Bradley wants to give to the poet due credit for what he actually creates, that is, a linguistic artwork. If Bradley too, in tune with the common reader sincerely in love with big questions about life and death, allows us to focus primarily on the substance, then the poet would not get this credit. Therefore, Bradley thinks that it is necessary and worthwhile to declare that form and substance are so intimate that they are inseparable.

We can also develop one unsympathetic line of thought. The poet employs form in order to convey the substance. Thus there is the substance on the one hand and form on the other. Of course substance is primary and form secondary. The serious common reader looks for the substance; enjoys the form only incidentally. As the poet consciously employs the form, it has at best an extraneous connection with the substance. That is, the same substance can be conveyed through other forms as well. But in order to maintain poetry's sanctity, Bradley has to exaggerate and declare that form and substance are so intimately interconnected that they are inseparable. We shall see later on that Peter Kivy's criticism of Bradley's lecture expands on such an unsympathetic line of thought.

Now, what these two lines of thought have in common is the assumption that the form and the substance are readily available to the poet before he starts writing the poem. The proponents of both these lines of thought do not see that form and substance *emerge, arise,* or *become manifest* in the act of composition. That is, they imagine that the poet works in a vacuum, and he just chooses, employing his power to choose, certain forms for certain substances. Of course, he thinks about appropriateness, fittingness, effectiveness and beauty but it is all up to him; he decides this form would go with this substance. When Bradley emphasizes that form and substance are not two components of the poem somehow joined together, he means to say that they do not have a superfluous relation to each other for they have arisen in the creative act. Now, they do not and cannot arise out of the blue. Thus we

are led to consider the crucial concept of medium. Form and substance arise out of the poet's medium. They are inseparable means that they are derived simultaneously.

Let me seek Aldrich's help again. Aldrich gives us a formula: "the *content* of a work of art is its *subject matter* as *formulated* in its *medium*"[48]. All the four concepts are present in this formula and Aldrich neatly specifies their interrelations. Aldrich offers us an insightful and clear distinction between material and medium:

> "The English language (spoken or heard) is the material, and as material the language is simply the recognizable utterances in grammatical order (secondary material) and the familiar meanings and rhythms of the words together with the usual image or emotive concomitants (primary material). Now ... see what you can do with this material. You juxtapose certain elements in a way that enhances rhythms, sonorities, and alliterations in the secondary material, a way that requires you to go beyond merely pronouncing the words correctly to intoning them, while it freshens the meanings and their ordinary values in the new combinations, metaphorical and otherwise. Thus does the *medium* of the poem emerge for notice, out of the linguistic matrix or base of its *material.* "[49]

> "Strictly speaking, the artist does not manipulate the medium. He composes with it ... The materials are parts of the work of art simply as a material thing. But one should never forget that it is these materials, arranged by the artist into the material thing called the work of art, that are prehended as the aesthetic object. In the artist's experience as he composes, each material is featured as a little, elementary aesthetic object. Thus the composite aesthetic object is not a sort of ethereal veil or screen between the prehending subject and the work of art. The aesthetic object *is* the ordered material thing (work of art) appearing under the categorical aspect that is has for prehensive perception ... the medium ... is what is featured in prehension of the thing as aesthetic object. And in observation the medium is excluded, because the thing is then a physical object."[50]

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[48] Op. cit., 41
[49] Ibid., 94
[50] Ibid., 39-40

Aldrich's exposition is very valuable as it rightly guides us towards the poet's medium. The medium emerges through the poet's play with the materials. What he really arranges are parts of the material but at the same time he combines elements of the medium. So, 'form' can refer to both. However, as Aldrich intends it, his term denotes combination and juxtaposition of elements of the medium. We can call them 'material form' and 'medium form' respectively. Content is the medium-formed subject matter. So subject matter is not only transformed but transfigured in the composition.

However, I am not happy with Aldrich's *equating* the emerged or 'achieved' medium *with* the aesthetic object. As the aesthetic object is the ultimate object of aesthetic appreciation, it includes everything that a work of art has within it. And a work of art has within it everything that the emergence of the medium has helped to become manifest. So, the medium itself cannot be the *ultimate or supreme* object of appreciation. What the reader of a poem experiences is that which the medium makes available and accessible. As the medium that the poet creates is unique, what it shows and lets us experience is singular and insubstitutable.

We can turn now to the question whether Bradley regards the poem as merely intransitively meaningful. When we perceive the purposiveness in a flower, we do not bother to discover whether it really serves some or other purpose but let its shape or form appear as something striking. That is, we tend to think as if it is formed in a certain medium. However, no subject matter is formulated in the flower, so there is no content to it. In this sense, the beauty of a flower is 'abstract'; it is devoid of subject matter as transformed into content. Herein lies the key to make sense of Bradley's position. As far as the poem does something to the subject matter, it does have content or transitive meaning in the ordinary, everyday sense. That is, though Bradley is all for experiencing the poem as an aesthetic object, he wants to provide some room for the notion of meaning in terms of what-happens-to-the-subject matter. So, on our interpretation of Bradley's position, he rescues the common reader's meaning or content in this way.

1.11 Bradley, Brooks and Budd

Henceforth I consider briefly two views that show close affinity with Bradley.

Cleanth Brooks, a well-known proponent of New Criticism, wrote one of the most influential literary-critical essays in the twentieth century, namely, 'The Heresy of Paraphrase'. While Bradley thinks it heretical to give primacy either to the substance or the form, Brooks regards a view that regards a paraphrase as a statement that exhaustively captures the essential meaning of a poem as a heresy. Bradley's view, and also his language, reverberates in Brooks's equally significant essay. As we shall see afterwards, Kivy characterizes Bradley's doctrine as 'no-paraphrase claim'. So it would be fruitful if we take into account the cognate view proposed by Brooks whose name - rather than Bradley's - is customarily associated with the heresy of paraphrase.

More recently, Malcolm Budd, in his book *Values of Art*, has stressed that the poetic value of a poem is to be found in the experience it gives us. Budd's view, in my judgment, is a slightly modified avatar of Bradley's insightful doctrine. So it would also be rewarding to study a tacit relationship between Bradley, Brooks and Budd.

Brooks is not so much against paraphrase as he is for the innate resistance "which any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it."[51] To believe that a paraphrase captures the essence of, and can replace the poem, is, according to Brooks, to commit a heretical act. For it forces us to consider a poem as a statement, and thereby jeopardizes its poetic value. Paraphrase leads us away from the poem; it makes us think that the 'prose sense' of the poem is a rack on which the detachable, disposable, and negligible poetic stuff is hung.[52] In order to paraphrase a poem, one must first concentrate on and extract the so-called prose sense. This approach treats a poem as a hierarchical system rather than as a harmonious unity of intuition and expression. Brooks admiringly quotes W. M. Urban: "The artist does not first intuit his object and then find the appropriate medium. It is rather in and through his medium that he intuits the object."[53] Brooks views the poetic composition as the poet's coming to terms with his experience.[54] So, it follows that to read and appreciate a poem is to see how the poet has come to terms with his experience and thereby to regard the unity of intuition and expression that is the poem itself as

[51] Brooks 1947, 160
[52] Ibid., 162
[53] Ibid., 163
[54] Ibid., 169

singular and worthwhile for its own sake. On the other hand, attempts to paraphrase a poem *divide* it by hook or crook and identify a thought or meaning that can be fully captured by other words as its core and essence. This is not to deny the usefulness of paraphrases. We can use paraphrases "as pointers and as short-hand references provided that we know what we are doing."[55] And an important part of what we must know while using paraphrases consists of an antidote to implied dualisms like form and content: as paraphrase expresses the poem's content, its form can be replaced by any other form. Thus, according to Brooks, the heresy of paraphrase is the root-heresy; it not only leads to various distempers of criticism but makes us forget to read poetry as poetry.

Budd has advanced a thesis about poetic value which is pretty similar to that of Bradley's. Budd maintains that a poem's value as a poem does not reside in the thoughts it expresses. If the poem's value consisted in the thoughts, then we would dispose of it after grasping the thoughts. However, we do not consider a good poem dispensable in this way. For, Budd writes, "what matters in poetry is the imaginative experience you undergo in reading the poem, not merely the thoughts expressed by the words of the poem; and it is constitutive of this imaginative experience that it consists in an awareness of the words as arranged in the poem."[56] Budd says further, "... the value of poetry is singular or insubstitutable: poetry has an importance it could never lose by being replaced by something else that achieves the same end". Hence paraphrasing cannot be a proper way of appreciating a poem. Unlike non-poetic linguistic vehicles, the function of a poem is not to convey a message but to offer us an experience "that cannot be fully characterized independently of the poem itself."[57]

We do not need a commentary to see how similar Budd's position is to Bradley's central thesis. According to both, a poem is to be valued for its own sake. However, it is curious that Budd not only does not mention Bradley as his pioneering predecessor but brings him in as a foil. Budd is keen to separate his position about the singularity of a poem from the claim that a poem is insubstitutable because it contains a meaning that cannot be captured by any other words. According to Budd, it is not the unique, unparaphrasable meaning but the imaginative experience offered

[55] Ibid., 160
[56] Budd 1995, 83
[57] Ibid., 84

by the poem that makes it intrinsically and irreplaceably valuable. Budd thinks that Brooks is a prominent representative of the school that equates the poem's insubstitutability with its unparaphrasability. And, Budd observes in a note, a "somewhat similar claim about the meaning of a poem and the diagnosis of a related heresy - the heresy of paraphrasable substance - is made in A. C. Bradley's 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake'"[58].

Thus Budd can be seen as relegating Bradley and Brooks to the opposite party. It is my contention that he can do so because he prefers to consider their positions as centered around meaning rather than experience. On Budd's view, both Bradley and Brooks think that it is the matchless meaning that bestows on the poem the unique poetic value. On the other hand, Budd himself tries to locate the uniqueness of poetic value in the imaginative experience the reader undergoes.

However, it should be clear from the above discussion that Bradley is fighting a case for the intrinsically valuable poetic experience. It is Brooks who finds himself entangled in the jungle of meaning. In order to maintain that even an accurate paraphrase cannot tell us what is truly poetic about the poem, he asserts that a paraphrase does not lead us to the essential meaning or the core of the poem. Thus Brooks seems to unnecessarily create the myth of the ghost-like core or essence of the poem wherein dwells the pure, authentic, genuine meaning. This is definitely a troublesome move. For instance, Stanley Cavell criticises Brooks by detecting this tendency:

> "... he [Brooks] has to do everything at his philosophical disposal to keep paraphrase and poem from coinciding; in particular, speak of cores and essences and structures of the poem that are not reached by the paraphrase. It is as if someone got it into his head that really pointing to an object would require actually touching it, and then, realizing that this would make life very inconvenient, reconciled himself to common sense by saying: Of course we *can* point to objects, but we must realize what we are doing, and that most of the time this is only approximately pointing to them."[59]

Cavell is referring here to Brooks's insistence that paraphrase at its best only

[58] Ibid., 191
[59] Cavell 1976, 76-77

points to the essence of the poem; that paraphrase states the poem's meaning only approximately, not exactly. Cavell sketches Brooks as a person who unnecessarily thinks that an approximate, arrow-like paraphrase fails just because it doesn't touch an unreachable, hidden core. Cavell rightly underlines that poem and paraphrase belong to different planes altogether, and it is futile to view paraphrase as the poem's competitor and to declare the poem as winner forever. Now although Cavell seems to be perfectly right here, we must note that Brooks does not engage in this debate because he wants to decide what is superior - the poem or the paraphrase. His diagnosis is that the belief that what the poem means or expresses and what the paraphrase captures are one and the same thing leads to various distempers of criticism. And therefore he confronts the heresy of paraphrase. However, the jargon he adopts makes him look like an eccentric warrior. Though Brooks's eccentricity seems extreme against Bradley's being trapped in the jungle of form, content, their unity and the essence of poetry, Bradley too is a victim of his own jargon at least to some extent. Budd's lumping them together and distancing himself away from them brings this to the fore.

However, Budd too is not utterly safe. He can easily be seen as positing another dualism - thoughts expressed by the poem and the way the thoughts are expressed. Describing Budd's view as "the richest and most sophisticated recent philosophical discussion of poetic value"[60], Alex Neill observes that though it is true that the poem's value does not lie wholly in the thoughts it articulates there still is the possibility that it lies partly in those thoughts. Well, wherein lie the remaining portions of value, then? Of course in the *way* in which the thoughts are expressed. Neill writes, "... what is experienced in the experience of a poem is (or at least very often) precisely a thought or set of thoughts expressed or articulated in a particular way."[61] So the value of a poem lies partly in the thoughts and partly in the way in which they are expressed. On Neill's suggestion, these two exhaust the object of our experience of the poem. Needless to state, this is yet another version of the form-content dichotomy.

Though Bradley seems to be an outstanding figure in the stream of philosophical thinking about poetry that emphasizes on the poetic experience, Budd likes to repress this heritage in order to avoid certain traps. So he finds it convenient

[60] Neill 2003, 609
[61] Ibid., 611

to take notice of Bradley as someone whose view is another example of the adamant unparaphrasability thesis advocated by Brooks.

1.12 Conclusion

In this inaugural chapter we saw that Bradley's principal thesis is that a good poem is intrinsically and irreplaceably valuable owing to its imaginative experience. The sub-theme of the form-content identity causes a lot of furore. Bradley argues that what the poem expresses is unique since it cannot be expressed by any other forms. I interpret this as a plea for considering a poem as a work of art. As a work of art, a poem emerges out of the poet's play with the medium. The poem's literary-aesthetic meaning, which Bradley rightly considers as the only relevant sense of 'meaning' in connection with poetry, may be termed as intransitive, if we regard the ordinary, statable meaning as transitive. Malcolm Budd tries to separate his position regarding the poetic value from Brooks's as well as Bradley's views. This helps us to map the internal conflicts within the camp of aestheticians who connect the intrinsic value of a poem with its unique experience. In the next chapter, we shall consider Peter Kivy's critique of Bradley, which can be seen as a representative of the opposition that capitalizes on these conflicts.

CHAPTER 2

Poem: A Vehicle on Hire or An Act in the Medium?

2.1 Introduction: Bradley vs. Kivy - a representative fundamental quarrel

In 1997, Peter Kivy wrote a noteworthy book entitled *Philosophies of Art: An Essay in Differences*. Thus far aestheticians have pursued to bind all arts together but the point is to focus on the differences between them - this is the key-note of Kivy's monograph. This plea is, of course, worth welcoming. However, in the fourth chapter of the book 'On the Unity of Form and Content', Kivy, in my view, not only fails to note the distinctiveness of poetry but tries to lead the reader away from it. Broadly speaking, Kivy thinks about poetry instrumentally. For him a poem is a means employed for a certain purpose. The poem may be charming, impressive or beautiful but that does not alter its subsidiary status. But this seems to be plainly absurd. For when we like a certain poem, we normally consider it as not 'useful' but 'beautiful'. To say that the poem is beautiful means, among other things, that we enjoy it for its own sake. The phenomenon that we enjoy some poems for their own sake naturally points towards a possibility that their significance does not depend upon the purposes they serve; it may be intrinsic. Bradley devotes his energies to explore this possibility. Kivy, on the other hand, tries to persuade us that seeing a poem as a useful means is perhaps the only worthwhile way to look at poetry. So I feel it necessary to examine Kivy's position and show that his outlook does grave injustice to the peculiar nature of poetry.

As the title of the chapter in question tells us, Kivy is concerned in those pages with the view that a poem's form and content are so unified that they are inseparable. This is the 'form-content identity thesis'. According to Kivy, this is an implausible thesis. For we can always discern that *this* is what the poem means and *this* is the way in which it expresses that meaning. Words of the poem are its form and what it means or expresses is its content. It is as simple as that. Corollary to the form-content identity thesis is what Kivy calls the 'no-paraphrase claim'. As the poem's form and content are inseparable, its content cannot be re-stated in other words. The poem's form alone can express its content. So a good poem can never be

fully paraphrased, however accurate or faithful the paraphrase may be. Kivy's chapter is an attempt to question the validity of, and to refute, the way of philosophising about poetry in terms of the form-content identity and the unparaphrasability exhibited by poems. Kivy focuses upon Bradley's lecture as the source of the twentieth-century avatar of the form-content identity thesis.

As we already saw, Bradley deals with the notions of form and content because they, due to their messy (or rich) ambivalence, give rise to various misconceptions about the nature of poetry. One prominent misconception, which Kivy tightly embraces, is to view a poem as a means, as a vehicle conveying a message. So, an important thing to be borne in mind while considering Kivy's criticism is that Bradley underlines the form-content identity and the unparaphrasability displayed by a good poem in order to draw our attention to his broader thesis that poetry is for the sake of poetry.

Thus, Bradley's philosophizing about poetry is non-instrumentalist whereas Kivy appears to be a thorough instrumentalist. Bradley is an advocate of the view that a poem's value is purely intrinsic whereas Kivy is a representative of the view that a poem's value is purely instrumental. The conflict begins at a fundamental level.

In this chapter, I intend to critically examine the Bradley-Kivy debate as a representative quarrel concerning two fundamentally opposed approaches to poetry.

2.2 Kivy's conception of poetry

Before turning to his criticism, it would be useful to take into account Kivy's general conception of the nature of poetry. He puts it forth towards the end - in Section 14 - of the chapter 'On the Unity of Form and Content'. This is too brief an account. I am also aware of the fact that Kivy writes it incidentally. That is, in the chapter under consideration, his primary aim is to criticize Bradley rather than to develop his own theory of poetry. Nonetheless, this is an explicit statement of his view of the nature and value of poetry which informs his critique of Bradley throughout. Moreover, Kivy proposes this view as a more viable, indeed better alternative to Bradley's view. Therefore, although briefly and incidentally stated, this view of Kivy's can be taken as the wellspring of inspiration for his assault on Bradley. In addition to this, it will also be rewarding if we take notice of Kivy's own take on the relations between

form and content as presented in Section 15 of the chapter in question. Our prior knowledge of Kivy's views on the form-content relationship and the nature of poetry will be quite helpful to understand his critique of Bradley. Let us first observe what Kivy has to say about the nature of poetry.

Once upon a time it was a common practice to present results or findings of intellectual inquiry in poems. Accordingly, being an articulation of intellectual content, poetry was regarded (and respected) as a source of knowledge.

However, nowadays a philosopher or a molecular biologist does not express the findings of his inquiry in a poetic form. For there has been a profound change in the practice of sciences and intellectual disciplines. Similarly, as poetry is no longer a means of expression of intellectual content, there has been an equally profound change in the practice of poetry too.

In a changed scenario, some lovers of poetry feel it necessary to defend poetry, and so they claim that it offers us a special kind of knowledge, which cannot be obtained through sciences and intellectual disciplines. The form-content identity thesis stems from such a desire to defend poetry as a source of an esoteric sort of knowledge. To claim that form and content are inseparable is to claim that the poem's content is a unique piece of knowledge which cannot be expressed by means of other forms.

Against this backdrop, which is in fact a summary of one of the principal theses of his chapter, Kivy writes:

> "The practice of poetry is not a way of knowing some particular kind of thing but, in one of its offices, one of the various ways we may have of expressing all kinds of things we know or believe, wish or hope, fear or value."[62]

Remarking that Bradley is quite wrong in saying that we should not consider a good poem as a verbalisation of something that we already know, Kivy observes that this view of Bradley's "overlooks one of our deepest and most persistent needs: the need, so obvious already in childhood, of being told the same things over and again."[63] He adds further:

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[62] Kivy 1997, 114-15
[63] Ibid., 115

"Poetry and fiction are not special conduits to the fonts of wisdom. They are ways some wise folks (and some not so wise) have tried to express some of the things they have found out or others have found out, (and some things that nobody has found out, because they are not the case). There is no one kind of knowledge, effable or ineffable, that is the particular province of poets."[64]

"The practice of poetry is not a method or methods of gaining some special, esoteric form of knowledge, but a method or methods of expressing knowledge (and other things too) that people have (or think they have) acquired in all of the various ways people do acquire such things, from scientific investigation to philosophical discussion, from common sense to ecstatic vision, from moral argument to religious conversion."[65]

Kivy seems to hold two beliefs firmly: First, poetry itself is not a way of knowing. Second, poetry is one of the various ways of expressing whatever we want to express - this includes not only what we know (through other, non-poetic ways of knowing) but also what we value, fear and so on. But why do we need poetry if it expresses that which we *already* know, fear, or value? Well, it is our deep need to be told the same things time and again. So, on Kivy's account, poetry *reminds* us; it helps us to recollect knowledge that we already possess and other things which we have already experienced. But a disturbing question immediately comes to mind: If a poem is nothing else than a reminder, then why do we need a *poetic* reminder? If our goal is to recollect things, then any reminder can do the job well; we do not need poetry for that.

Kivy might say here that poetry performs the job of reminding not only effectively but beautifully. We might reply to this by saying that the hundreds of second-hand books that I bought during my years at the university remind me - of course, not only effectively but also beautifully - of what I valued then. That is, I do not need poems written by someone else for such remembrance of things past. In response to this, Kivy might qualify his claim further by saying that a poem reminds in a special and distinctive way. But in that case he will have to characterize poetry's

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 116

way of telling the same old things which is special not due to efficiency or beauty alone. Kivy does not specify this.

Kivy's list of ways of knowing is curious. It includes not only scientific or philosophical investigations but also *ecstatic vision* and *religious conversion*. It seems to me that in order to stress that generation of knowledge of a unique sort is not what poetry is all about. Kivy goes to extremes and includes in his list of knowledge-generating activities such things as ecstatic vision. Let me clarify at once that I do not want to claim here, or do not interpret Bradley to hold, that a poem imparts a unique piece of knowledge in virtue of its being an inseparable unity of form and content[66]. Nor do I wish to claim that things like ecstatic vision do not generate knowledge. I would like to point to a possibility that if ecstatic vision can provide us with a certain kind of knowledge, then why not poetry, which is regarded as not entirely innocent of ecstatic vision? After all, poets have so often been compared to seers, prophets or visionaries. Besides, while ecstatic vision may not be a direct or straightforward result of human efforts alone, poetry is largely a matter of deliberate and intentional human undertaking. In this sense, it is more concrete or reliable. My point here is just that if someone avidly asserts that even ecstatic vision is a way of obtaining knowledge and fervently denies that poetry is a way of obtaining knowing, there is some room to doubt the grounds of this bifurcation.

Kivy's statement to the effect that poetry reminds us of the same old things has crucial implications. Firstly, we use poetry to articulate what we already know, fear, value, and so on. So, poems are *means* to realize definite, specifiable ends. Secondly, as a poem is a means employed for a determinate purpose, it can be *replaced* by any other means which could perform the job. Thirdly, as our interest in a poem is due to what it helps us to recollect, it is *dispensable*: we can throw it away once we recall the thing. Fourthly, what the poem helps us to recall has no significant relationship with the poem; they are only *contingently related* to each other.

Thus, according to Kivy, a poem is a vehicle conveying a useful thing. The vehicle is of course secondary: it is replaceable, dispensable, and forgettable. Let us call this 'the vehicle view of poetry'.

Before proceeding to the next section, let me make one point about poetry as

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[66] We shall see in due course how Kivy advances this claim.

reminder. While reading a poem, we are definitely reminded of several things which we may have experienced (seen, heard, dreamed, hoped, feared, respected, dismissed and so on) earlier. Such remembrances play some role in our understanding of a poem. However, reminding these things is not the ultimate purpose of a poem. Good poems show us a novel aspect of the world rather than remind us about the same old thing.

2.3 Kivy on the form-content relationship

Let us now consider what Kivy has to say about the relationship between the form and the content of a poem. Unlike Bradley, Kivy does not subscribe to the view that a poem's form and content cannot be prised apart. However, he admits that the form-content identity thesis is a response, though fundamentally mistaken, to a significant intuition. He says:

> "It appears to me that we have a deep intuition that in the arts there is an especially intimate relation between form and content not exhibited in other modes of expression. To a degree this is a valid intuition, and the form-content identity thesis is a response to it - the wrong response ..."[67]

Kivy thinks that it is possible to emphasize on "the special intimacy of form and content" without treating them as inseparable, without obliterating the distinction between them. Arthur Danto seems to do this. Kivy appreciatively quotes Danto: "The thesis is that works of art, in categorical contrast with mere representations, use the means of representation in a way that is not exhaustively specified when one has exhaustively specified what is being represented."[68] What Danto says is quite clear. Later on, Kivy adds:

> "What is extra in the artistic form-content relation is that one must also specify the way in which the form, the medium, is employed. And that way is what makes the relation more intimate. For the *way* in which the artist employs the medium is, in effect, part of the content, because it expresses

[67] Ibid., 116
[68] Ibid., 117

something in the artist's point of view about the content."[69]

So, at least on the face of it, Kivy's position actually comes quite close to our interpretation of Bradley in the previous chapter. For Kivy explicitly says here that a way of handling the medium becomes part of the content and reflects the poet's point of view. And, following Danto's lead, Kivy maintains that the relationship between medium and content or form and representation cannot be exhaustively described though it is possible to state the content exhaustively.

This account, Kivy contends, explains the intimacy of form and content and keeps the distinction intact as well. Recall our observation in the last section that if Kivy wants to maintain that poetry reminds us in a special and distinctive way he would have to specify the specialty and distinctiveness of that way. Maybe this intimacy of form and content is his response to that query.

However, it should be carefully noted that this talk about 'the way in which the artist employs the medium' does not affect in any way Kivy's basic approach to poetry - the poem remains the same type of vehicle conveying the known things. As is the case with the non-artistic forms of expression, the poetic form too is employed to communicate the content. However, in Kivy's eyes, the inexhaustible intimacy between them is an 'extra' - not peculiar, vital or essential - feature of poetry. It might explain poetry's prettiness but is a superfluous characteristic of it.

2.4 Form and content: 'constructs' or 'givens'?

Peter Kivy's general conception of poetry can be succinctly stated now. A poem is a vehicle that conveys something that we already know. And, Kivy's view on the form-content relationship is that this relation is so intimate that it cannot be exhaustively specified, but the intimacy does not snowball into the identity.

It should be obvious that Kivy's conception of the nature and significance of poetry is fundamentally different from that of Bradley's. Bradley locates the value of a poem in the imaginative experience the reader undergoes, not in what it reminds him of. Bradley would concede, as we suggested above, that this performance of a poem - of reminding something or offering the known information - may be an

[69] Ibid.

'ulterior' purpose served by it. But, at the same time, Bradley would vigorously insist that the poem's poem-hood cannot be and should not be reduced to that.

We saw that a large part of Bradley's lecture is spent on clarifying notions of form and content. Let us recall a few important points. First, Bradley is absolutely clear that form and content are *concepts* or analytical categories; not real, ontological parts of the poem. Second, Bradley thinks that concepts of form and content are too ambiguous and so require clarification. Third, as far as our poetic-aesthetic experience of a poem is concerned, consideration of form and content does not play a major role in that experience. And, fourth, these concepts often prove to be obstacles in the appreciation of poetry as poetry.

The most striking difference between Bradley's and Kivy's manner of handling these concepts is philosophical in character. In Bradley's view, form and content, though their use is so common, are critical, analytical concepts. That is, they have origins, courses of development, histories of distortions, and a variety of implications. They are *constructs*. Therefore, we need to be alert every time about why we are using these categories and in what sense are we using them. In contrast, Kivy talks about form and content as if they are *given*. That Kivy considers form and content as given is betrayed when he talks about their intimacy. There he alludes to a "deep intuition" that "we have". This presupposes that "we" have a lucid grasp of the two concepts; we know them as if instinctively. As a result, he does not feel it necessary to define the sense in which he uses them. He takes it for granted that the words of a poem are the form and what they mean is the content. It does not occur to him that if we accept this there would not be much difference between our everyday use of words and a poem. Thus, Kivy just ignores the ambiguities involved in the use of the two concepts. Moreover, as we shall examine it afterwards, these concepts play a predominant role in what Kivy considers to be the proper way of reading poetry. To read or to explicate a poem is, according to Kivy, is to extract the content from the form.

Needless to say, Bradley would find all this to be a vulgar error. We can recall that Bradley turns in his lecture to the discussion of form and content *vis-à-vis* a possible misapprehension of his formula 'poetry for poetry's sake' as a disguised doctrine of 'form for form's sake'. The principal thesis of his lecture is *not* that a poem is a unity of form and content. Let us note that it would be futile if one tries to refute Bradley by arguing that it is perfectly possible to point to the intimacy

between form and content without eradicating the differences between them.

Kivy's casual, inadvertent slip, while talking about medium, is rather interesting. As quoted above, he writes: "... the *way* in which the artist employs the medium is, in effect, part of the content." What Kivy has in mind when he invokes 'medium' is not made clear. But there is ground to suspect that in this particular quotation he qualifies his notion of form. Here form is the way in which the artist employs the medium. The poem's form is not merely the words it is made up of but the poet's manner of *using* those words. The poet's particular manner of using words affects the content in such a way that it becomes part of the content. So, Kivy is saying here that the form becomes part of the content. Isn't this, then, like Bradley's claim that the poem's form or content is not an easily detachable thing? No, it is not. For, although the form becomes part of the content, they are not inseparable, according to Kivy. Nonetheless, an important point to be gathered from here is that Kivy too, although unknowingly, begins to imitate Bradley's language while showing the intimacy between form and content.

Thus far we have considered Kivy's conception of poetry and his view of the form-content relation. I have sprinkled my critical comments on Kivy's views here and there. Now let us move on to Kivy's full-fledged onslaught on Bradley's lecture.

2.5 Kivy's critique of Bradley

Although Bradley's identity thesis can yield many different claims, Kivy focuses on one that stands out as his main target. That claim Kivy christens as the "no-paraphrase" claim. In Kivy's own words, "The "no-paraphrase" claim ... is that any attempt to state the content of a poem in any words other than those of the poem itself will not accurately paraphrase its content."[70]

There are two parts, facets or aspects of Kivy's critique. One facet concerns with the *origins* of the form-content identity thesis. The other facet concerns with the *reasons* that Bradley adduces for the identity thesis. Let us start with the first facet.

In the first part, Kivy tells us a story of where the identity thesis springs from. I choose the word 'story' purposely. For Kivy is conscious that he is indulging in a

[70] Ibid., 86

"slightly *a priori* history"[71]. He contrives a story which, he hopes, would help us to see *when* and *why* the identity thesis began to present itself as a plausible and reasonable theory of poetry[72].

Kivy's basic contention, the axis of the plot of his story, can be formulated in this way: The eighteenth century witnessed the growth of specialization and professionalism in all forms of knowledge. In the wake of these developments, poetry ceased to be a conveyer of knowledge. Consequently, some theorists of poetry - its defenders - found the identity thesis particularly useful for saving poetry's erstwhile epistemic status. This is approximately the historical juncture when the identity thesis begins to seem not only attractive but also plausible. These theorists adopted a peculiar strategy. If the poetic form is declared or deemed to be singular and insubstitutable, then the poetic content too would be revered as too profound, even too sacred, to be stated in profane paraphrases. The poetic content, which is so profound, ineffable, and inseparably linked with the form, would automatically be regarded as a distinct, even higher and superior, type of knowledge.

In order to appreciate this thesis, let us see the main phases or periods in Kivy's historical-philosophical fiction. It begins at the beginning - with the Greeks and the Romans.

2.6 The original state: knowledgeable poetry

On Kivy's story, the classical Greek and Roman world would have found the identity thesis "very puzzling indeed"[73]. Poetry played a prominent role in the intellectual life of that world. Narrative poems like *Iliad* were regarded as the source of practical and theoretical knowledge, and poets were considered seers and wise men. Didactic poems of Lucretius and Parmenides, for instance, conveyed scientific results. Thus it was natural for the Greeks and Romans to regard poetry as having "rich, deep, full-blooded content of science, cosmology, and philosophy as they were then known and practised." Poetry then didn't have "some out-of-the-way, esoteric, scare-quotes "content""[74] Sketching the significance of poetry in the classical world in this manner, Kivy focuses on Lucretius. The claim that the content of his poem *De rerum*

[71] Ibid., 87
[72] Ibid., 89
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 88

natura is an "ineffable thing" that is "inseparable from his mode of expressing it" would have baffled Lucretius who saw his poem as "one of the ways of transmitting a cosmology, a science, and a moral doctrine that certainly could be expressed non-poetically and, in part, had been so expressed by his great Greek predecessors."[75]

Now, what does this prove? This proves that Lucretius wanted to communicate his scientific and moral doctrines, and he chose to communicate them through poetry which was one of the many available means. Lucretius's primary intention was to convey his doctrines; not to write poems. He chose to write poetry because he believed that the honey of poetic expression would make the medicine of content palatable. Therefore, the facts about Lucretius stated by Kivy himself indicate that Lucretius considered himself a scientist or a moralist first, and looked at his poem as a means that would effectively communicate his findings to the audience. Lucretius's rich and full-blooded content, that is, a body of his scientific results, would have played the same role as it actually did in the intellectual life of his audience even if he had chosen to express it by non-poetic means. So, if we have Lucretius's particular case in mind, from the observation that he, following the well-established tradition, put his scientific results into poetry, it cannot be concluded that the identity thesis would have seemed extremely odd to him. Had Kivy provided a chance to Lucretius to give voice to his perception in this *a priori* history, Lucretius would have modestly replied: "I am not a poet, I only use verse to express my science, and there may be some poets whose poetry is of this kind, that is, in that poetry the form and the content constitute a unity."

At a certain juncture, Kivy observes: "Indeed, that epistemic claim was one of the objects of Plato's devastating critique of poetry in the *Republic* and elsewhere. In the event, in a way, Plato's critique prevailed."[76] This observation comes after Kivy has stated that in the classical Greek and Roman world poetry played a prominent intellectual role and before he considers the case of Lucretius. *Who* precisely made epistemic claims, Kivy does not make satisfactorily clear. Perhaps Kivy has in mind *poetry's* epistemic claims because poetry was then seen as a source of knowledge and so he refers to Plato's questioning this *attitude* of his people towards poetry. I think Kivy should have specified whether by poetry's epistemic claims he means (a) the epistemic claims of the *discipline* (e.g. cosmology); or (b) its

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 87-88

practitioner who uses poetry to communicate results (e.g. Lucretius); or (c) the epistemic claims that *poetry* makes as poetry (that is, the epistemic claims of philosophical supporters of poetry on behalf of poetry, so to say). This is not anachronistic. There is a clear awareness in Lucretius, which Kivy has recorded himself, that he is *using* poetry as a vehicle, as a means. Lucretius implies that his scientific results and moral doctrines - his content - were ready beforehand. One crucial implication of this is that even Kivy's highly interested consideration of Lucretius indicates a possibility, or leaves space for a view, that Lucretius did not claim to produce content *through* poetry, and that some other poets could have made such a claim for they might have engaged in such kind of activity.

It is interesting that Kivy prefers to overlook his other example, that is, Homer's poetry. The epistemic claim made with reference to Homer's poetry that Plato questions is definitely different in kind from the epistemic claim that is made by Kivy regarding Lucretius's poetry. The epistemic claim that is here being attributed to the Lucretius kind of didactic poetry by Kivy really belongs to Lucretius, the practitioner of a scientific discipline and to the discipline in which he works. Indeed, there can be observed in Plato at times this kind of reasoning when he questions the poet's 'authority' in these terms. Plato inquires about a discipline, a branch of knowledge to which the poet belongs and which provides the poet a method of producing or deriving the content. But Plato at the same time examines the *nature* of poetry, the nature of the manner in which poetry presents its content, and shows that the poet, in order to obtain content has to rely on some or other non-poetic branch of knowledge. And his main target is Homer, the poet, and Homer's poetry which was regarded as the inexhaustible source of ideas and ideals about virtually everything in human life. Plato questions this authority of poetry as well as his people's attitude towards it by showing that real sources of ideas and ideals are elsewhere and not in poetry. This is the first and ever-present profound challenge to poetry's claim regarding its being about the world and the human life in a deeply significant way (not merely its claim to knowledge in the manner of natural or humanistic sciences). Kivy's picture of the challenge to poetry posed by the eighteenth century scientific revolution pales in comparison to Plato's famous challenge.

Kivy cannot conclude on the basis of Lucretius's case alone that Bradley's identity thesis would have been found strange by the classical Greek and Roman

world. Although it cannot be applied to Lucretius's poetry, Bradley perhaps would describe Homer's poetry in these terms. Bradley would find Lucretius's poetry as 'impure', that is, not responding to the real, poetic idea of poetry. My point is that the kind of poetry that Bradley has in mind when he talks about pure, paradigmatic poetry has a continuous tradition since the classical Greek and Roman world. And that tradition does not consider the poetry of the Lucretius kind portrayed by Kivy as poetry.

Here is a passage from Aristotle's *Poetics*:

> "People do, indeed, add the word 'maker' or 'poet' to the name of the meter, and speak of elegiac poets, or epic (that is, hexameter) poets, as if it were not the imitation that makes the poet, but the verse that entitles them all to the name. Even when a treatise on medicine or natural science is brought out in verse, the name of poet is by custom given to the author; and yet Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common but the meter, so that it would be right to call the one poet, the other physicist rather than poet."[77]

Here Aristotle distinguishes between 'verse' and 'poetry'. Not all verse is poetry; though most of poetry may be written in verse. Physics written in verse is physics after all; it does not become poetry thereby. Only a verse that 'imitates' in a special Aristotelian sense can claim to be called a poem. Empedocles is a physicist and a verse-composer, but not a poet. On the other hand, Homer is a verse-composer and a poet.

We can see now that Kivy thinks of the poet as a scientist/scholar/researcher-and-verse-composer. As we saw above, Kivy's general conception of poetry and literature (even of our era) is that "they are ways some wise folks (and some not so wise) have tried to express some of the things they have found out or others have found out"[78]. The 'wisdom' through which these folks 'find out' what they express is of course not poetry.

To bring in Bradley's terminology, for Kivy a poem is *a verse with a subject.* The large part of our interest in the poem, on Kivy's view, is determined by its subject. And the residual part of our interest in the poem can be explained in terms of

[77] Aristotle 1951, 9
[78] Op. cit., 115

the appeal of the composition of the verse. Unlike Bradley, Kivy would not subscribe to the view that within the poem there is substance, not simply subject. Kivy would not accept that the substance - the subject transfigured through the poetic act upon the medium - is what the poem offers us for contemplation. So a crucial aspect of Kivy's upholding the Lucretius kind of poetry is his rejection - *not* refutation - of the distinction between the poet and the verse-composer, between the verse and the poem.

I would tie up now my objections to Kivy's use of the Lucretius case. To express one part of it I cite Kivy's own words: "... for the Greeks and Romans it was as natural to convey philosophical and 'scientific' results at the cutting edge in poetry as it is natural for us to convey the former in learned journals and the latter in mathematics."[79] And now the other part: The *phenomenon* – poetry of the Homer sort – that is being dealt with by Bradley's and similar theses existed in the classical Greek and Roman world, and it too played an important cultural (not merely intellectual in Kivy's sense) role. So, to confront Bradley's thesis with the aid of the observation that there existed the Lucretius kind of poetry as well is not that helpful a move. According to Kivy, the form-content identity thesis was thus foreign to the Greek and Roman world. One can accept this only as a statement that this theory was not put forward in that world; but the phenomenon that could be dealt with by this theory existed and flourished there. Bradley adoringly mentions the classical Roman poet Virgil.

2.7 The fallen state: ignorant poetry

In the eighteenth century, in the wake of the scientific revolution, Kivy contends:

> "... the growth of specialization and professionalism in all forms of knowledge, practical as well as theoretical and humanistic, put an end to the epistemic claims of the ancient poets that Plato so deplored."[80]

Kivy's reason obviously is that verse ceased to be the vehicle to convey

[79] Ibid., 87. Note the oddity: Kivy puts 'learned journals' and 'mathematics' on the same level; they are for him 'forms' of the same kind that we use for conveying scientific results.
[80] Ibid., 89

knowledge. But if scientists and scholars were using verse as a vehicle and now they began to use other vehicles to convey the same kinds of things, how can this mean that this phenomenon "put an end to the epistemic claims of the *poets*"? For these people along with other types of poets were called poets and now they are not called poets. Or, is this what Kivy really means to say? Even according to the picture Kivy paints, scientists remain scientists; they only change their methods of expressing their knowledge-claims. They used to make epistemic claims in the past and they continue to do so now. Furthermore, the Homer kind of poetry, which was Plato's real target and Aristotle's model, continues to make (or is taken to make) a distinct kind of epistemic claims with which Kivy shows no concern. When Kivy says that as in the wake of scientific revolution "poetry lost pretensions to knowledge, and Plato at last was vindicated", this appears to be exceptionally confused. I have noted earlier that Plato's attack was mainly on the Homerean poetry which claimed epistemic authority *as poetry* and not merely as a verse-vehicle for science and other types of 'full-blooded content'. Plato cannot be vindicated on the ground that verse is no longer a fashionable vehicle.

Therefore, the kind of poetry with which Bradley's and other similar theses deal has a continuous tradition right from the classical Greek and Roman period up to the day. And well before the eighteenth century the distinctions – scientist/scholar/researcher, verse-composer, and poet – as used by Aristotle, for instance, were developed. So, although Bradley's thesis was put forward in 1909, it cannot be shown to be outlandish in the context of the classical world's understanding of poetry.

Thus Kivy cannot be relied on when he tells us that the classical world would have found just implausible the view that in poetry form and content are inseparable. After considering the classical world, Kivy suggests Pope's famous phrase is "Perhaps a good place to take measure of the collapse of poetry as a purveyor of knowledge at the cutting edge in the Enlightenment"[81]. Pope had said about poetry: "What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed". I am going to analyse Kivy's interpretation of Pope's epigram in detail later on in conjunction with Collingwood's interpretation of it. Suffice it here to note that in Kivy's view this phrase does not save the poet's epistemic status. For it implies the "old-wine-in-new-bottles theory".

[81] Ibid., 90

The poet is not a discoverer of truths but a purveyor of other people's truth. So, what can be done to re-establish the poet's epistemic authority?

2.8 The gimmick of poetry-defenders

Kivy offers his contention:

> "In order for that to be done we must secure for the poet a kind of knowledge that only he can command. What kind of knowledge can that be?
>
> Well one thing the poet is in sole command of is poetic form or expression. If he were not in command of that, he would not be a poet. But if the form or expression *were* the content, then the poet would be in the sole command of the content.
>
> Put another way, if the content of the poem is ineffable, if, that is, only the poem can say what it says, then what the poem says, which only it can say, is an expression of content that only the poet can have "discovered". The poet is the world's greatest expert, the world's only expert, on the kind of knowledge his poem expresses, because it is the *only* example of that kind: it is sui generis content."[82]

In the world or the era before the scientific revolution, knowledge conveyed by the kind of poetry Kivy likes to concentrate on was derived from branches of knowledge like, physics, medicine or philosophy. Now, as practitioners of such branches of knowledge stopped using verse to convey their knowledge, poetry was robbed of its valuable content, its soul. How to exhort people that poetry is still important? The defenders of poetry, who, as per the picture drawn by Kivy, as though have vested interests in letting poetry capture people's attention, play a smart move. They declare the poetic content to be one with the form. Its source is not somewhere else outside the poem. By creating the form the poet creates the content, too. So, it cannot be expressed by any other form; it is unique and ineffable. Thus a simple truism that the poet is a composer of form or verbal expression is turned into a gimmick that helps to save its ancient epistemic authority.

Kivy's contention looks attractively persuasive. But it also seems at once to rest on a frail supposition. The supposition is that thinkers like Bradley maintain that a poem, especially in its capacity as a form-content unity, offers a unique kind of

[82] Ibid., 90

knowledge. However, our review of Bradley's lecture in the first chapter shows that he never invokes any concept of knowledge. What is unique about a good poem is the imaginative experience we undergo while reading it. The intrinsic worth of this experience is the poetic value of a poem. While writing about this, he also lists a few ways in which a poem can be said to have ulterior values. Two of them are being a means to culture or religion and conveying instruction[83]. Now if Bradley unambiguously includes conveying instruction, which may come close to be seen as an activity concerning knowledge, in the list of non-poetic functions or points of poetry, then he cannot be said to have counted on the form-content identity thesis as a possible justification for poetry's capacity to generate its own kind of knowledge. As we have seen, one of the most important points in the insistence on the inseparability of form and content is that both arise simultaneously since they are derived from the work upon the medium. Thus, Bradley's reasons for the identity thesis have nothing to do with knowledge. Bradley does not see poetry as a competitor of branches of knowledge. Kivy would undoubtedly stress that thinkers like Bradley claim a special sort of knowledge for poetry indirectly and obliquely. Though they talk on the surface about the uniqueness of poetic value in terms of the imaginative experience, such thoughts are always on their mind. Kivy is apparently more interested in fathoming what lurks at the back of the mind of this kind of philosophers.

However, in the process, he attributes to Bradley a thesis that he never held, namely, that a poem *qua* an inseparable unity of form and content produces a distinctive kind of knowledge. It remains unclear how Kivy bridges the wide gulf between claiming that 'a poem is a unity of form and content' and claiming that 'a poem *qua* a unity of form and content offers a unique kind of knowledge'. In my view, this is a leap of faith on Kivy's part.

But suppose Kivy is right. These were the circumstances that caused the birth and the growth of the form-content identity thesis. So Kivy tells us correctly about the origin of Bradley's thesis. Does this information about the origin prove wrong what Bradley has to say about the nature and value of poetry? Would we not find any merit in Bradley's views because we now know from where they sprang? Absolutely not. To know about the origin of a philosophical thesis and to evaluate its

[83] Bradley 1909, 4-5

philosophical content are fundamentally different things. To equate them is to commit the genetic fallacy. A water-lily has its roots in mud and slime; but it would be wrong to infer from this that it lacks beauty.

Kivy knows this. There are two facets to his critique of Bradley - this historical narrative and the critical comments on Bradley's reasons regarding the unparaphrasability of a poem. However, he would like to make us believe that the historical narrative explains away Bradley's view of poetry. So would it be entirely wrong to say that Kivy's *a priori* history wants us to commit the genetic fallacy just as he wants Bradley to hold at least tacitly the thesis that a poem as a form-content unity provides a unique kind of knowledge?

2.9 Kant, the originator of the gimmick

After offering his contention about the historical origin of the identity thesis and noting that Pope's phrase rather fails to save poetry's ancient epistemic status, Kivy turns to Kant. To Kivy's mind, we find in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* the first powerful statement of the thesis that a poet is a "sovereign over a special, unpoachable knowledge reserve that drives the ineffability thesis"[84]. I will first state as objectively as possible what Kivy says about Kant, and then offer my analysis of it.

According to Kivy, Kant's doctrine of 'aesthetic ideas' is the source of both "the problem of how artworks can possess content all on their own, possible for them alone, immune to the inroads of the special sciences and practical disciplines" and "the first attempt at a powerful solution"[85]. Besides this, by claiming that the pleasurable experience of a free, purely formal beauty like a wallpaper and the mind-expanding, spiritual experience of an artwork like a poem eventuate in the same harmonious interplay between the understanding and the imagination, Kant forges a link between his formalism and his concept of poetic content which leads to the idea of their coalescence[86]. Thus Kant's aesthetic theory is, on Kivy's story, the cradle of the form-content identity thesis which Bradley is seen to uphold afterwards. I discuss Kant's fascinating notion of aesthetic ideas in Chapter 3. I will argue there, among

[84] Op. cit., 91
[85] Ibid., 94
[86] Ibid., 91-96

other things, that it is not motivated by the desire to protect a special knowledge reserve for the poet. I confine myself here to Kivy's take on the Kantian concept.

According to Kant, an aesthetic idea is a presentation of the imagination which occasions much thought, but no determinate concept or thought can be adequate to it, and no language can express it completely. Kant employs the concept of rational ideas for clarification. Crudely speaking, rational ideas are intellectual, abstract notions like love, eternity or death. Generally we characterize a poem to be about such a thing, and we call it as its 'theme'. Thus rational ideas provide themes for poetry. However, a poem is not merely an explication or illustration of a theme. To take Kant's own example, when a poet describes a morning by uttering "The sun flowed forth, as serenity flows from virtue", the image of the serenity flowing from virtue animates the idea of morning, evokes in us numerous supplementary presentations - thoughts, sights, sounds, silence - and makes us think of the beauty of morning in a new and fresh way. The ideas which enliven the theme of morning's beauty are aesthetic ideas. Neither other verbal expressions can replace what this poetic line offers us nor its offering can be reduced to a single determinate concept. Kivy comments:

> "We might characterize Kant as saying something to the effect that there are two levels of "content" ... a statable, manifest content and an ineffable "sub-text", which is constituted by the huge range of "aesthetic ideas" the poem arouses in the reader. And it is the aesthetic ideas that constitute the true aesthetic content of the poem."[87]

Kivy further claims that a mistaken chain of reasoning has driven Kant to such a position. The poem must have content, for it is not a free beauty like a tulip. But this content cannot be statable, for if it were statable it would belong to some or other branch of knowledge, and would not be deemed especially poetic. Therefore, a true poetic content is ineffable. Let us move on to the other aspect of Kivy's take on Kant.

On Kivy's view, Kant characterizes the experience of a free beauty like a flower or wallpaper in terms of a purely perceptual experience tinged with hedonistic

[87] Ibid., 93

pleasure. On the other hand, he characterizes the experience of an artwork, which is not a free beauty but has content, in terms of mind-enhancing, spiritually uplifting satisfaction. However, both kinds of experience culminate in the same interplay between the imagination and the understanding. This sameness of effect in spite of differences in the respective propensities of the objects of experience is what Kivy thinks plays a crucial role in the evolution of the identity thesis. Kant forges a link between the content of a work of fine art and the formal beauty by subsuming them both under the play of the cognitive faculties[88]. I suppose Kivy wants us to think in the following way. In the light of the Kantian hint, one tends to think that if the resulting experience is the same, then there must be similarity between the objects of experience too; otherwise, why would they give us the same kind of experience? So this reasoning directly leads to the thought that the content of an artwork is (just like) the form of a free beauty. Accordingly, we have to *deny* the statable, explicable content in an artwork. And a clever way to deny the content is to regard it as one with the form. This is what Kivy seems to have in mind. This is the most speculative and so obscure part in Kivy's story.

So far as the concept of aesthetic ideas is concerned, Kivy's reading into it Kant's attempt to deny the statable content and to accentuate the ineffable content is too far-fetched. Kivy heavily relies on an inference that he draws from Kant's statement. Kant says that aesthetic ideas supplement and expand the abstract, intellectual theme of the poem. Kivy infers from this that the theme is the primary, principal, 'rational' part of the poem, and aesthetic ideas constitute secondary, accessory, embellishing or beautiful part. Furthermore, in order to nip in the bud the possibility that the intellectual theme of the poem be viewed as inherently non-poetic, as properly belonging to a branch of knowledge like physiology or psychology, Kant claims that aesthetic ideas, which are rich but ineffable, are the real essence of the poem. However, Kivy is mistaken about his taking intellectual theme to be *equivalent* with Kant's technical concept of 'rational ideas'. Apparently the word 'rational' has misled Kivy. According to Kant, a poem is not a sum of the main rational idea *and* the subsidiary aesthetic ideas. A good poem offers innumerable aesthetic ideas for our contemplation, which *we* see as exhibiting a certain theme. Now this theme may be an empirical matter like love or a purely

[88] Ibid., 95-96

abstract, non-empirical thing like the idea of eternity, or, in Kant's philosophical jargon, a rational idea like eternity. Note that the poet may draw on rational ideas as *one* of the many possible sources for poetic themes; the poem is not always or necessarily about a rational idea. So the dichotomy (of the two levels of content) that Kivy confidently brings into play in his criticism is absolutely artificial. I would tease this out in the next chapter.

One important point must be noted here, though. Kant emphasizes that what aesthetic ideas offer cannot be expressed by any other verbal expression *completely*. This does not mean that aesthetic ideas are *ineffable*, that is, that it is just impossible to talk about them. It rather means that although other verbal expressions may indicate what aesthetic ideas offer they cannot do proper justice to the rich variety of meanings, contemplation of which broadens our ken. There is a difference between asking the reader to be aware of the limitations and drawbacks of the poem's paraphrases, and asking the reader to keep mum about their experience of the poem. Kivy collapses this difference.

2.10 Kivy's contentism

In Kivy's *a priori* history, two stages come in between Kant's step towards, and Bradley's full-fledged advocacy of, the conflation of form and content. They are Hanslick's and Pater's theories. I shall not deal with what Kivy has to say about Hanslick since Hanslick's theory is confined to music alone. But I consider Kivy's Walter Pater who appears too distinct from the writer of 'The School of Giorgione'. Attending to what Pater actually held is important for two reasons: One, Bradley acknowledges Pater as his precursor, as an 'authority'; and two, Kivy tries to assimilate Pater's, along with Bradley's, position with formalism.

According to Kivy, we need to pay heed to Pater not because he puts forth a sophisticated aesthetic theory but because he is a coiner of historically influential, eye-catching phrases. One of Pater's famous slogans is:

> "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*. For while in all other kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it."

Although Kivy quotes these lines to see Pater's celebrated phrase "in its context"[89], he does not go on to quote the latter part of the passage. Here is that further explanatory part:

> "That the mere matter of a poem, for instance, its subject, namely, its given incidents or situation – that the mere matter of a picture, the actual circumstances of an event, the actual topography of a landscape – should be nothing without the form, the spirit, of the handling, that this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter: this is what all art constantly strives after, and achieves in different degrees."[90]

Thus, on Pater's view, the condition of music that all art aspires towards is not contentlessness but making the spirit of handling content an end in itself. One crucial consequence of this is that the search for mere or pure matter untouched by the form is destined to fail. For the poem has attained the condition of music. I suggest that we take 'the condition of music' in Pater's passage as a *metaphor* for an artistic ideal. It is always easier to assent to the view that a piece of music does not have matter or content; while it is not that easy to agree that a poem is devoid of matter or content. And the piece of music means a lot; it does not prove to be worthless due to the absence of any matter in it. Similarly, a poem as a work of art should mean a lot without compelling us to explicate it in terms of matter. This is what Pater seems to me to be pointing out. Pater does not want to obliterate the distinction for its own sake, but wants to stress the "interpenetration" of form and matter.

It is worth considering what Pater says about poetry in particular. Noting that in the instances of didactic poetry - the kind of poetry that conveys moral or political aspirations (for example, Victor Hugo's poetry) - the understanding can distinguish between the form and the matter, Pater calls our attention to the "ideal types of poetry" in which the distinction is reduced to its minimum (for example, Blake's or Shakespeare's poems). In such poetry, Pater writes,

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[89] Ibid., 98
[90] Pater 1980, 106

"the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity present one single effect to the "imaginative reason", that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol."[91]

Pater gives us here too neat a formula, which is somewhat Kantian. If a poem excites the mere intellect or the senses, it is inferior as a poem. On the other hand, a poem that transcends the intellect and the senses, and appeals to the imaginative reason, is good *as* a poem. Such a poem presents thoughts or feelings as if they are twin-born with symbols. Hence we cannot distinguish its form from matter.

Kivy, however, neglecting these strands behind or around Pater's well-known phrase, declares that "Pater's theory ... aspires to the condition of formalism"[92]. Kivy has not specified the sense of 'formalism' with which he has used the word. But it seems that for Kivy formalism is a theory which claims that the essence, significance or point of an artwork lies in its form, and its matter or content is rather immaterial in determining its artistic value. If it had struck odd in our discussion of Kant that Kivy wants a Kantian aesthetician to deny the statable content in order to protect a knowledge reserve for poetry, it would sound but natural now. Kivy takes such philosophers to be sliding towards the extreme of formalism. For Kivy it is *either* formalism *or* 'contentism': you are interested in either extracting didactic content or in devouring the charms of form. We can realize now that Kivy is more interested in fighting for contentism than trying to exhort Bradley and company that it makes perfect sense to say that a paraphrase captures the poem's meaning or it is always possible to detach content and form. As against formalism, we can define contentism as the view that the essence, significance or point of an artwork is to be found in its content, and its form is irrelevant. So simplistically Kivy polarises the whole debate, and relegates Pater and Bradley to the camp of formalism. But let us listen to what Bradley says:

"How can the subject determine the value [of a poem] when on one and the same subject poems may be written of all degrees of merit and demerit ...

[91] Ibid., 109
[92] Op. cit., 99

> The 'formalist' is here perfectly right. Nor is he insisting on something unimportant. He is fighting against our tendency to take the work of art as a mere copy or reminder of something already in our heads ... The sightseer who promenades a picture-gallery, remarking that this portrait is so like his cousin, or that landscape the very image of his birthplace ... what is he but an extreme example of this tendency?"[93]

Fighting against the tendency to see an artwork as a copy or reminder of the familiar is common to the formalist and Bradley. The formalist does the job by insisting on the magical work of the form, on the transformation by the form of the so-called matter. But he exaggerates by claiming *superiority* for the form, by equating artistic value with the magic of the form. However, Bradley detects here the "perfectly right" note in the formalist's approach. This means that he wants to keep away from formalism. For, as we saw in the last chapter, Bradley does not wish to bypass the common reader's anxiety. The question of meaning or content haunts him, so to say. Therefore, we characterized the meaning of a poem in terms of what-happens-to-the-subject-matter in the poetic work upon the medium. Bradley avoids two extremes: Kivy's contentism, which is fundamentally misguided; and, the formalist's exaggeration, whose key-note is sound. He hints at something different: What we prehend when we experience a poem imaginatively is a dawned aspect of it as an aesthetic object; it is neither form nor content.

2.11 Kivy on Collingwood

Along with Kant and Pater, Kivy brings in Collingwood as a thinker who is in tune with Bradley. Bradley holds that the way in which poems are composed is incompatible with the separability of form and content. His description of the poet's act of composing a poem[94] is, Kivy says, "a remarkably close approximation to the concept of expression" in Collingwood's *Principles of Art*. Kivy's comments on Bradley's as well as Collingwood's view of poetic creation are as follows:

> "Taken as an account of how *all* poems (or works of art) come into being, it

[93] Op. cit., 10
[94] See pages 6 and 7

> is plainly false. It may indeed be the case - I certainly believe it is so - that sometimes a poem has its beginning as vague, inchoate impression, some "I know not what", that gradually becomes clear to the poet as the work progresses, and reaches full, self-conscious clarity only in the completed utterance. It is a possible scenario and, I feel certain, an actual one on many occasions ... But why should we believe that this "clarification-in-process" scenario is the exclusive one? ... The idea of a single thing called "the creative process" seems to me a damaging myth."[95]

Kivy regards what may be called the Bradley-Collingwood characterization of poetic composition as the mentalistic description of a purely private episode in the individual poet's mind or head. He divides the creative act into two neat phases: the initial vague, incomplete utterance and the later complete, clear utterance. The vagueness or clarity, the incompleteness or completeness are, in Kivy's view, merely features of the stages of the creative act, which of course cannot be literally applicable to each and every composition. However, as we saw in the last chapter, Bradley wants in this passage to deny that a poet merely dresses up an already conceived thought, idea or meaning, and wants to stress that the poet creates the form in order to explore the meaning he is looking for. Collingwood too places exploratory and adventurous nature of poetic composition at the heart of his theory. I discuss Collingwood in Chapter 4. I hope to show there that Collingwood's vivid descriptions of the act of expressing one's feelings, which have often been read in psychological terms, are tied up with the concepts of 'medium' and 'tradition'.

2.12 The paraphrase of a poem

Now let us turn to another facet of Kivy's critique of Bradley, namely, his points of criticism concerning Bradley's 'no paraphrase claim'.

Kivy notes that throughout the lecture Bradley contends that "we can verify the form-content identity of any poem by simply trying and perforce failing to re-express the content of that poem in different words"[96]. He goes on to observe that Bradley's criteria for successful re-expression are not reasonable. *Any* change in the

[95] Op. cit., 107-108
[96] Ibid., 103

words of the poem would change the poem's meaning, according to Bradley. This is absurd, Kivy argues. To paraphrase the poem means to state its meaning in *different* words, but, on Bradley's view, "by definition, paraphrase is doomed to failure"[97].

Again, Bradley says at a juncture, when a poem answers to the idea of poetry, it is hopeless to convey its effect in any form but its own. Here Bradley has replaced 'meaning', 'substance' or 'content' by 'effect'. He hopes that while it does not sound plausible to say that we cannot re-state the poem's meaning it would sound but natural to say that we cannot convey its effect in other forms. However, Kivy pleads his case, "So if the criterion of success in re-expression of the content of *Paradise Lost* is reproduction of the poem's total effect on the reader, it is an unreasonable, certainly an over-stringent criterion."[98] Kivy's final verdict is:

> "I see no reason why, in principle if not in practice, it is not possible to give a *complete* paraphrase of poetic meaning, leaving nothing of the content out. But in any event, no one who claims the content of a poem can be stated in words other than those of the poem is (or need be) claiming that full content can be captured, that perfect paraphrase is possible. And surely the modest claim that we can say in plain words more or less what the content of a poem is seems an unobjectionable one. Where it seems to fail is when we either place upon paraphrase the completely inappropriate criterion of success of translation or simply make its denial true by stipulation."[99]

As a position regarding the general problem of paraphrase of poetry, this seems quite plausible. Bradley's position, which we characterized in the last chapter as a weak negative/positive thesis, is rather similar to this. However, as a response to one of Bradley's contentions concerning the nature and value of poetry, Kivy's position does not seem acceptable.

Strictly speaking, paraphrase means re-statement; the paraphrase of a poem means the re-statement of the *poem*. But note Kivy's working definition of paraphrase in the above passage. For him paraphrase is re-expression of the poem's *meaning* or *content*. And it is not difficult to see what this meaning or content

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[97] Ibid., 104
[98] Ibid., 105
[99] Ibid., 106

amounts to: it is a readymade message like Lucretius's doctrines. Consequently, for Kivy, to paraphrase such content is not to re-state the poem but to negate it. This can be done efficiently by equating the poem with its form which is the sole contribution of the poet, and then throwing it away. To put it in a straightforward manner, according to Kivy, to paraphrase a poem is to rescue the content from the clutches of the form, indeed of the poem. On the other hand, Bradley takes the problem of paraphrase to be the question: Is it possible to re-state the poem? Can we say that the sense of a poem and the sense of its paraphrase are the same? And his strict answer is: No. What the poem expresses or offers cannot be re-stated.

As we emphasized in the previous chapter time and again, form and content are technical terms, invented analytical categories; they are not ontological parts of the poem. Therefore it is not mandatory that while paraphrasing a poem we must employ this pair. While saying in other words what the poem is about, for instance, we do not require bifurcating its form and content. So the form-content identity thesis does not pose problems for the *possibility* of paraphrasing poems. Therefore, in order to justify the possibility of paraphrasing poems we need not combat and refute the identity thesis. Kivy is mistaken about this. He feels it imperative to equate the claim that 'it is normally possible to paraphrase a poem' with the claim that 'it is always possible to detach form and content'. However, to paraphrase a poem and to extract the poem's content and re-express it are two distinct and separate things. We saw that when Bradley contends that the poem's substance cannot be expressed by any other form, he wants to draw our attention to the fact that to understand the substance properly we need to pay attention to the nuances of the form, not to negate and forget it. This does not preclude the very possibility of paraphrasing the poem. But Kivy's strong contentism makes him conflate these two distinct claims.

Consider a poem of Philip Larkin entitled 'Counting'[100]:

> Thinking in terms of one
> Is easily done —
> One room, one bed, one chair,
> One person there,
> Makes perfect sense; one set
> Of wishes can be met,

[100] Larkin 1988, 108

One coffin filled.

But counting up to two
Is harder to do;
For one must be denied
Before it's tried.

Can I paraphrase this poem? Yes, of course: "Thinking about one person, that is, about yourself is manageable, because it is natural, but including another person in yourself, within your space is difficult, because it is unnatural. This is so not because inclusion or acceptance of another person is hard, but in the meantime you lose your own space, your own self, which is one and only one in its pristine condition as exemplified by the singularity of the coffin."

This attempt on my part to re-state Larkin's poem articulates what the poem means but it involves an interpretation. In this paraphrase I have not mentioned what may be called its 'mathematical method' or attended to connotations of 'coffin'. No doubt my re-statement or paraphrase is a short one, and a fuller re-statement would include the rest of the things. However, 'the rest of the things' is not a class of definite and finite things, and a fuller re-statement would have several complimentary and even conflicting versions. The above re-statement is a paraphrase; a fuller statement would be called a 'critical commentary' or an 'analytical exposition'. As my paraphrase involves, rather rests on, an interpretation, it cannot be the statement of *the* meaning of the poem. The poem may yield many other paraphrases. Not just this. While re-stating the poem, I have not focused on what Kivy would call content as distinct from form. Even if by 'form' we mean simply words, the above paraphrase does not ignore the words and picks up the content. Thus to paraphrase a poem we do not necessarily divide it into form and content. While paraphrasing, we try to re-state the *poem*, not the *content*.

Generally, a paraphrase is said to capture the central idea of a poem; it is typically a statement of the theme and the thesis of the poem. In the Larkin poem the nature of human relationships is the theme, and the thesis is that to relate with someone is a form of self-denial. Thus paraphrase belongs to the level of 'interpretation' in Monroe Beardsley's scheme. In his classic *Aesthetics: Problems of the Philosophy of Criticism*, Beardsley provides us with the three aspects of criticism of an individual work of literature. 'Explication' is the recovery of the language of

the poem; 'elucidation' is the recovery of the poem's world; and, 'interpretation' is the recovery of the theme and the thesis[101]. So, a typical paraphrase as a statement of the theme and the thesis is never merely a *literal* re-statement of, but a *literary* statement about, the poem. This presupposes that a poem is basically a literary work. When Bradley stresses that 'accurate paraphrase' (or 'perfect paraphrase' as Kivy puts it betraying his unconscious closeness to Bradley's cautious position) is impossible, he seems to underline this crucial difference and to suggest that a poem demands its paraphrase to be a literary statement, not a literal copy.

At the beginning of the chapter, immediately after stating Bradley's 'no paraphrase claim', to show its obvious implausibility, Kivy writes:

> "Isn't it the case that one of the very things literary critics are supposed to do, and what Bradley did, with no little distinction, is to help us understand what poems are saying by paraphrasing them for us in what is sometimes a very sophisticated critical language?"[102]

If we are willing to call the whole cluster of activities that a literary critic performs while commenting upon poems 'paraphrasing', then he certainly paraphrases a poem for us. However, as Kivy's awareness of "a very sophisticated critical language" displays, such paraphrases are products of explication, elucidation and interpretation. To understand the poem in the way indicated by such a paraphrase is not merely to extract a statement about the meaning or content of the poem but to attend to the objects of explication and elucidation. Attending to the objects of explication and elucidation, namely, the poem's language and world, may lead us to the discovery of a hitherto unnoticed theme and thesis of the poem. I hope it is clear that such a paraphrase does not aim at rescuing content, as Kivy would have it.

2.13 How to interpret Alexander Pope?

> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.
>
> Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*

[101] Beardsley 1981, 401-11
[102] Ibid., 87

So much depends upon what we make of Pope's celebrated epigram.

R. G. Collingwood says:

> "When Pope wrote that the poet's business was to say 'what all have felt but none so well express'd', we may interpret his words as meaning (whether or no Pope himself consciously meant this when he wrote them) that the poet's difference from his audience lies in the fact that, though both do exactly the same thing, namely express this particular emotion in these particular words, the poet is a man who can solve for himself the problem of expressing it, whereas the audience can express it only when the poet has shown them how."[103]

Peter Kivy says:

> "Perhaps a good place to begin to take measure of the collapse of poetry as a purveyor of knowledge at the cutting edge in the Enlightenment is Pope's famous phrase ... In a way, it might seem much like Lucretius's sugar-coated pill in early modern dress. But there is an obvious and crucial difference. For Pope, the poet is no longer a "seer", a discoverer of truths, but the purveyor of other people's truths ... It is the old-wine-in-new-bottles theory. The distinction between form and content remains in place; and the form and content may both be splendid things. There is, however, no kudos for the poet as far as the content is concerned. The poet has merely selected it; it is the discovery of others."[104]

On Kivy's interpretation, a poem is a way of communicating what people have already discovered. What has been discovered is the content for which the poet provides the form. The poet is not a seer or discoverer of hitherto unknown things. At his best, he is composer of forms and spreader of known truths. His job is to serve old wine in new bottles.

But it is interesting that Kivy terms the already known things "other people's truths". That is, he excludes the poet from the people who know the content of the

[103] Collingwood 1938, 119
[104] Op. cit., 90

poem before the poem comes into being. Does not the poet, as a member of the public, share in the same body of knowledge? Why should we count the content that he communicates through the poem as belonging to others and not to him as well? Why does Kivy treat the poet differently as far as the known truths or the content of poetry is concerned? One reason suggests itself. In order to emphasize that the content does not come from the poet, Kivy inadvertently says that the content does not belong to the poet but to the other people. But, if that is the case, that is, if all members of the society including the poet know previously what the poem expresses, then why does the poet put that into the poem? Well, it is the poet's job to serve the old wine in new bottles.

In that case another question crops up: why does Kivy think that the old wine can be as "splendid" as the new bottle? It is understandable that the sheer newness of the form, whether it is in fact *novel* or not, is what would make it seem splendid at least for a while. But it is too hard to imagine that what all people know remains splendid. Or, is it the case that the poet's form transforms the old wine and renews or enhances its taste or splendour? Keeping these questions in mind let us turn our attention to Collingwood's interpretation.

According to Collingwood, the poet and the other people are engaged in the same activity: both want to express what they feel. But it is the poet who solves the problem of expression, that is, he composes the poem. The reader can express his feeling only when he reads the poem composed by the poet. Thus the expression, the poem is placed at the centre in Collingwood's interpretation. Not only the reader but also the poet cannot express what he feels until the poem comes into being. It is the poem that enables both of them to realize the particularity of what they feel. Without the particular words of the poem, the particularity of what the poet and the reader feel remains inchoate or inaccessible. Thus, on Collingwood's interpretation, there is a world of difference between the way in which the poem expresses what we feel and our ordinary grasp of what we feel. Expression enables us to grasp the peculiar nature of our feeling.

It is evident that the difficulties that Kivy's interpretation gives rise to do not even crop up with respect to Collingwood's interpretation. Rather, Collingwood seems to have overcome those difficulties.

Firstly, Kivy's exclusion of the poet from the camp of the readers puts Kivy in an awkward position. And so the poet's access to an already discovered truth and

his *need* to put it into poetic form remain puzzling aspects of Kivy's interpretation. In contrast, Collingwood views the poet and the readers as engaged in the same act. What is known to the readers is not beyond the reach of the poet but he undertakes his artistic activity in order to solve the problem of expressing it. Writing a poem is as much necessary for the poet himself as for the readers for that particular poem alone can help them to understand what they feel.

Secondly, Kivy's segregation of the poet and the readers has a deep affinity with the poem's division into form and content. Content belongs to all irrespective of the poem's existence or non-existence; form is the poet's sole contribution. One implication of this is that the same content can be communicated in several forms whose splendour would vary. On the other hand, according to Collingwood, the poet is not a coiner of more or less splendid forms, and therefore the poem is not just a new bottle in which the old wine is poured and served. As noted, the poet solves the problem of expression, that is, his composition makes available what remains inaccessible otherwise. To compose a poem is to *define* what we feel and think, not merely to give voice to the old and the known.

Kivy's and Collingwood's interpretations of Pope's aphorism, thus, embody two diametrically opposed attitudes towards poetry. One regards the poem as a purposefully employed vehicle, as a form that more or less splendidly communicates a readymade content. The other regards the poem as an indispensable medium to grasp what exactly we think and feel, as a unique expression. Thus we have two attempts at deciphering what Pope may have meant. Who is right? Which of these views does justice to the nature of poetry? That is the question.

2.14 Conclusion

Peter Kivy's criticism of Bradley, as we hinted in the last chapter, takes advantage of the philosophical traps to which upholders of the intrinsic value of a poem may fall into. These traps include, for instance, the form-content identity thesis or the no paraphrase claim. By focusing on these issues, Kivy could not only ignore Bradley's position concerning the intrinsically valuable imaginative experience offered by the poem but polarize the complex debate into formalism versus contentism. He also links up the emphasis on the form-content identity in a poem with the claim about the unique kind of knowledge produced by it. Thus Kivy strengthens his 'vehicle

view of poetry' by exposing fears regarding the 'ignorance' (or at least lack of knowledge) of poetry. In short, he suggests that thinkers like Bradley are susceptible to such traps as well.

Consequently, the Bradley-Kivy debate makes us realize that defending the intrinsic value of a poem in terms of its unique, unparaphrasable meaning or the essential unity of its form and content are destined to fail. For claims about the intrinsic poetic value are likely to be reduced to a kind of formalism or to a claim that the poem presents an esoteric sort of content. Therefore, we have to look for other ways to explain the intrinsic value of a poem.

One line of thought seems quite promising. In the first chapter we saw that Bradley suggests that the form and the content are not readymade but simultaneously arise during the composition of the poem. That is, Bradley feels the need to connect the singularity of the experience of the poem with its being derived from the medium. As I interpreted it, Bradley's insistence on our imaginative experience of the poem has more to do with its propensity to dawn upon on us as an aesthetic object than to deny that the poem can be a vehicle of intellectual or moral content. As the poem is a work of art derived from the medium, it can appear to us as an aesthetic object. Therefore, Bradley seems to me a practitioner of the medium-centered approach to poetry. In the next three chapters, which are devoted to Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger respectively, I propose to show how the three aestheticians connect the uniqueness of our experience of a poem with its medium-bound nature. They will reveal that the special province of poetry, if we may use such a phrase with reference to poetry, is not a mysterious knowledge reserve but the medium the poets work upon.

CHAPTER 3

Poetry as Work of Genius: A Kantian Inquiry

"Poetry fortifies the mind: for it lets the mind feel its ability ... to contemplate and judge phenomenal nature as having aspects that nature does not on its own offer in experience."[105]

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider Kant's concepts of aesthetic ideas and genius. In his theory of poetry, when we contemplate a poem aesthetically, when we experience it for its own sake, the object of our experience is the aesthetic ideas the poem presents. And genius is at the heart of Kant's general theory of fine art. One important characterization of genius given by him is that it is the ability to create aesthetic ideas. Hence delving deep into the nature, genesis and significance of aesthetic ideas may yield a concrete understanding of the mercurial notion of genius. In a somewhat creative fashion, I use the baffling implications of Kant's brief remarks about honeybees as a launching pad for my inquiry into what genius is. As we noted at the end of the last chapter, this chapter is an attempt to look for a Kantian attempt to connect the singularity of the poetic value of a poem with the poem's being carved in the medium. It will be shown in this chapter that a good poem is genius embodied.

3.2 Aesthetic Ideas

The concept of aesthetic ideas is a very fascinating element of Kant's theory of fine art. It is aesthetic ideas whose presence or absence in a work of fine art can make it lively or lacklustre. It is the concept of aesthetic ideas whose presence in Kant's aesthetics makes a strong case for Kant's not being absolutely formalistic. For, speaking roughly, this concept urges us to pay attention to what Kant has to say about the content, in contradistinction to the beautiful form, of a work of fine art. It is aesthetic ideas which make art seem a fountainhead of what remains elusive to

[105] Kant 1987, 53: 196-197

ordinary experience. A work of art which has rich aesthetic ideas compels reason, which is a higher cognitive faculty in Kant's philosophy, to "think more". And it is its power to present aesthetic ideas "to full extent"[106] that makes poetry the supreme art in Kant's eyes.

3.3 The nature of aesthetic ideas

At the beginning of Section 49, in which the concept of aesthetic ideas is introduced, Kant says, "A poem may be quite nice and elegant and yet have no spirit."[107] What is spirit? Kant uses the word "in an aesthetic sense". Spirit is "the animating principle in the mind", which, in turn, is described as "the ability to exhibit *aesthetic ideas*"[108]. A poem's propensity to display aesthetic ideas enables it to animate the mind of a reader. And so the reader finds the poem soulful. In other words, the poem comes alive due to its aesthetic ideas. But, what are aesthetic ideas? Here is Kant's initial attempt at definition:

> " ... by an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i. e., no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it."[109]

Here Kant tells us the *source* of an aesthetic idea: it is a presentation of the *imagination*. Kant also tells us about aesthetic idea's three-fold relation to thought:

1. It is not a thought itself.
2. It "prompts much thought".
3. It exceeds a determinate thought or concept.

We can also gather from this initial definition that an aesthetic idea cannot be fully conveyed by (other) verbal expressions. The proper way to grasp an aesthetic idea is not to translate it into other words or understand it in terms of other determinate thoughts or concepts, but to experience it directly. So, let's experience

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[106] Ibid., Section 49: 183
[107] Ibid., 49: 181
[108] Ibid., 49: 182
[109] Ibid., 49: 182

now aesthetic ideas in a poem that Kant discusses himself as his illustrative example:

> "The great king [Frederick the great], in one of his poems, expresses himself thus:
>
> Let us part from life without grumbling or regrets,
> Leaving the world behind filled with our good deeds.
> Thus the sun, his daily course completed,
> Spreads one more soft light over the sky;
> And the last rays that he sends through the air
> Are the last sighs he gives the world for its well-being.
>
> The king is here animating his rational idea of a cosmopolitan attitude, even at the end of life, by means of an attribute which the imagination (in remembering all the pleasures of a completed beautiful summer day, which a serene evening calls to mind) conjoins with that presentation, and which arouses a multitude of sensations and supplementary presentations for which no expression can be found."[110]

The poet "conjoins" the setting sun's artistry in the sky on a beautiful summer day with a retiring person's cosmopolitan attitude. This attribute, that is, the sun, "animates" the presentation of the rational idea of cosmopolitan attitude. However, this does not merely mean that the setting sun is a symbol for the cosmopolitan attitude. It is that and much more. For the initial description of the attitude - parting life without grumbling and filling the world with good deeds - and "the multitude of sensations and supplementary presentations" invoked by the attribute come together, and create a word-picture of a particular attitude which would ordinarily be designated as, as Kant does himself, the "cosmopolitan attitude". The attitude that is the theme of the poem and the aesthetic attribute employed for its presentation do not remain distinct and separate, but merge in such a way that the attitude the poem is about is just unthinkable without the summer sun in the poem. In other words, the poem's aesthetic ideas *particularize* the general theme.

In his further, more theoretical attempt at definition, Kant characterizes aesthetic ideas in terms of rational ideas:

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[110] Ibid., 49: 184

> "... an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate."[111]

Aesthetic ideas and rational ideas are counterparts. A rational idea, say, of God or the cosmopolitan attitude in the example mentioned above, is a pure or abstract concept in the sense that it can never be presented as a sensible intuition. On the other hand, an aesthetic idea is a sensible intuition which cannot be summed up in a concept.

A word of caution is in order here. By no means does Kant want to suggest that rational ideas are primary or superior and aesthetic ideas are secondary or inferior. By no means does Kant have in mind that art can prove itself worthwhile by dealing with rational ideas via aesthetic ideas. Kant is here only trying to explain what aesthetic ideas are and for this purpose he finds their being counterparts to rational ideas quite handy. 'Rational ideas' is a purely technical concept here. So we must be careful not to let the ordinary connotations of 'rational' colour our understanding. It is far easier and rather tempting to take the rational idea as a clearly comprehensible and neatly extractable 'message' or 'point' which is largely intellectual and aesthetic ideas as a vehicle or as an embellishment.

Kant provides examples of rational ideas: "rational ideas of invisible beings, the realm of the blessed, the realm of hell, eternity, creation, and so on."[112] It should be obvious that none of these is an empirical thing. We do not and cannot experience eternity. We can only form an idea of it. Thus, the essential feature of ideas, in Kant's jargon, is to refer to things beyond the confines of experience. And, Kant seems to base the concept of aesthetic ideas on rational ideas: aesthetic ideas are *ideas* because they too, in the manner of rational ideas, try to exhibit things which can only be abstractly and intellectually defined, but are not experiential.

According to Kant, the poet "ventures to give sensible expression to rational ideas"[113]. As many commentators have noted, Kant's rational ideas thus seem to be, or to provide, subject-matters or themes of poetry, and aesthetic ideas the poetic

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[111] Ibid., 49: 182
[112] Ibid., 49: 183
[113] Ibid.

means to tackle them, to present them. However, though rational ideas provide subject matter for poetry, they do not entirely exhaust the list of poetic themes. On Kant's view, the poet also deals with matters of experience such as "death, envy, and all the other vices, as well as love, fame, and so on."[114] We do encounter these things in everyday life, but, Kant maintains, poetry (and art in general) presents these empirical things in a manner that can be inaccessible to the ordinary experience.

It is interesting that although Kant bases the idea-hood of aesthetic ideas, as we saw above, upon rational ideas and calls these two kinds of ideas counterparts, he also views rational ideas as useful in artistic rendering of empirical themes. Kant supplies the example himself:

> "... even an intellectual concept may serve ... as an attribute of a presentation of sense ... a certain poet, in describing a beautiful morning, says: "The sun flowed forth, as serenity flows from virtue." The consciousness of virtue ... spreads in the mind a multitude of sublime and calming feelings and a boundless outlook toward a joyful future, such as no expression commensurate with a determinate concept completely attains."[115]

In this example, the poet enlivens the tender and sanguine beauty of morning in terms of "the serenity that flows from virtue". In the earlier example, the setting sun, which is an empirical thing, animates the rational idea of cosmopolitan attitude. And, in this second example, virtue, which is an intellectual concept, enlivens the empirical morning. This is a crystal clear indication of the fact that aesthetic ideas are not simply sensible, perceptible mirror images of rational ideas. Rational ideas too can play a part in the creation of aesthetic ideas. What is distinctive about aesthetic ideas is the way in which they present things, whether empirical or intellectual.

The distinctive way in which aesthetic ideas render an empirical or unempirical theme, is described by Kant as follows:

> "... if a concept is provided with [*unterlegen*] a presentation of the imagination such that, even though this presentation belongs to the exhibition

[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 49: 184-185

of the concept, yet it prompts, even by itself, so much thought as can never be comprehended within a determinate concept and thereby the presentation *aesthetically expands the concept itself* in an unlimited way ..."[116]

Here Kant's emphasis on the poet's main task being the exhibition of a given concept is quite audible. Whatever there is in the poem (or the so-called content of the poem) is tied to the concept and so the poem is basically seen as the "exhibition of the concept". But the poem is not just this exhibition: it aesthetically *expands* the concept. What does this mean? I interpret it in this way. Perhaps Kant wants to show that though we know abstractly what a cosmopolitan attitude consists in, this poem gives us a concrete picture of it. However, this concrete picture is not a depiction or representation. A poet does not represent the attitude by portraying someone's actions inspired by it. But the cosmopolitan attitude in the poem is a *particular* cosmopolitan attitude. It is not merely an *instance* of the cosmopolitan attitude. That is, it might be classified under the universal called 'cosmopolitan attitude', or it may not be due to its peculiar shades and nuances. Paul Guyer's words are apposite: "... our response to works of art manifesting such [aesthetic] ideas is always *linked* to concepts but never *determined* or *exhausted* by those concepts."[117] Guyer's statement is as much descriptive of what Kant means as prescriptive for the readers and critics of poetry.

Kant seems to suggest that we must clearly distinguish between the concept which prompts the poet or with which the poet starts the composition of a poem, and the concept which the poem exhibits itself. The former can be called 'the *poet's* concept' and the latter 'the *poem's* concept'. If we insist that the poem is purely or principally about a well-familiar and determinate concept, we only focus on the poet's concept and do not let the poem reveal its particularity. In an interesting sense, to regard the poet's concept as decisive in explicating and evaluating poems would be deemed by Kant too as committing the intentional fallacy.

The difference between the poet's and the poem's concepts implied by Kant is somewhat like the distinction that Bradley makes. As we considered in Chapter 1, Bradley calls the poet's concept "subject" and the poem's concept "substance". The subject, Bradley says, "is generally something, real or imaginary, as it exists in the

[116] Ibid., 49: 183 emphasis added
[117] Guyer 1997, 359

minds of fairly cultivated people. The subject of *Paradise Lost* would be the story of the Fall as that story exists in the general imagination of a Bible-reading people."[118] Thus, although the poem can be said to be *about* some or other subject like the Fall, what it actually presents is the substance. The subject lies *outside* the poem and hence it cannot determine the poem's meaning or worth.[119]

There is yet another side to Kant's implied distinction. As we saw above, the poem's concept, although it can be linked to the poet's concept, cannot be reduced to that. The poem offers us a particular. Seen from a different angle, the particular offered by the poem renders the poet's concept indefinite and inchoate. For the poet's concept or the similar concept applied by the reader or critic to the poem in order to interpret it is, to borrow Bradley's words, something that is part of our general imagination. However, the poet turns it into something peculiar and individual. Thus Kant's way of elucidating poetic expression is exactly opposite to Collingwood's (whose theory we shall consider in Chapter 4). In his avowed theory, Collingwood may sound too sure about the inchoateness of an unexpressed emotion. He maintains that the emotion becomes clear and comprehensible when it gets expressed. On the other hand, Kant grants, rather expects, that the poet starts off with a clear concept. But it is the particularization of that concept achieved through the poem that renders the earlier, seemingly clear concept inchoate. Its inchoateness is mainly due to its origin in the general imagination. Thus, in my view, without sounding mentalistic at all as Collingwood might seem at times, Kant implicitly expresses a thought similar in spirit to Collingwood's theory.

Now, Kant is not satisfied with just pointing out that the poem offers us a particular. He does not confine himself to the strict meaning of Bradley's 'substance'. Kant wants to go further. He wants to claim that the poet creates a substance that can be found nowhere in nature. The poem is not merely *about* a known thing but a *thing* to be known. It would seem that I am stretching the meaning of the word 'substance' used by Bradley too far. Bradley only means that the finished poem's concept is different from the poet's initial concept. But I am trying to confer on Bradley's substance *substantiality*, some kind of *reality*. And I think Kant appears to have this in mind.

There is ground in Kant's words to justify the contention that he wants the

[118] Bradley 1909, 9
[119] Ibid., 9-13

poem to reveal itself as, and even to become, a part of nature. When describing the imagination as the originator of aesthetic ideas, Kant notes that it is "very mighty when it creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it."[120] Now, while recording this observation, Kant is well aware of the Freudian mechanisms that can also be in operation in this making of "another nature". Kant says, "We use it [the imagination] to entertain ourselves when experience strikes us as overly routine."[121] However, imagination's work is not limited to building pleasurable fictional worlds indulgence in which allows us to forget the life of "overly routine" experiences. We can also use the imagination freely, that is, not according to the laws of association. Note that Kant does not regard the construction of a dream-world as a fully free act of the imagination. The imagination acts freely when it processes the material that nature provides it under the ordinary laws of association into "something quite different, namely, into something that surpasses nature."[122]

One meaning of "surpassing nature" is that aesthetic ideas, as ideas, "strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience, and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts (intellectual ideas), and thus [these concepts] are given a semblance of objective reality."[123] Aesthetic ideas make us feel *as if* rational ideas are objectively real. But, when empirical matters are subjects of poetry, the poet

> "ventures to give these [things exemplified in experience] sensible expression in a way that goes beyond the limits of experience, namely, with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature."[124]

This is enormously significant. This sheds a different light on Kant's apparently strange claim in Section 45 that an artwork should look like nature. Kant says there that "art can be called fine [*schon*] art only if we are conscious that it is art while yet looks to us like nature."[125] It is pretty obvious what Kant is up to here. He

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[120] Kant 1987, 49: 182
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 49: 183
[125] Ibid., 45: 174

means to say that though an artwork is a product of intentional human action, though it is made according to a certain plan, a concept and a set of rules, it must look unintentional and natural, nevertheless. For if it does not do so, it cannot please us "in merely judging it" despite its being a successful instantiation of a concept. The artwork should look like nature means that it should instantly appear as free from rules and concepts, to have its own intrinsic purposiveness, to have a life of its own, to exude spontaneity and naturalness. In short, an artwork should radiate artlessness, it must look as if it is a part of nature.

And, when we consider this insistence of Kant's in the light of the above discussion about "surpassing nature", another possibility comes to mind: by 'looking like nature' Kant did not merely mean the *look* of nature. As aesthetic ideas particularize and individuate the poet's concept, the poem begins to make the abstract, unempirical thing like the cosmopolitan attitude or eternity *exist* in a certain way. Through the poem, we can find and view it *in nature*. Therefore, the poem looks like unmade nature.

The concept of 'nature' plays a significant role in Kant's theory of fine art. He begins his discussion of fine art by distinguishing products of art from products of nature[126]. He describes genius as an "innate productive ability of the artist" and as belonging ultimately to nature[127]. And, as we saw a moment ago, he stresses that art should look like nature. And, it seems to me, there is yet another, largely neglected role played by nature in Kant's theory of fine art, namely, that aesthetic ideas make a poem (or an artwork in general) a part of nature. Now, the later three senses of nature - genius as a natural talent; an artwork looking like nature; and, an artwork being a part of nature - are all interrelated. Only the first sense - art being essentially different from nature - stands alone. The other three senses push art to the side of nature whereas the first sense strictly separates art from nature. Paul Guyer refers to this as Kant's "paradox of art"[128]. We shall consider this in detail in the later sections of this chapter.

Poetry presents empirical matters in the way in which we do not confront them ordinarily. Kant seems to hold that the poet is rather interested in the *concepts* of empirical matters. One important implication of this view is that the poet does not

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[126] Ibid., 43: 170
[127] Ibid., 46: 174
[128] Op. cit., 351

aim at portraying an accurate, truthful and evocative word-picture of an empirical matter. A poem about death, say, will not just represent it in this sense. In the second example given by Kant, the poet does not paint the beauty of morning nor does he arouse certain feelings associated with it. He rather presents morning by creating an aesthetic idea of it. The poet attaches something to the *concept* of morning which not only matches the nature of morning but also gives it a more fresh and rich meaning, adds up to its meaning and beauty.

Kant calls such things as morning, death, love, envy or fame as things "exemplified in experience". One meaning of this is that a death in a poem is also one of the instances of The Death. Does this mean that he regards death or love as residing outside the realm of experience like Platonic Ideas, and that is why he gives empirical matters the same status as he gives to rational ideas? With the help of aesthetic ideas, the poet attempts to exhibit concepts of empirical or non-empirical things, to "strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience".

It is obvious that we do not *know* for certain the things rational ideas refer to. We only think intellectually about them or imagine them. Thus, rational ideas are the only means, however meagre, to portray these things. In other words, a poem about eternity is in fact about the rational idea of eternity and not eternity itself. Interestingly, Kant thinks about empirical things in a similar manner. Unless the poet works upon the concept of death he cannot be said to portray or present it. We hold numerous conceptions about death but the poet focuses on a particular conception and individuates it, gives it completeness unparalleled by some ordinary instance of death. Two commentators have devoted some attention to this intriguing point.

Noting that Kant's claim that presentation of things like death involves going beyond experience is obscure, Kenneth Rogerson says:

> "One way to interpret Kant, anachronistically to be sure, is to say that while we may have limited experience of the behavioural manifestations feelings, an artist is able to capture what lies beyond our limited experience, namely, the feeling itself."[129]

Mary McCloskey contends:

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[129] Rogerson 1986, 99

"Unlike Rational ideas these concepts [such as death, envy, or fame] are already instantiated in our experience but Kant suggests that such instantiations are in some way incomplete and that their 'bodying forth' in poetry can be more complete than they are in actual experience. We can guess that what he means to contrast here is the difference between experiences lived through, or relationships and states of affairs observed, correctly categorized and truly stated; and those which come fully home to us."[130]

Rogerson points to an area, the feeling itself, and McCloskey names it: the aspect of feeling which is not captured by ordinary observation, categorization and statement. This sounds like Collingwood's contrast between 'description' and 'expression'. According to Collingwood, to describe a feeling is to classify it, to see it as an instance of a generalisation. On the other hand, to express a feeling is to understand its peculiar character[131]. On McCloskey's interpretation, Kant sounds so much Collingwoodean.

Kant asks the poet to reach for a maximum, for completeness. In my view, Kant seems to think that the poet creates *a particular complete world*[132] in which the poem's concept manifests itself as a pure particular, not a copy of some transcendental universal. It is a 'pure particular' in the sense that its universal does not lie outside the poem. The poem's world is complete because both the particular and its universal reside in it. If this sounds fanciful or far-fetched, a brief look at Kant's conception of purposiveness without purpose would render it earthly at least to some extent.

In the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, Kant maintains that an object, in order to be a proper object of pure aesthetic judgement, must show purposiveness in its form, which is distinct from the (practical) purpose it may serve. The parts of an object and their interrelationships must constitute a certain kind of design or meaningfulness so that it may appear as purposive. This purposiveness is internal to the object in the sense that it does not gain its life from the purpose the object serves in the external

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[130] McCloksey 1987, 118

[131] Op. cit., 111-115

[132] I owe this point to Michael McGhee's paper: McGhee 2004

world. Kant calls this purposiveness without purpose.[133]

The poem's presentation of a theme must seem complete means the poem's purposiveness should be enough to make the reader aware of the concept in question; the poem need not go outside itself. Thus the poem is complete in itself. By showing its subject-matter's pure particularity, the poem makes the reader conscious of the concept with which he ordinarily conceptualises and veils similar particulars. We do not *know* the concept or Idea of death; we are only familiar with particular deaths or particular conceptions of death. The poem makes us realize this and thereby renews and mystifies life.

3.4 Generation of Aesthetic Ideas

How exactly are aesthetic ideas generated? Though a natural talent, genius is later on characterized as the ability to express aesthetic ideas[134]. So, it is genius that generates aesthetic ideas which make a poem intrinsically valuable and insubstitutable. Thus, a mysterious-sounding concept of genius begins to seem as executing a particular kind of function, when we pay close attention to the discussion of aesthetic ideas. Genius generates aesthetic ideas with the help of imagination in its creative mode.

In Kant's scheme, imagination is a cognitive power. It synthesises sensory intuitions in accordance with the law of association to correspond with a concept of the understanding so that we can have cognition of the object. This is imagination's ordinary, empirical mode. However, as we noticed above, it can also function in a productive or creative fashion: it can create "another nature".

Kant distinguishes between logical and aesthetic attributes. Logical attributes explicate the content of the concept; they are inherent in the concept. In a word, they *denote* the concept. On the other hand, aesthetic attributes are "only supplementary presentations of the imagination, expressing the concept's implications and its kinship with other concepts"[135]. Kant gives the example of Jupiter's eagle. The eagle bearing a lightning in its claws is an aesthetic attribute. Allen Wood describes the significance of the eagle image beautifully: "When we think of the eagle as

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[133] Op. cit., Sections 10 and 11
[134] Ibid., 49: 186
[135] Ibid., 49: 183

signifying Jupiter, we are drawn to think of the bird's powerful, curved beak, its terrible scowl, its majestic wings in flight, soaring among the clouds."[136] Thus, the eagle does not merely denote the sublimity of creation but embodies it and yields an aesthetic idea, which "serves the rational idea as a substitute for a logical exhibition, but its proper function is to quicken the mind by opening up for it a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations."[137] Aesthetic attributes create a situation, a field which would encourage the reader to entertain an aesthetic idea. The aesthetic idea is the object of pleasurable and harmonious interplay of cognitive powers of imaginations and understanding, which does not eventuate in a concept.

Therefore, genius consists in using imagination freely yet in tune with the understanding so that the final product sounds intelligible. Kant calls this activity "expression":

> "... genius actually consists in the happy relation - one that no science can teach and that cannot be learned by any diligence - allowing us, first, to discover ideas for a given concept, and, second, to hit upon a way of *expressing* these ideas ..."[138]

The poet must first "discover" ideas that are apt and appropriate for a given concept of the understanding. That is, the imagination has to use the understanding as its launching pad. And, secondly, the poet must "hit upon" an expression of the discovered ideas so that they are communicable and comprehensible to the readers. In other words, the discovered idea cannot be truly said to have come into being unless the poet creates an expression. Now, it might seem that these two are quite independent activities. But if we pay careful attention to Kant's passage, two phrases stand out: First, ideas are not invented but *discovered.* Second, genius consists not in combination but *happy relation* between discovery and expression, between imagination and understanding. This means that ideas are discovered in the process of expressing them. Discovery and expression of aesthetic ideas are one and the same artistic activity.

This leads to a very important aspect of Kant's aesthetics. Kant considers

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[136] Wood 2005, 168
[137] Op. cit., 49: 183-184
[138] Ibid., 49: 185

originality to be "the foremost property of genius"[139]. Yet, however novel and bold the poem might be, it must not be what Kant terms "original nonsense"[140]. Originality does not lie in mere boldness, play or peculiarity. An original poem or artwork *must make sense*.

Art is not produced according to formulable and learnable rules. Art is produced by an unlearnt talent (called genius). This means that genius creates a rule of its own. That is why Kant talks about other artists' imitation by abstracting such rules from artworks. In other words, only original artworks in which such rules are inscribed can equip artists with the resources they can draw upon. That is, only art can give rise to art. Or, as Heidegger would like to put it, art itself is the origin of artworks and artists. The difference between artistic sense and nonsense is this: The original artwork can be imitated for it makes sense. On the other hand, the original nonsense just attracts attention to itself but cannot inspire other artists to create.

How can an original artwork be made sense of? There is in Kant's aesthetics an acute awareness of the significant role played by the artistic medium. As an artwork is something that is wrought in a medium such as language, which is public and social, it is open to objective scrutiny. That is, what the artist has done to or with the medium and how the artist has attained to an originality is objectively available to other artists, critics and readers. So, *what has been done* with the medium inspires or gives rise to *what can be done* with the medium. Kant makes this clear, though not precisely in this manner, in his discussion of 'constraint' in art. Kant says:

> " ... in all free arts [in contrast to mercenary arts or crafts, which are tied to the purpose they serve] there is yet a need for something in the order of a constraint, or as it is called, a *mechanism*. (In poetry, for example, it is correctness and richness of language, as well as prosody and meter.) Without this the *spirit*, which in art must be free and which alone animates the work, would have no body at all and would evaporate completely."[141]

Note that the *free* arts require a constraint. Spirit of an artwork comes from genius, creative imagination precisely, in the form of aesthetic ideas, whereas its "body" is

[139] Ibid., 46: 175
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid., 43: 171

shaped through mechanism or constraint. The poet's act of achieving an expression is essentially tied to the language and its latent and manifest possibilities. The constraint is exerted by those possibilities. It is noteworthy that in Section 46 Kant vehemently tells us that genius is "not a predisposition consisting of a skill for something that can be learned by following some rule or other"[142], but in Section 43, where the discussion of fine art starts, Kant celebrates art's difference from science in terms of skill:

> "*Art*, as human skill, is also distinguished from *science* ([i.e., we distinguish]) *can* from *know*), as practical from theoretical ability ... That is exactly why we refrain from calling anything art that we *can* do the moment we *know* what is to be done, i.e., the moment we are sufficiently acquainted with what the desired effect is."[143]

Skill is not the foremost feature of genius but it is essential for art. Art is a matter of doing rather than knowing. And, even if the artist knows precisely what is to be done, he cannot do it just because he knows it. In art-creation, knowing does not necessarily lead to doing. Artistic skill is thus fundamentally different from craft-skill. Kant's conception of artistic skill is bound up with his conception of genius. The spirit of an artwork comes from genius but its body is shaped by skill. Thus it is skill that enables the poet to actually write the poem. In other words, unless the poet *could* actually write a poem which is original and exemplary, which offers rich and fertile aesthetic ideas, which exhibits genius, he cannot be said to have or be genius. Genius is not the artist's mysterious mental ability or divine gift. Genius is *realised*, not *possessed*. To be able to create an original artwork and to have genius are two sides of the same coin.

The link that Kant establishes between the artwork's being original and being exemplary suggests the idea of tradition which we shall consider with reference to Collingwood too in Chapter 4. Collingwood holds, in concordance with Eliot's essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent', that originality is not strangeness or non-conformity. The genuine, original artwork fits in with, as well as sounds individual against the backdrop of, other original artworks. Besides, it makes us re-evaluate the

[142] Ibid., 46: 175
[143] Ibid., 43: 170-171

whole corpus. We find a similar, though largely tacit, line of thought in Kant, too. In this connection, Paul Guyer writes in his essay 'Exemplary Originality: Genius, Universality, and Individuality':

> " ... although he [Kant] characterizes genius as "exemplary originality", he understands the sense in which the originality of genius is "exemplary" precisely as both a provocation to and a model for the originality of others, thereby guaranteeing that the works of genius will not constitute a stable canon but a locus of constant upheaval."[144]

In Kant's scheme, artworks serve as standards and rules. Also, genius is entrusted with the responsibility of creating artworks which would be looked upon as exemplary models to be imitated or followed. Though "genius itself cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products", these products allow the artists who have a spark of genius within to abstract a rule from them. Good artworks do not provide "entertainment of the moment" but something more valuable, for instance, "material for future meditation or quotation"[145]. On Kant's view, then, a genuine artwork initiates and sustains a galaxy of artworks, a tradition of art, which is derived from the artistic medium[146]. However, it is monumental artworks themselves, not the whole language, which provide the medium in which the poets think.

3.5 Poetry and Paraphrase

Kant's discussion of aesthetic ideas also touches upon the problem of paraphrase of poetry. The very definition of aesthetic idea rules out the possibility of paraphrasing the poem: "no language can express it completely". The reason is also made explicit in this definition. An aesthetic idea is not a thought stated in words. Technically, an aesthetic idea is "a presentation of the imagination", for instance, Jupiter's eagle or serenity flowing from virtue. If an aesthetic idea were merely an extractable thought, it could have been easily translated into another set of words (or in a set of words in

[144] Guyer 2005, 250-251
[145] Op. cit., 46: 175 and 44: 173
[146] John White also makes a somewhat similar point: White 1995, 89

the case of arts other than poetry). An aesthetic idea is not a thought itself but also cannot be reduced to a determinate thought. It exceeds the poet's original concept, enhances it, and ultimately, on account of it, the poem seems not to be about a certain concept but a thing of which several concepts can be formulated. And despite these formulations, it would still remain unlimitedly suggestive. If by 'paraphrase' we mean a restatement of the poem, then, on Kant's view, the poem is unparaphrasable. However, note that Kant says that "no language can express it *completely*" or "no [determinate] concept can be *adequate*" to it. This means that the poem is not absolutely unparaphrasable but that no paraphrase can express its significance completely. No determinate concept would prove adequate to it. Kant does not mean that the poem's meaning is simply ineffable.

It might be tempting to connect Kant's emphasis on the unparaphrasability of poems to the claim that Kant means to maintain that poems express a special, higher kind of *knowledge* which is fundamentally different from, above indeed, the kinds of knowledge that intellectual pursuits such as natural and social sciences give us. Peter Kivy is a leading figure to propose such an assault on Kant. However, Kant never connects aesthetic ideas to knowledge, rather he explicitly maintains that ideas do not lead to knowledge. In Kant's philosophy, ideas are contrasted with concepts of the understanding. We can obtain a cognition or knowledge of an object when its sensory intuitions, synthesised by empirical imagination, correspond to a concept of the understanding. Ideas are, by their very nature, outlandish in the enterprise of gaining knowledge. Rational ideas are pure concepts which cannot be presented by sensible intuitions and aesthetic ideas are sensible intuitions which do not exemplify any determinate and definite concept. Ideas do not and cannot help us to obtain knowledge. It is far-fetched to criticise Kant's stress on the unparaphrasability of poems on the ground that Kant is keen to claim a higher kind of knowledge for poetry and for all arts.

McCloskey suggests that, though Kant is not committed to the view that the content of artworks is "of necessity non-paraphrasable in literal language", he is committed to the view that "a paraphrase would not satisfy the role of an aesthetic idea in a work"[147]. McCloksey also gives a reason for this. An aesthetic idea "suggests" a thought about death, say, which the paraphrase "asserts". An aesthetic

[147] Op. cit., 116-118

idea does not assert anything but "invites us to entertain" it.[148] This is entirely plausible but superficial. Kant's reason for the unparaphrasability of the poem seems to be the insubstitutability of what the poem and the poem alone shows us. Kant regards poetry as supreme among all arts. His hymn to poetry is as follows:

> "Poetry fortifies the mind: for it lets the mind feel its ability - free, spontaneous, and independent of natural determination - to contemplate and judge phenomenal *nature as having aspects that nature does not on its own offer in experience either to sense or to the understanding*, and hence poetry lets the mind feel its ability to use nature on behalf of and, as it were, as a schema of the supersensible."[149]

Let us keep the religious-mystical note in this hymn aside. But we cannot help but notice that in Kant's eyes (or to Kant's eyes) a true or good poem offers an experience of an unperceived aspect of nature. That is, the poem is a pure particular in that it contains within itself a purposiveness of the subject-matter (death, for instance) that flashes at us momentarily and is susceptible to melt away instantly. The poet strives to capture that meaning by carving it into the medium, by creating an original and exemplary expression, that is, a poem. The poem is thus a dawned aspect of nature which is available through the poem alone and which remains unnoticed otherwise.

3.6 Kivy on Aesthetic Ideas

The focal part of Kivy's *a priori* history of the identity thesis is, as we saw in the preceding chapter, his discussion of Kant's concept of 'aesthetic ideas'. The Kantian concept deserves such pride of place because, according to Kivy, it is the "first clear statement of what was later to become the form-content identity thesis"[150]. Let us see now whether Kivy is right in his reading of it.

Kivy's interpretation of the concept is proposed as a set of remarks on Kant's illustrative example, that is, a poem by Frederic the Great, which we quoted above

[148] Ibid., 117
[149] Op. cit., 53: 196-197 emphasis added
[150] Op. cit., 92

together with Kant's own comments on it. We may recall that Kivy says that Kant posits two levels in the poem. One of these levels consists of manifest and statable content; the other consists of latent and ineffable content. Kant regards the manifest content as the main text of the poem, and the latent content as the sub-text. The sub-text is constituted by aesthetic ideas. Kant goes on to identify the true aesthetic significance with the sub-text, with the latent content, with aesthetic ideas. Why does Kant rely on this vague, largely fictional part of the poem to explain its distinctive value? Kivy's diagnosis is that Kant feared that in the wake of the growth of specialized branches of knowledge a poem's content would be considered as an object of study of some or other branch of knowledge, and poetry would be robbed of its epistemic authority. Therefore, we have to assert that such an esoteric kind of content is the special province of poetry. It does not matter much whether we discover or invent this kind of content.

In the light of our long discussion of aesthetic ideas, it is not difficult to see that Kivy's diagnosis suffers from his unhealthy reliance on Kant's use of the words 'rational' and 'intellectual' in his explication. Although Kivy has not stated explicitly what the manifest and statable content in the poem discussed by Kant is, it is certain that he takes it to be the rational idea of cosmopolitan attitude. Now, neither the phrase 'cosmopolitan attitude' nor its description occurs in the poem. What is, then, the basis of Kivy's assumption that the rational idea of cosmopolitan attitude is the poem's statable and manifest content? Well, Kant tells us so. This is crucial. Kant offers us his critical and appreciative comment on the poem in which he tells us about the theme of the poem and the way in which the poem presents and develops it. In other words, the poem under consideration is about cosmopolitan attitude is Kant's, that is, a critic's or appreciator's, *construal*. It is not a solid fact or a hard truth about the poem. After identifying the theme of the poem, Kant calls our attention to the work of aesthetic ideas evoked by the image of the setting sun. He implies that to be ordinarily aware of what cosmopolitan attitude consists in and to perceive it as presented in the poem are two separate things. Kivy does not care to pay heed to this distinction. We may bring any appropriate idea or concept apprehended intellectually to the poem in order to understand it, but that does not mean that the poem's intellectual, rational, statable or manifest content consists of that idea or concept. It is Kivy, not Kant, who divides the poem and imagines a hierarchy within it.

This is too subtle a matter. But Kivy makes an awfully crude mistake while *introducing* his philosophical target. He writes:

> "They [aesthetic ideas] are, Kant says, a counterpart of the "rational ideas" of the first *Critique*, in that *both are concepts* "to which no intuition (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate."[151]

This is shocking. In Kant's third Critique, a rational idea is a concept and an aesthetic idea a presentation of the imagination or intuition. Both are *not* concepts; only one of them is, namely, a rational idea. Kant states this explicitly and clearly. There can be found no hesitation in the text about this. Kant describes them as counterparts *not* because he considers both of them to be concepts. They are counterparts in the sense that to a rational idea no presentation of the imagination can be adequate whereas to an aesthetic idea no determinate concept can be adequate.

Kant's employment of the word "counterpart" is as metaphorically suggestive as it is theoretically ambiguous. If we are not careful enough, it might be taken to imply two things. First, rational and aesthetic ideas are *similar* in nature. Second, aesthetic ideas largely serve the purpose of rational ideas; they are echoes or mirror-images of rational ideas. Kivy seems to carefully exploit these two implications. His exploitation of the first wrong implication leads him to assert that both kinds of ideas, rational and aesthetic, are concepts. And his exploitation of the second wrong implication helps him to divide the poem into two levels: manifest and unmanifest, statable and unstatable.

The doctrine of aesthetic ideas does not suggest that what the poem presents for our aesthetic contemplation does not fall into a certain branch of knowledge. It is rather an assertion that intellectual devices provided by some or other branch of knowledge cannot render what the poem presents redundant. In this specific sense, a good poem cannot have an alternative. Kivy uses the adjective 'esoteric' in a derogatory sense. But Kant's doctrine urges us to look for an esoteric content in the poem. If the poem's content is rendered redundant by the light of a branch of knowledge, the poem is not worthwhile for what it offers is not singular. So if the poem's content is esoteric, that is, it cannot be explained away by a branch of

[151] Ibid., 91 emphasis added

knowledge, it is worthwhile as a poem.

The staunch opposition to paraphrase by Bradley and Kant can be viewed in this light. The paraphrase of a poem is a brief statement about its central idea. Such a paraphrase is prone to be taken as a proposition that properly belongs to a certain branch of knowledge. Thus, paraphrase creates a possibility, rather it issues a strong recommendation, that a poem be taken as an endeavour towards production of knowledge. Hence the apparently odd pair of opposites: paraphrase vs. the direct experience of a poem.

3.7 Is Poet a Honeybee?: Art, Genius and Nature

The fascinating concept of aesthetic ideas leads us to the heart of Kant's theory of art, namely, genius. According to Kant, fine art is possible due to genius, which he initially characterizes as a natural talent, and later on, in a more concrete way, as the ability to produce and present aesthetic ideas. However, Kant adds a twist to the tale of genius by proclaiming that nature itself gives the rule to art through genius. How to make sense of this puzzling thought? Besides, as noted above, though Kant sharply distinguishes art from nature, some senses of 'nature' play considerable role in his theory. In Section 43 in which the discussion of fine art begins, we come across a couple of intriguing passages about honeybees. In what follows I try to interpret varied relationships amongst art, genius and nature, by pursuing the suggestions and connotations of these passages about honeybees. The aim of this part of the chapter is to elucidate poetry as the work of genius.

3.8 Kant's remarks about honeybees

Kant begins his discussion of fine art by distinguishing products of art from products of nature. Nature is a realm of happenings; its products are mere 'effects' of those happenings. Art, on the other hand, is a realm of human action, of 'doing'; its products are 'works'. Reason and power to choose, and also the freedom implied and assured by these two, underlie the realm of art. Natural happenings are caused by blind forces; they are purely results of chance and accident.

However, some natural objects look artistic. Their structure and appearance seem to have come into being as a result of an intentional artistic act. For example,

honeycombs. Kant notes that objects like honeycombs may pose a difficulty for his clear-cut distinctions between doing and operating, human action and natural happening, art and nature. Nonetheless, he finds a way, although somewhat tricky and slippery, not to admit a honeycomb to the guild of artworks.

> "By right we should not call anything art except a production through freedom, i.e., through a power of choice that bases its acts on reason. For though we like to call the product that bees make (the regularly constructed honeycombs) a work of art, we do so only by virtue of an analogy with art; for as soon as we recall that their labour is not based on any rational deliberation on their part, we say at once that the product is a product of their nature (namely, of instinct), and it is only to their creator that we ascribe it as art."[152]

Kant does not put forth here his own factual claim about honeybees but only 'recalls' the widely held belief in order to support his thesis that art is a work of man alone. That honeybees build honeycombs not rationally but instinctively was a common sense notion in Kant's times as it is today. And to call a honeycomb not only artistic in some respects but a work of art in its own right was, and is, also a pretty common way of looking at the honeybees' home (or industry). Kant draws upon these well-known facts to carve out a distinction which would prove useful for his theory of fine art. He claims that we call a honeycomb a work of art *not literally*, but 'by virtue of an analogy with art'. This is not a well-established fact but a minor thesis developed by Kant himself. And this minor thesis of Kant's seems wrong at least intuitively. People think not only that a honeycomb *looks* artistic (or beautiful) but that a honeycomb *is* a work of art. People do not adopt a special stance towards a honeycomb and stare at it *as though* it is a work of art. People regard a honeycomb as art with literal seriousness. People will agree at once that honeybees act simply instinctively but they will not subscribe to the view that their aesthetic gaze at a honeycomb is merely metaphorical, not real or literal. Thus, Kant's minor thesis begins to seem odd at the very outset.

So, on Kant's view, though they look like artworks, honeycombs are not in

[152] Op. cit., 49: 170

fact artworks. For, they are not born through 'rational deliberation'. We said above that almost all people, who aesthetically gaze at honeycombs, would admit that this is so. Yet, they would insist that in spite of being natural, it is art. What is the basis, then, on which people can contemplate honeycombs as artworks? Kant suggests an answer himself:

> " [It is true that] if, as sometimes happens when we search through a bog, we come across a piece of hewn wood, we say that it is a product of art, rather than of nature, i.e., that the cause which produced it was thinking of a purpose to which this object owes its form. Elsewhere too, I suppose, we see art in everything that is of such a character that before it became actual its cause must have had a presentation of it (as even in the case of bees), yet precisely without the cause's having [in fact] *thought* of that effect. But if we simply call something a work of art in order to distinguish it from a natural effect, then we always mean by that a work of man."[153]

Kant admits the basis for our regarding honeycombs as artworks is provided by their intrinsic feature, by their 'form'. We come across in objects like honeycombs or a piece of hewn wood a form, a design, a structure which can only owe its origin to the purpose, that is, thought or concept in the mind of its creator. Such a neat, even exquisite, form or design is not possible, so we think, without planning, without someone's thinking about or aiming at it. Thus we discern a purpose behind the manifest construction of honeybees: its form seems to be shaped according to a certain purpose.

So, Kant is aware that although our knowledge (belief, to be precise) of honeybees tells us that they do not *create* honeycombs in the sense in which human artists create artworks, certain intrinsic features of honeycombs compel us to consider and call them as artworks.

3.9 Problematical implications of Kant's remarks

Now, these remarks about honeybees and honeycombs are at odds with two major

[153] Ibid. 43: 170

views of Kant. Firstly, Kant characterizes genius primarily as the artist's innate, natural ability and even goes on to claim that genius belongs to nature itself. So, the question arises: If it is their nature that enables honeybees to build honeycombs and genius is nothing but nature of the artist, then is Kant willing to admit that honeycombs and artists are on the same footing? And secondly, in Section 45, Kant says, "Fine art is an art insofar as it seems at the same time to be nature"[154], whereas Kant undermines honeycombs on the same ground by passing the remarks under consideration. Rather, honeycombs fulfil this condition more efficiently and elegantly: they do not merely seem natural but *are* natural. Is this a contradiction in Kant's theory, then?

Let us consider these problematical implications one by one.

3.10 Genius as nature

The concept of genius is almost the heart of Kant's theory of fine art. We find him pronouncing that "fine art is possible only as the product of genius"[155]. Kant's apparently passing remarks about honeybees and honeycombs, however, seriously make this core concept sound as an arbitrarily favoured one.

In Section 46, in which the concept is introduced, Kant describes genius in this fashion:

> "*Genius* is the talent (natural endowment) that gives the rule to art. Since talent is an innate productive ability of the artist and as such belongs itself to nature, we could also put it this way: *Genius* is the innate mental predisposition (*ingenium*) *through which* nature gives the rule to art."[156]

Is not Kant's characterization of genius in terms of 'natural endowment', 'innate productive ability' and 'innate mental predisposition' very much like his description of honeybees' ability to build honeycombs in terms of 'nature' or 'instinct'?

If genius is the artist's 'innate productive ability' through which nature itself 'gives the rule to art', then the honeybee's instinctive ability to build a honeycomb

[154] Ibid., 45: 173
[155] Ibid., 46: 175
[156] Ibid., 46: 174

can also be legitimately regarded as the medium through which nature offers the rule to honeycombs. Rather, Kant's unstated claim is precisely this. Honeybees' need, intention and ability relating to construction of honeycombs are all natural, are all determined by nature. Similarly, in the case of art, genius is the artistic ability as well as the rule that is provided by nature.

If the honeycomb is a product of honeybees' nature, would Kant, then, be ready to call honeybees' natural talent for creating honeycombs genius? If not, why not? Similarly, if the artist creates artworks through genius, which is his nature, would Kant admit that the artist can also be said to act instinctively, naturally or blindly like honeybees? If the artist acts according to the dictates of nature, then he turns out to be another type of honeybee. Conversely, if the honeybee acts according to its natural productive talent, then it turns out to be exhibiting genius in the specific Kantian sense.

However, we can find a way to disentangle these knots, to dispel these perplexities.

In Kant's scheme, to create an artwork, genius alone is not enough. Genius is only one factor, one power involved in the enterprise. The artist also needs artistic skill such as the poet's ability to write a correct and rich language[157]. The artist must also be conversant with 'mechanism'[158] and proficient in shaping the academically appropriate form[159] without which what genius creates would evaporate[160]. Now, the form of an artwork, or what Kant calls mechanism of it, are to be shaped *in and through the medium*. Notice that Kant emphasizes the poet's *language*, not the *thoughts or meanings* in the poet's mind. Unless he could write a correct and rich language, unless he could have command over prosody and meter, the poet cannot form his poetic meanings, his expressions in a peculiarly artistic way. The poem he wants to write is not merely a vehicle which carries the meaning which is ready beforehand. The poet discovers what he wants to express while actually writing the poem. And the act of writing a poem takes place in and through language, which is a public and social medium.

The artist's skill is necessary for carving what genius offers - aesthetic ideas - in the perceptible, experiential, publicly available form. Thus, Kant's genius does not

[157] Ibid., 43: 171
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid., 47: 178
[160] Ibid.

operate in a vacuum. What genius creates is not a sudden, mysterious, prophetic idea, which becomes available automatically and immediately after it has been thought about. Genius on its own cannot show the artist a way to articulate aesthetic ideas. The artist has to work upon his medium and create something out of it to make proper use of the gifts of his genius. The artist works in and upon a public medium which is not his own instinctive creation whereas honeybees use the substance secreted by their bodies to build their houses. What the artist makes out of the available medium - how he uses, moulds, challenges or even negates it - is what matters the most in art, whereas honeybees mechanically make the same kind of honeycomb out of the naturally available substance. So, even if we decide to entertain the thought that genius is also a kind of instinct, we cannot claim on that ground that creation of artworks is a *purely* or *wholly* instinctive, non-rational activity.

Besides, although building a honeycomb is essentially a group activity, a social enterprise in the world of honeybees[161], this social side of their activity is not similar to the social dimension in which the individual human artist creates his artwork. Expressing an emotion or thought through writing a poem never remains a solitary or individual action cut off from the society. For expression is not possible without medium which is, as we said above, public and social. What honeybees use is *material* which is purely physical-chemical, not the *medium* which is intimately tied up with, and ultimately belongs to, the society.

Now, as to the honeybees' nature as genius. Can we really contend that honeybees exhibit genius? Kant's artistic genius is entrusted with the responsibility of creating artworks which would be looked upon as exemplars or models to be imitated or followed (but not to be copied)[162]. Though "genius itself cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products", these products allow the artists who have a spark of genius within to abstract a rule from them. Good artworks do not provide "entertainment of the moment" but something more valuable, for instance, "material for future meditation or quotation"[163]. In Kant's view, exemplary artworks are 'touchstones' of art, as Matthew Arnold would put it later on in his essay 'The Study of Poetry'. Literally, a touchstone is a hard stone of the kind once

[161] Can we think of a *single* honeybee contemplating the future activity of building a honeycomb?
[162] Ibid., 46: 175 and 47: 177
[163] Ibid., 46: 175 and 44: 173

used for testing the quality of gold or silver. Arnold characterizes "lines and expressions of the great masters" as touchstones. For they are employed as a standard of instant comparison for judging the value of other works, for "detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality"[164].

Honeycombs, however, do not display such a variety that some of them may be regarded as models, as touchstones and some as 'imitations' of those models in Kant's peculiar sense. We can safely claim that no observation and deduction of rules take place there. Honeybees are forever engaged in making the age-old type of structures. They do not possess and display genius.

Thus honeybees' nature is not genius and the artist's genius is not nature or instinct. There is a world of conceptual difference between them.

We saw that Kant grants that though their activity is pre-determined[165] and mechanical, honeybees may feel a sensation of the thing to be produced. Kant says:

> " .. we see art in everything that is of such a character that before it became actual its cause must have had a presentation of it (as even in the case of bees), yet precisely without the cause's having [in fact] *thought* of that effect."[166]

A honeycomb's "character" points to the "presentation", which its "cause", that is, its creator - the group of honeybees - had before the honeycomb came into being. That is to say that honeybees *know* in a certain way what they are going to do before they actually start building a honeycomb. But, Kant seems to hold, honeybees can only have a slight inkling which is also predetermined by nature; honeybees do not actually *think about* the idea of building something. So, the implicit claim here is that the artist, unlike honeybees, thinks about creating something; he does not merely sense vaguely the upcoming natural happening. His idea of the artwork to be created is his own thought arrived at by a rational route.

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[164] Arnold 2001, 72-73

[165] Karl von Frisch, who was awarded in 1973 the Nobel prize for his research on the 'language' of honeybees in which they communicate to each other about the sources of honey, observed that this dance-language, though so deliberate and elaborate, is 'genetically programmed' and not 'learnt'. (http://nobelprize.org/medicine/laureats/1973)

[166] Op. cit., 43: 170

Kant is keen to establish that it is *our feeling, not a fact about honeybees*, that they "must have had a presentation of it". 'Presentation' is Kant's technical term for objects of our direct awareness such as sensations, intuitions, perceptions, concepts or ideas. However, Kant's stated words imply so diverse thoughts that they confound the drift of the passage. Firstly, it appears that Kant wants to draw a distinction between being aware of a sensation and having a distinct notion or thought. Using this distinction, he wants to stress that honeybees only become aware of a sensation of building something; they do not think about building something. However, his use of the generic term 'presentation' does not permit such a clear-cut distinction. Secondly, Kant seems to say simply that honeybees may be vaguely, not clearly, aware of their future task. So he accentuates the thinking aspect which is, in his view, lacking in the honeybees' awareness. Thirdly, the passage also seems to indicate that the human artist, in contradistinction to honeybees, has a certain purpose, thought, or conception in addition to a vague feeling before he starts actually composing it. Moreover, this thought or conception is his own creation and this aspect of it makes it entirely different from the honeybees' vague awareness. Honeybees' vague awareness is instinctual and pre-programmed. What honeybees become aware of is only a sensation, only a fleeting, vague moment of experience. That's not a thought, a clear and lucid production of a free, rational mind. Fine art is "production through freedom", which honeycombs are not.

So far, so good. But these implied or intended distinctions between sensation and thought, vague and clear awareness, pre-programmed notion and a rational conception cannot help Kant to establish that art is production through freedom. Art cannot be shown to be free and rational by arguing that it is created under the guidance of a clear and distinct conception which is obtained in advance. This is strikingly true of Kantian theory of fine art.

As we saw above, Kant is acutely aware of the important role of artistic medium. The poet plays with the language, changes it, challenges it, innovates it and thus tries to express what he wants to express. If the poet knew well what he wanted to express prior to the composition of a poem, he would certainly have resorted to the ordinary language to communicate it; he would not have written a poem. It is not that the poet has a clear and distinct meaning or expression in mind and *then* he just looks for appropriate and nice words. Rather, words help him to see clearly and distinctly what his meaning or expression is. The words the poem is made up of and

the expression of a poem are not different things; they are two sides of the same coin. Kant's concept of genius contains this insight, which would later be theorized by such thinkers as A. C. Bradley and R. G. Collingwood especially.

Two chief traits of genius, according to Kant, are: the product of genius is original, and, genius itself cannot explain how it creates. Originality is not bestowed upon the artwork by readers or critics; but it itself exudes it; readers and critics only detect and spot it. An original poem radiates originality: it expresses what is insubstitutable, what can be expressed by it alone. The poet achieves this originality by working upon his medium. The poet achieves an original poem by not following a particular plan, rule or principle. Rather, a particular strategy would be a hindrance to his exploration of the medium. So, what the poet finally writes is actually what he has arrived at, what he has obtained. He cannot fully explain how he reached there.

And this is something that is betrayed by Kant's implied distinctions we discussed above. In that particular passage, Kant appears to equate rationality and the freedom to choose with having in mind a clear idea or purpose. This equivalence is not consistent with the view of the process of artistic creation to which Kant subscribes, though mostly tacitly.

The artist is blind, so to say, when he begins to create an artwork. His exploration of and through the medium is like groping in the dark. And, even when he finally succeeds in creating what he wanted to, he cannot tell us how he did it. His genius helps him evidently. There we come again: the artist, on this account as well, is 'blind' like honeybees. He doesn't know what he wants to do, what he is doing, and what he has done. He gropes, fumbles and emerges with something that sounds and appears novel and interesting. A Kantian finds it original and mind-enhancing. A question arises: Is the artist blind like honeybees? Or, can honeybees be said to grope like the artist?

When we consider descriptions of artistic creation given by thinkers like Bradley and Collingwood, it seems that Kant has couched his description of honeybees' sensation in exactly the same language. On the Bradley-Collingwood account as well as the Kantian one, the artist is virtually a blind person who leads his creative life in the light of his genius.

As we have already seen, Bradley maintains that genuine poetry is "not the decoration of a preconceived and clearly defined matter". The poet begins with "a

vague imaginative mass pressing for development and definition."[167] And Collingwood says in a similar vein:

> "When a man is said to express emotion, what is being said about him comes to this. At first, he is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what this emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. ... From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself. This is an activity which has something to do with the thing we call language: he expresses himself by speaking."[168]

Both Bradley and Collingwood highlight the initial vague, inchoate feeling. Both of them explicitly emphasise the interaction between such a formless feeling and the medium that the artist handles of which we find only tacit indications in Kant's central concept of genius. Both suggest that artistic creation is not a domain of well-formed, crystal clear notions and conceptions. And, very interestingly, in Bradley's passage the meaning *possesses* the poet and in Collingwood's passage it *oppresses* him. So, from the artist's viewpoint, the creation of an artwork leads not only to a physical product, a resultant artwork but also to the experience of liberation from the disturbing fog in consciousness. In a peculiar sense, art provides freedom. We will consider the relationship between art and freedom in the last section of this part.

Kant's remarks about honeybees are problematical precisely because he strips the artist of such cloudy feelings which ask for expression, for soul. These remarks of Kant's make the artist appear as a man with a definite mission and as a man who is absolutely free. He is not an adventurous explorer. Art is not a voyage of discovery. Curiously, his whole discussion of genius, on the other hand, can be read as a precursor to the Bradley-Collingwood school, as we have done here.

The situation is rendered more complex when we see that Kant rather ascribes the vague, undefined feelings to honeybees. Can we suppose that honeybees' prior sensation is like the vague, undefined feeling that is later defined and made sense of through creating an artwork, as described by the Bradley-

[167] For the full quotation refer to pages 6 and 7
[168] Collingwood 1938, 109

Collingwood theory? If yes, then we have to concede that honeybees are artists. To sort out these puzzles, let's try to get more clear about what Kant really ascribes to honeybees.

Kant's remarks may mean two things: (1) Honeybees sense *that* they are going to build a honeycomb. (2) Or, they sense the image, form, pattern, design, or thought *of* the honeycomb that is to be built.

What exactly does Kant have in mind here? It appears that Kant had in mind (1), but he inadvertently put forth (2). Kant wanted to say: "Yes, of course, we can, can we not, imagine honeybees as sensing, envisaging, thinking of the activity of building a honeycomb together." But the context makes him utter a different parlance. He has granted that we detect a purposive form in a honeycomb and we also think that this form must owe its existence and its nature to a designing mind, a specific intention or concept in that mind. And, as though Kant went on to say: "Yes, it is perfectly possible that honeybees have a sensation *of* a honeycomb." Thus, Kant goes the other, unintended way. Therefore the doubt or question we gave voice to above crops up. But it should be quite clear that by all means Kant only means that honeybees only sense the activity (event, in fact) of building honeycomb and *not* the idea or form of honeycomb.

When Bradley's or Collingwood's artist feels a nebulous feeling and feels like composing a work of art, he is going to do something with that very feeling. Through his artistic act, he expresses the feeling itself. Bradley and Collingwood make it clear that the expressed feeling is a transformed one: it begins to exist in a new and novel way. On the other hand, what honeybees sense or feel vaguely is quite separate and distinct from the activity that follows. To put it succinctly, the artist works *upon* the feeling, whereas honeybees, as described by Kant, work *in accordance with* the feeling. This is the vital difference between what honeybees sense and what the artists feel. Needless to say, Kant would happily agree with the Bradley-Collingwood account.

3.11 Art as nature

Now let us turn to the second problematical implication of Kant's remarks about honeybees and honeycombs.

According to Kant's theory of fine art, one of the essential traits that an

artwork is expected to exhibit is that it must look natural. The whole of Section 45 is devoted to this theme. There Kant says, " ... [Art] can be called fine [schon] art only if we are conscious that it is art *while yet it looks to us like nature.*"[169]

Kant's point is pretty obvious. An artwork, though it is primarily a product of a purposeful and directed action, must not seem so. It must not look intentional, a thing made according to a certain plan, and so a thing which is meant to be understood in terms of a determinate concept. Rather, an artwork should look like a natural object: free, independent, spontaneous, worth dwelling upon for its own sake, intelligible in its own terms and exuding a sovereign significance. If an artwork looks determinate, that is, graspable in terms of and reducible to a concept, it cannot become an object of a pure judgement of taste. So, Kant's advice to the artist is: " ... [The] academic form must not show; there must be no hint that the rule was hovering before the artist's eyes."[170]

There also seems to be yet another sense of the naturalness of an artwork about which Kant does not talk until Section 53. A brief indication of this sense of naturalness can be found in Section 49, though. Kant wants to maintain that a worthwhile artwork, with its exhibition of aesthetic ideas, creates "another nature". He spells this out in Section 53 while discussing poetry's supremacy: " ... it [poetry] lets the mind feel its ability - free, spontaneous, and independent of natural determination - to contemplate and judge phenomenal nature as having [*nach*] aspects that nature does not on its own offer in experience either to sense or to understanding."[171]

Thus, Kant appears to hold that a worthwhile artwork does not only look like nature but *is* nature in the sense that it offers a hitherto unperceived aspect of nature for our contemplation. It does not offer a sensation or a concept, objects of experience and understanding. It rather offers such a purposive form commensurate with the harmonious interplay of imagination and understanding that it "makes reason think more"[172].

Honeycombs are natural in the sense that they are not created by man. We know that they are produced by honeybees. Artworks are not natural in this sense. They are artificial; they are created by man. But Kant insists that artworks should

[169] Op. cit., 45: 174 emphasis added
[170] Ibid., 45: 174
[171] Ibid., 53: 196
[172] Ibid., 49: 183

look like nature. They should look as if they are not created by man. So, it means that Kant does not want to define art in terms of being man's creation whereas he inaugurates his discussion of fine art with the remark that art is the sole privilege of man. This very oddity we have been trying to untie.

However, as we have been seeing here, there are different senses of being or looking natural.

A honeycomb is natural in two senses:

1. It is not created by man.
2. It looks like existing on its own, having a life and nature of its own.

But a honeycomb is not natural in the third sense:

3. It does not offer a novel aspect of nature for contemplation.

It follows from this that in the third capacity lies the art's distinctiveness. It can become nature by offering a novel aspect of nature. A honeycomb *is* nature but an artwork *becomes* nature. So, honeycombs cannot be worthy candidates to be regarded as artworks in this particular sense.

3.12 Plato's honeybees and Kant's honeybees

It is curious that Plato also should invoke honeybees while talking about the nature and worth of poetry. Plato likens poets to honeybees whereas Kant tries to distinguish poets from honeybees. I wonder whether Kant's distinction is an attempt to refute Plato's claim.

In *Ion*, Socrates proclaims:

> " ... the poets tell us, don't they, that the melodies they bring us are gathered from rills that run with honey, out of glens and gardens of the Muses, and *they bring them as the bees do honey, flying like the bees*? And what they say is true, for a poet is a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside himself, and reason is no longer in him."[173]

Plato claims that the poet is just like the honeybee. Both act according to

[173] Plato 1961, 220 emphasis added

instinct or inspiration, which is a force outside themselves. Both are in the *grip* of this force. So, they cannot be said to be free.

Kant, on the other hand, claims that the poet is so much different from the honeybee. The honeybee acts according to instinct whereas the poet acts by employing an ability which, though it cannot be learnt, is still non-instinctive and non-natural. Kant famously calls this ability genius. On the face of it, this conception of genius, of the unlearnt, non-natural ability appears strange. And Kant's language also mystifies it, especially when he claims that nature itself gives the rule to art through genius. Such remarks make genius seem a natural or divine gift. Efforts seem to have nothing to do with it.

However, if we closely consider all components that play different roles in the creation of an artwork according to Kant's theory, genius looks like a guiding principle invented by the artist himself. But the artist cannot literally invent such a principle. He does not *devise* it, but *derives* it. He derives it in the process of creation, in and through his play with the medium.

Thus, Kant's genius is not an entity. It's not a ghost within the artist. Kant does not make some *deus ex machina* a seat of inspiration in the artist. Genius is something that is exhibited and realized. Genius is what the artist *does*. Genius is Kant's medium-bound, rather medium-centered, concept.

I wonder if Kant coined this concept to counter Plato's fierce attack on inspiration. Plato portrays inspiration as a blind, irrational force, as opposed to knowledge or wisdom. Kant, on the other hand, portrays genius not as a force external to the artist but his innate faculty which, according to my interpretation, he has to realise. On Kant's view, instinct belongs to honeybees and inspiration in the form of genius to artists. Artists are not honeybees.

Kant's remarks about honeybees and honeycombs, if seen from a broader perspective, concern the role of instinct, intuition, inspiration, flash of imagination, or genius (or what is called *pratibha* in Sanskrit poetics) in the creation of artworks. It is commonly supposed that a good artwork cannot be created without inspiration, without a stroke of genius, which, in turn, is not the outcome of technique, skill or hard work alone. This is also Kant's own view. Rather, the prevalent view owes much to Kant via Romantic poetry and Romantic poetics. But in the honeybees passage Kant seems to consciously and carefully distance himself away from instinct or nature at least. For he does not want to maintain that artistic inspiration is a divine

dispensation.

Roughly speaking, Romanticism sees poetry as natural, impulsive, spontaneous expression of felt emotions. According to Romanticism, poetry is not a mirror-image of men's actions but expression of the poet's feelings. The pivot of the process of composition is spontaneity. This is so because composition of a poem does not consist of "the artful manipulation of means to foreseen ends"[174].

In contrast, Kant, whose aesthetics is regarded as the cradle of Romanticism, lays emphasis on rational deliberation, conscious awareness, and purposefulness. At the very outset of his discussion of fine art he insists that art is a non-instinctive, non-natural affair. The principal merit of Kant's aesthetics, which, in my view, has not been paid much attention to, is that it attempts to provide an account of genius in terms of what exactly happens in the inspired, spontaneous state of composition. So, it's worth pondering if it is right to continue to consider Kant's aesthetics in a strictly Romantic way.

3.13 Art as freedom

There is a significant difference between 'instinct' and 'inspiration'. Plato's honeybee signifies inspiration whereas Kant's honeybee is a sign of instinct. Plato's artistic inspiration is just like the honeybee's instinct whereas Kant's artistic genius is fundamentally different from the honeybee's instinct.

A dictionary defines 'instinct' and 'inspiration' in the following manner:

> Instinct: "a natural tendency for people and animals to behave in a particular way using the knowledge and abilities they were born with rather than thought or training."
> Inspiration: "the process that takes place when [somebody] sees or hears [something] that causes them to have exciting new ideas or make them want to create [something], especially in art, music or literature."[175]

Instinct is a 'natural tendency'; instinctual behaviour is guided by inborn knowledge and abilities. On the other hand, though inspiration is a sudden flash, it is

[174] Abrams 2001, 177-78
[175] Hornby 2000, 673

a product of a 'process' which is founded upon 'thought and training'. Kant rejects instinct straightaway. He also seems to keep inspiration at bay, although the concept of genius looks much like inspiration. If Kant allows his artist to entertain sudden flashes of inspiration, then his artist would not be so free as Kant wants him to be. The artist would then be a part of a chain under the auspices of some supra-human agency.

For Plato, inspiration is not a state, phase or duration, but a force, almost a transient faculty. By claiming this, Plato argues that art is in opposition with reason and knowledge. Plato thinks that this is solid ground for undermining art. Kant's genius, which gives soul to artworks and enlivens them, is mainly a talent[176]. It basically differs from skill which can be taught and learnt. Kant does not claim that genius offers us higher, more significant knowledge. Rather, his basic conception of art is that it is not cognitively known but pleasurably contemplated for its own sake. But not to be concerned with knowledge is not a sign of being worthless. Art can show us unperceived aspects of nature and thereby enlarge our ken. Genius can do it precisely because it acts freely, though rationally and purposively.

The primary meaning of the freedom that genius enjoys is not that it is *free from instinct* but that it is *free to work upon the medium*. No formula, rule, recipe, concept, convention or principle shackles the true artist and so he is credited with being or having genius.

At times Kant seems to hold that the thought or plan on the basis of which the artist begins his creation is arrived at by a rational route. We considered that this receives a strong opposition from the later Bradley-Collingwood theory. On this theory, the artist never merely communicates the readymade thought; art is no craft. The artist rather creates art in order to see what his thought is. Only the medium he is going to work on can help him to realise this goal. The artist is not absolutely free in the sense that he alone determines what his art expresses or means. He expresses or means what his exploration of the medium *allows* him to express or mean. The artist only enjoys relative, medium-bound freedom. Considering his theory as a whole, it is hard to say what Kant means by the freedom with which the artist starts creation is not the absolute, ungoverned freedom.

Thus, Kant's brief discussion of honeybees touches upon a lofty theme. On

[176] The Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah once said: "There is no innate talent as such. But if you lack it, you lack everything."

Kant's theory of fine art, to create an artwork is to experience one's freedom. Note that Kant's initial definition of art is "production through freedom". Not only the honeybee but the artist who acts according to recipes and formulas is *not free* like the true artist who creates through genius. Thus to create an artwork is not only to design a purposeful, meaningful and aesthetically rich object but also to experience one's freedom, to be free.

3.14 Conclusion

In this chapter we critically expounded Kant's conception of aesthetic ideas. They are presentations of the imagination which cannot be reduced to, or fully explicated in terms of, or completely communicable by, a determinate thought, concept or verbal expression. The creation of aesthetic ideas bestows on the poem spirit. This is poetic expression. It is not an articulation of a preconceived thought or meaning, but is arrived at by an exploration through the medium with artistic skill. The finished poem is, thus, the realised genius. Thus delving deep into the concept of aesthetic ideas sheds different light on the mysterious-sounding concept of genius, and hopefully renders it more accessible.

CHAPTER 4

Poetry as Expression: A Collingwoodean Inquiry

"Expression is an activity of which there can be no technique."[177]

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss Collingwood's aesthetic theory as presented in his *Principles of Art*. To understand his central idea that art is expression, it is important to appreciate his distinction between craft and art. For, in his view, expression is such an activity that it can *never* be craft. So, to regard a poem as a vehicle for readymade content is, according to Collingwood, to treat it as a product of craft. After the craft-art distinction, I turn to the notion of expression, and show that for Collingwood the expressed emotion and its expression are not two distinct things but two sides of the same coin. This accentuates the role of the 'medium' in writing poetry. I also argue that Collingwood's apparently mentalistic or psychological notion of 'unexpressed emotion' can be made sense of by exploring further the notion of the medium. The idea of 'tradition' is brought in as an amplification of the notion of medium. This equips me with effective tools to criticize in the later sections two of Collingwood's critics, namely, Nigel Warburton and Richard Wollheim.

4.2 Art is no Craft

Collingwood famously distinguishes between art and craft. He strongly maintains that art is not craft. How does he distinguish them? And, more importantly, why does he contrast art with *craft*?

First a few words about the second question. Collingwood pays close critical attention to the concept of craft for three main reasons. Firstly, the classical Greek and Latin concepts of art cover both handicrafts and what we today call arts such as painting, music or literature. On Collingwood's view, the modern, "aesthetic" sense of art, which he presupposes and accepts in his discussion, needs to be disentangled

[177] Collingwood 1938, 111

from these broader classical concepts. Secondly, since both art and craft aim at *production* of things, it is quite tempting to see them as activities of the same kind. Collingwood is all against this sort of approach. In his view, art not only is dissimilar to craft in certain respects but art and craft cannot be brought together and compared at all. Art is no craft. Art is something totally different. Thirdly, this way of thinking, though not applicable to art, can be applied to and is true of certain activities such as amusement art or magical art which have the appearance of art but in fact are not. However, since art has been consistently treated as a species of the same genus as craft, the aesthetician who wants to theorize about art needs to carry out a negative duty first: he has to show that artistic creation cannot be understood as an activity similar to craft.

To conflate this crucial distinction is a "special error" which Collingwood terms as "the technical theory of art"[178]. According to the technical theory, art, just like craft, is "the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action"[179]. Collingwood puts forth six "main characteristics" of craft, which do not define craft definitely or strictly, but "we may claim with tolerable confidence that where most of them are absent from a certain activity that activity is not a craft"[180]. And, very significantly, when the creation of a certain artwork can be said to be fully explained in terms of and exhausted by these characteristics, it cannot be called art; it is a craft falsely called art. Of these characteristics four are most important.

First, in craft there is always a clear-cut distinction between means and end, "each clearly conceived as something distinct from the other." The means of a craft are the actions which are "passed through or traversed in order to reach the end"[181]. The blacksmith's actions such as burning the fuel or heating the iron are passed through and left behind while making the horseshoe. The final, finished product is not an eventual culmination or 'conclusion' of these actions; it is, as Aaron Ridley puts it, "conceptually distinct" from them[182]. Its nature and the purpose it would serve could be conceived independently of the means the blacksmith uses. And these means, too, in turn, can be specified and delineated independently.

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[178] Ibid., 9
[179] Ibid., 15
[180] Ibid., 15, 17
[181] Ibid., 15
[182] Ridley 1998a, 10

Second, in craft there is also a clear-cut distinction between planning and execution. The craftsman has a *precise foreknowledge* of what he wants to make. Both the words are equally important: "[t] he craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it" and "this foreknowledge is not vague but precise"[183]. A carpenter who sets out to make a table vaguely conceived is not a craftsman.

Third, in craft there is yet another clear-cut distinction between raw material and finished product. The craftsman works upon the readymade raw material and transforms it into an artifact of a certain kind. What distinguishes the final product from the raw material is the form it acquires in the process of production.

And the fourth important feature of craft is that "There is a hierarchical relation between various crafts, one supplying what another needs, one using what another provides"[184]. Every craft thus has a "hierarchical character"[185]. This is not a subsidiary feature as many commentators tend to think and hence overlook. I shall say more about it when we consider connections between Collingwood and T. S. Eliot.

The first three characteristics largely concern the *distinctions* craft involves. When we consider the blacksmith's craft, we can distinguish, on the one hand, the plan it executes, the means it employs and the actual process of making, and, on the other hand, the goal it aims at or, seen from the opposite direction, the finished product it results in. Plans are made, means found, and the making undertaken to obtain the result which would satisfy a certain need. And the fourth characteristic is about the *system* constituted by various crafts. This system is ultimately rooted in the everyday practical life.

The technical theorist of art tries to elucidate art in terms of these features which, in Collingwood's opinion, is an impossible task, a vulgar error. Art does not involve or display clear-cut distinctions between means and end, planning and execution or raw matter and finished artifact, and it also does not have a hierarchical character.

The poet requires no means such as hammer or anvil to write a poem. No doubt the poet requires a pen and a paper but these implements are essential for

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[183] Op. cit., 15 and 16
[184] Ibid., 16
[185] Ibid., 17

"writing", not for "composition"[186]. Also, the poem cannot be a means to an end like the production of a certain state of mind. The poem's failure to bring about a certain state of mind does not make it a bad poem but the horseshoe must be of such a nature that it must fulfill its purpose. Cannot the poet's poetic labour be conceived as the means by which he writes the poem? Collingwood's point is that although we can very well imagine and postulate the blacksmith's "sheer labour"[187], this alone will not enable him to produce the intended horseshoe; he will require forge, anvil and other tools. In contrast, the poet can create a poem without any tools.

The poet also does not execute a plan when writing a poem. Suppose the poet is trying to write a poem about a particular subject to satisfy his editor's demand. Thus he has a plan, an idea of what he wants to do. But, while rejecting some lines as he finds them in his head and altering them to his liking, his composition cannot be said to be totally dictated by the plan or the vague idea of the poem[188]. And, he may write a poem without a plan and be still a poet. It is not that the poet always has a vague plan or does not plan at all but that he *need* not plan his writing whereas the craftsman's undertaking cannot take place without a precise plan and a precise method of execution. It is hard indeed to identify "the measurements and specifications of the poem"[189].

The poet's writing a poem is not working upon and transforming raw material. When a blacksmith makes a horseshoe, he makes it "not out of all the iron there is, but out of a certain piece of iron"[190]. The poet does not have a *certain* raw material at his disposal. A poet writing in English has the whole English language before him, which is to say nothing or everything that is not directly available or responsive to transformation in a particular manner. The words that occur in the poem are not the readymade matter in the same way as iron that constitutes the horseshoe. Collingwood acknowledges here that writing poetry is converting emotions into poems, as Heine says, but "this conversion is different from the conversion of iron into horseshoes".[191]

There are various implications of the craft-art distinction which are

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[186] Ibid., 20
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid., 21
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., 23
[191] Ibid.

advantageous for focusing upon art proper. The amalgam which the classical concepts treat as art can be systematically divided on the basis of Collingwood's salient properties of craft. (Fine) Art is different from (useful or mechanical) craft because it not only does not manifest those properties but it crucially differs from craft in those very respects. Although these features of craft do not and cannot throw light upon what art is, they can explain the nature of apparently artistic activities such as entertainment art. Collingwood argues that they only appear to be artistic but are not really art. For they can be fully explicated on the basis of the theory of craft.

Thus, Collingwood's discussion of the meaning of craft dialectically serves two purposes: first, separating art from handicraft and, second, uncovering the crafts which masquerade as art but actually are not.

The purpose of Collingwood's discussion of the meaning of craft is neither to deny that art does not involve any features of craft nor to advance a crazy thesis that whatever is not craft is art as some commentators, H. O. Mounce, for instance, have concluded.[192]

Ridley's interpretation is quite illuminating here. According to Ridley, "the distinction that Collingwood wants to draw is not between craft-objects and art-objects, but between respects in which an object can be seen as a piece of craft, in the sense that it can be understood instrumentally, and respects in which it can not."[193] To put it more succinctly, Collingwood does not want to separate two clear-cut *sets* of objects but *aspects* that an object may have. Unlike its craft-aspect, an object's art-aspect cannot be understood instrumentally. How to understand it, then?

4.3 Expression

According to Collingwood, the poet, as an artist proper, writes a poem in order to express his emotion. By writing a poem he expresses his own as well as his readers' emotions. What does he mean by 'expression'?

The poem as expression from the reader's point of view

Let us first look at Collingwood's idea of expression from the reader's point of view:

[192] Mounce 1991. R. T. Allen criticises Mounce along the same line as I try to develop here: Allen 1993

[193] Op. cit., 16

> " ... when some one reads and understands a poem, he is not merely understanding the poet's expression of his, the poet's, emotions, he is expressing emotions of his own in the poet's words, which have thus become his own words. As Coleridge put it, we know a man for a poet by the fact that he makes us poets. We know that he is expressing his emotions by the fact that he is enabling us to express ours."[194].

Salient characteristics of expression that are implied by this passage can be described as follows:

1. *Expression is fundamentally different from communication*: In the mode of communication, language plays the part of a means. It is employed by the user to achieve a preconceived end, namely, transmission of a certain message. So, the receiver's chief interest lies in picking up the message sent from the other pole. However, such bipolarity and means-end relationship do not exist in the case of poem as expression. The poet and the reader both are in the same position in relation to the poem: it enables them to express their emotion. Thus the poem has an intrinsic significance for them. The reader does not just grasp the message but understands his own emotion while reading and experiencing the poet's words as his own.

Thus the reader finds the poem valuable not because it is a verbal vehicle. This is not to say that the reader may not see the poem in that manner. Nor that the poet may not have written the poem for that purpose. However, this stance on the reader's part, or the poet's intention, does not exhaust the poem's potential to be art proper, that is, to be read as an expression. In other words, the poem's art-aspect cannot be fully explained in terms of its craft-aspect. A poem may be a product of craft and yet may be an expression. But what makes it an expression is fundamentally different from what makes it a craft-product, a means of communication.

2. *The reader does not recognize his emotion in the poem but the poem enables him to express his emotion*: When he reads the poem, the reader does not just passively receive its meaning, but participates in the poet's act of expression. The experience

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[194] *Op. cit.*, 118

of the poem yields for him an understanding of his own emotion. This does not mean that the poem evokes in him a certain emotion nor that he reads into the poem an emotion similar to his own. The poem is neither a stimulus nor a mirror. Furthermore, the poet does not know clearly beforehand *what* he seeks to express. Likewise, when the reader tries to understand the poem and participates in the act of expression, he does not know, independently of the poem, what he too had been groping for. As a result, for the reader to understand the poem is not to recognize a similar emotion in its words but to realize that the poem has enabled him to be aware of his own emotion which was inchoately lurking within him.

3. *Hence, the poem as an expression is individual and indispensable*: The reader comes to realize that the poem, rather than reflecting a known or already grasped emotion, expresses hitherto nebulous emotion because the poem identifies and individualizes that emotion. In order to individualize his emotion, the poet keeps himself away from all sorts of generalizations that would not let him confront it in its peculiarity. In short, by writing a poem the poet *creates* an emotion. Therefore, the reader finds the poem as new and fresh, as a unique expression of his peculiar emotion. He regards the poem's words as insubstitutable for they and they alone express his emotion. As he experiences that the poem enlightens the unexpressed in him, he attaches a unique value to the poem. It is indispensable because it is individual.

<u>The poem as expression from the poet's point of view</u>

But how can the reader find the poem to be expressing his own emotion when it is written by someone else? How can the poet who creates it, and the reader who just reads it, be in the same position in relation to the poem? To answer these questions, we must look into what, according to Collingwood, the poet does when he writes the poem.

'Why does the poet write poems?' might be an unanswerable question. 'Someone's being a poet' is unexplainable. Or, seen from a different angle, it is prerequisite for writing poems. But, 'Why did the poet write *this* poem?' is an answerable question. And its answer lies in the poem itself: the poet wanted to express *this* emotion which *this* poem expresses.

The poet "must first be in circumstances that enable [him] to create"[195]. What does this mean? It means that although Collingwood insists that poetry or art is non-technical creation[196], he does not forget that "in order that a work of art should be created, the prospective artist ... must have in him certain unexpressed emotions, and must also have the wherewithal to express them"[197]. Now, the 'wherewithal' of the prospective poet is not a means to shape a raw material of unexpressed emotion in accordance with a certain plan. For that purpose, he would need to have an exquisite command over both of them. However, to have an exquisite command over the unexpressed emotion is simply to know it and to have an exquisite command over the wherewithal is to know that it is the perfect articulation of the unexpressed emotion. This seems at once absurd and so it is. To say that the poet *uses* his wherewithal is to say that he selects certain 'right' words to express his emotion. But out of *which* words (the whole language?) he chooses those words that make up the poem? And if the poet can know that those few chosen words express his emotion, then it is very hard to call that emotion 'unexpressed'.

On Collingwood's theory, the emotion "cannot be felt without being expressed"[198]. A crucial implication here is that our experience of an emotion depends on our expression of that emotion; we cannot experience or feel the emotion fully or as it really is unless we have expressed it. Aaron Ridley puts it nicely:

> "An emotion is not *revealed* for what it is through being expressed: it *becomes* what it is through being expressed"[199].

On the basis of this, Ridley goes on to claim that

> "On Collingwood's construction ... there can be no genuine distinction between the emotion expressed and the expression of it ... That the emotion expressed is always, and of necessity, *mediated.* One may express one's experience in words or in gestures ... The act of expression is tied

[195] Ibid., 130
[196] Ibid., 128
[197] Ibid., 130
[198] Ibid., 238
[199] Op. cit., 27 emphasis added

indissolubly to the *medium* through which it is achieved"[200].

This is extremely significant. It rules out the simplistic model, which can reduce expression to communication, to craft, according to which there is an emotion to be expressed *and* there are words which can be used to express it. Emotion cannot be experienced without expression means that language and emotion has a particularly intimate connection: emotion does not exist without words. However, not any words would express any emotion. And it is also equally true that words are not *appropriate* means for expression. The unity of words and emotion is achieved and felt when expression is complete, when it is realized that knowing and expressing emotion are one and the same thing. Given this, I contend, it is plausible to say that the intimate interconnection between language and emotion operates not only after expression is achieved but also *before* expression is undertaken. It follows from this that the poet's emotion can only be considered 'unexpressed' in relation to his wherewithal. That is, the language in which the poet writes *defines* the nature of his unexpressed emotion. Therefore, that language alone can enable him to understand the nature of the unexpressed emotion and *thereby* to express it.

How does language define the nature of the poet's unexpressed emotion? The poet's wherewithal is nothing else than the everyday, ordinary language which is a storehouse of "descriptions" that immediately suggest themselves. When the poet wants to express a certain emotion, at once the word 'anger', say, comes up and characterizes that emotion. According to Collingwood, such characterization is not expression but description:

> "To describe a thing is to call it a thing of such and such a kind: to bring it under a conception, to classify it. Expression, on the contrary, individualizes"[201].

The easily available description - 'anger' - treats the poet's emotion as an instance of the emotion which is generally called anger. No doubt the poet's emotion may be like anger but just that. The poet is more interested in getting clear about its peculiar character than attaching to it a convenient, 'user-friendly' label.

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[200] Ibid., 27 emphasis added
[201] Op. cit., 112

Here Collingwood not only distinguishes expression from description but also destabilises our confidence in our dependence upon, and even what we take to be the *truth* of, such general descriptions even in everyday life. The contrast that Collingwood draws in the preface to *Principles of Art* between "the old 'slice of life' entertainment" and "new drama" is worth noting in this connection. In the former, "the author's chief business was to represent everyday doings of ordinary people as the audience believed them to behave, and the actor's chief function to take a cigarette from his case, tap it, and put it between his lips."[202]. The old drama's primary aim is to entertain people. And it does so mainly by representing "everyday doings of ordinary people"; the actor takes a cigarette from his case just as the ordinary smoker normally does. However, Collingwood has already added a twist in this simple description: this kind of drama represents everyday actions in such a way that it matches the ordinary people's *beliefs* about those actions. The old drama's flaw or limitation lies not so much in being representation of life-like actions as in its reliance on the ways in which people generally view everyday actions. Although Collingwood leaves here unexplained what precisely he finds interesting about new drama, it is quite transparent that the new drama abstains from exploiting ordinary ways of understanding actions for the sake of entertainment. Rather than describing things, the new drama expresses them, and therefore people find it new, shocking, challenging or enlightening instead of merely amusing.

If expression is always mediated and so the expressed emotion is not distinct from its expression, then the expressed emotion must necessarily depend upon the medium for its definition and identity. What can it mean that the emotion that the poet (and the reader) try to express in words receives its identity from those words? The words that express an emotion enable us to understand the peculiarity of the emotion as well as to feel it fully and authentically.

In order to capture the emotion's peculiarity, one must refuse to label it, to categorize it. And this refusal gives rise to the search for a novel way to define an emotion. Rejection of platitudes and invention of novel ways are thus at the heart of artistic expression. Collingwood's famous (or infamous) distinction between art and craft is more a warning against confusing platitudinous art with art proper than an insistence that the so-called useful craft is the enemy of the so-called fine art or an

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[202] Ibid., v

insistence that art does not involve skill and technique. He rather wants to vigorously emphasize that art proper is always exploratory and novel. The so-called art that uses what is called 'artistic material' (clichés) and offers 'artistic experiences' to the 'art consumer' is in fact a craft which is much less worthwhile (and is dangerous indeed) than carpentry, for instance. The crucial purpose of craft-art distinction is not to undermine the importance of useful crafts, which of course no sensible person would deny, but to underline the baseness of what masquerades as art but really is not. So, we must differentiate between "drawing upon art tradition" and "using art tradition". The false craftsman (he is neither an artist proper nor a true craftsman) uses art tradition for the sake of ulterior ends. The artist proper draws upon art tradition because it provides him with the medium for his art, for expression.

The attempt to capture the peculiarity of an emotion is ultimately for experiencing that emotion fully and authentically. So, the search for a novel way that will define the emotion, must have a natural connection with that emotion itself. In other words, search for a novel way is not an invention but an exploration of the medium as well as the emotion itself. The poet's emotion will not be clarified and illumined through an unconventional invention (an eccentric phrase, for instance) that will *match* it in some or other fashion. Rather, the unconventionality of the expression must arise from the poet's awareness of the particularity of his emotion. That is, in Collingwood's own words, if one wants to express their emotion "intelligibly" then they have to express it in such a way as to be intelligible to themselves[203]. The activity of expression is for the sake of making one's own emotions available and intelligible. So, exploration is always prompted and also governed by the basic intelligibility of that emotion. Thus, the artist proper, in order to capture the peculiar character of certain emotions and to feel them fully and authentically, does not invent unusual, eccentric expressions but explores his medium. Now, what can it mean that the exploration of an artistic medium is related to the intelligibility of the emotions? It is not that the poet is a peculiar person who very often avoids descriptions and sets out to look for or invent unusual, novel, and even eccentric expressions. The other aspect of this story that the poet's emotion is found by himself unexpressed is also extremely important. This realization of the poet points to the inadequacy of his medium. The process of expression would not

[203] Ibid., 111

only express his hitherto unexpressed emotion but also fill in the lack of his medium (and indeed the lack of his world, a point to which we would come later on).

Thus, according to Collingwood, the poet explores his medium in order to express his emotion *just because* the nature of his unexpressed emotion is defined by the medium. It is not that the language lacks the word that will signify that emotion but as though the world itself lacks that emotion. And the poet feels that unless he actually does something with or to the medium that emotion will vanish. Thus, the poet confronts the medium at two interdependent levels: first, the medium is a lack and second, the medium is a possible expression. Similarly, the poet confronts his emotion to be expressed at two levels: first, the emotion is lacked in the world and second, the emotion is there in the medium.

Therefore, when the reader reads the poem and realizes that the poem is an individual, indispensable medium for expressing his own emotions, he confronts an emotion that cannot be put into descriptions. For he himself has realized that the poem expresses, that is, does not provide a general intelligible picture of, his own hitherto vague emotion. In a manner of speaking, the poem establishes the existence of the reader's emotion through making him aware of the 'lack' of the language and its, the poem's, capacity to express. It follows from this that the reader's understanding of the poem essentially consists of his dual awareness of the uniqueness of the expressed emotion and the necessity of the poem as expression. Hence, like the poet, the reader too keeps distance from descriptions while experiencing and understanding the poem.

4.4 Kivy on Collingwood

With such a detailed exposition of Collingwood's aesthetic theory at our disposal, we can see now how Kivy's dismissive comments on Collingwood are mistaken. We saw in Chapter 1 that Kivy compares certain remarks made by Bradley regarding the act of composing a poem with Collingwood's oft-quoted descriptions of the earlier vagueness and the subsequent clarity of the expressed emotion. Kivy says:

> "Taken as an account of how *all* poems (or works of art) come into being, it is plainly false. It may indeed be the case … a poem has its beginning as … some "I know not what" that gradually becomes clear to the poet as work

> progresses ... But why should we believe that this "clarification-in-process" scenario is the exclusive one? ... The idea of a single thing called "the creative process" seems to me a damaging myth."[204]

Needless to explicate, Kivy takes Collingwood's famous descriptions as mental episodes in the life of an individual. Collingwood, on the contrary, talks about what happens at the artistic level. That is, as we saw above, the vagueness or clarity of an emotion is felt with reference to the medium. Moreover, Collingwood is well aware of the fact that a product of an activity undertaken with precise foreknowledge may also have an art-aspect. So, it is plainly erroneous to take Collingwood's descriptions as the ultimate account of how all poems came into being. What Kivy terms as "clarification-in-process scenario" is applicable to not only artworks but also doctoral theses or philosophical treatises, for instance. One does not have clear notions about what is to be found out or argued for when one starts researching for a doctoral thesis, but in due course of research those initial notions begin to get clarified. However, Collingwood does not have in mind such clarity or lack of it. So, Collingwood cannot be charged for disseminating "a damaging myth" about the process of creation of all artworks in the whole world.

We saw in the preceding section that the reader too, in the same spirit as the poet's, thinks it necessary to keep away from descriptions. Paraphrases, seen from this point of view, are our attempts to translate the expression into descriptions. So, by way of paraphrasing it, we generalize or classify the so-called content or meaning or significance of the poem. Collingwood's theory implies that the reader must eschew paraphrases because the poet has eschewed them. That is, generalizing paraphrases may be hindrances for the reader's comprehension of what the poet is trying to reach.

4.5 Collingwood's Project: Expression and Tradition

In Collingwood's scheme, an artwork, whatever else it may be, *must* be an expression. Needless to say, the *nature* of the artwork must be such that we could find it as an expression of our emotion. When a poem identifies and individuates our

[204] Kivy 1997, 107-108

emotion we find and regard it as art. The fact that the work defies or does not fit in with the means-end or planning-execution or raw material-finished artifact framework is not sufficient to turn that work into art. Whatever that is not craft is not *thereby* art. Collingwood's account of differences between craft and art is not an attempt to divide all the things in the world into two camps.

Thus there seem to be three conditions for something to be an artwork:
(i) It must be artwork aesthetically. It must be produced for its own sake, for exhibition and contemplation, and not for non-aesthetic consumption.
(ii) It must not be explicable in terms of, and exhausted by, characteristics of craft.
(iii) Most importantly, it must express emotion.

While delineating the specific sense of 'art' as the object of study, Collingwood says, "The aesthetic sense of the word ['art'], the sense which here concerns us, is very recent in origin"[205].

Here by 'aesthetic sense' of the word 'art' Collingwood does not mean his own specific meaning of art. Rather, he is alluding to a general, established sense in which the modern world uses the word 'art' for only those objects which are produced as art and contemplated as art. Once he has delineated this aesthetic sense, Collingwood could go on to theorize about it. That is, he could go on to explain why some objects are created and contemplated as art and what exactly happens in their creation and contemplation. Distinguishing the aesthetic sense of 'art' is not an important part of the construction of Collingwood's positive account of what art is but only a step in the preliminary ground-clearing. We must keep this in mind. While considering this ground-clearing, Alan Donagan remarks:

> "Despite his [Collingwood's] historical narrative of how the aesthetic usage of the word 'art' emerged, he did not clearly explain how he discriminated that usage from its fellows"[206].

In my view, Donagan has to raise this doubt because he seems to equate the established aesthetic usage Collingwood alludes to with Collingwood's own specific meaning of 'art' which he develops in terms of expression. Those objects which are

[205] Ibid., 5
[206] Donagan 1962, 96

created, exhibited and contemplated as art are called 'art': this is the aesthetic sense or the aesthetic usage of 'art'.

Collingwood's discussion of paintings and sculptures of upper Paleolithic age is relevant here:

> "To call them art implied the assumption that they were designed and executed with the same purpose as the modern works from which the name was extended to them; and it was found that this assumption was false."[207]

The purpose of the Palaeolithic creators of these paintings and sculptures was not to exhibit them as art. They were produced as accessories in rituals. So, although they manifest resemblance with modern paintings, they are not art. The creators' purpose which can be described in terms of exhibition and contemplation matters in counting something as art[208]. This is not Collingwood's contribution but the aesthetic conception of art well entrenched in the modern world which he accepts.

Donagan seems to think that Collingwood would regard all the artworks that are deemed to be artworks according to the modern, aesthetic sense of art as proper artworks. But this cannot be true. Though Collingwood accepts the modern, aesthetic sense of art he thinks that we should not treat all works thus produced (presented as and claiming to be artworks) as proper artworks but *judge* whether they are really so or not. And not only the works produced after the establishment of the eighteenth-century art-institutional framework but also the works produced before the eighteenth century for many (non-artistic) purposes might claim to be art according to the Collingwoodean conception. In other words, the contemporary art-institutional framework is one form among many that art proper and art falsely so called can present themselves in. Collingwood does not ascribe to the contemporary (modern, aesthetic) art-institution any special status.

Exhibition-and-contemplation is only the contemporary, and hence contingent, mode of art. And so was that of, say, Palaeolithic paintings. Furthermore, those ancient paintings and modern paintings do have similar qualities. So, those qualities constitute art and not the ever-changing socio-cultural organisation of

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[207] Op. cit., 10
[208] Ibid., 11

objects. Collingwood takes this into account.[209]

Collingwood thus appears to distinguish two levels of meaning of the aesthetic sense of art: (i) initial, institutional level, and (ii) artistic or expressive level. Not all objects which are considered art at the initial, institutional level can prove to be art artistically or art proper.

Collingwood's approach is more in tune with debates in criticism. Though critics accept the initial, institutional level, they do not treat every writing called poetry there as poetry proper or poetry by their standards. They debate whether a certain writing is really a poem or not. And such debates are not meaningless. They are reflections of several trends in writing poetry and they in turn construct varied conceptions of poetry. The aesthetician cannot afford not to leave any space for such debates. Collingwood's aesthetician is first a critic.

To answer the question 'What is art?' we cannot appeal to the socio-cultural organisation of exhibition-and-contemplation. This organisation may change. We cannot explain art in terms of the art-world.

> "The aesthetician who claims to know what it is that makes Shakespeare a poet is tacitly claiming to know whether Miss Stein is a poet, and if not, why not. The philosopher-aesthetician who sticks to classical artists is pretty sure to locate the essence of art not in what makes them artists but in what makes them classical, that is, acceptable to the academic mind"[210].

When the aesthetician chooses and focuses upon certain poets, he must choose them not because they are generally called poets but because he considers them poets himself. He must have his own reasons for choosing some and rejecting others[211]. The aesthetician must try to locate the essence of art in what makes the artists artists and not in what is an established conception of art or artist. It is not that Collingwood is against the idea of classics. It is not that he does not appreciate that

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[209] Collingwood is acutely alert to the dangers easily engendered by the utter vacuity of the two components of the modern notion of art. These components - exhibition and contemplation - can be manipulated by those who are in fact concerned with something essentially non-artistic. He mentions in this context people associated with "art for art's sake" group who, in his view, were in fact mere craftsmen. So, unless we give some account of what happens in creation and contemplation of art as art, our modern, aesthetic notion gets manipulated.

[210] Ibid., 4

[211] Collingwood calls this the problem of usage or the problem of identifying instances of art proper, which is different from the problem of definition.

some excellent artworks are the real fountainheads of art (which is why they are regarded as classics).

In my view, Collingwood appears to indicate that the aesthetician must first choose a set of artworks which he considers the *tradition* of art proper and must have reasons for choosing that particular set. The articulation of these reasons with reference to those artworks will then constitute a reasonable aesthetic theory.

It should be clear by now that although Collingwood presupposes the modern aesthetic sense of 'art' and specifies it in terms of exhibition-and-contemplation, he is not willing to call *all* artworks thus produced in our era (roughly after eighteenth century, after the aesthetic sense of art was well established) instances of art proper. For example, he regards the slice of life kind of drama as mere entertainment whereas praises Eliot's poetry as art proper. He thinks that he is locating the essence of art in what makes Eliot a poet and not in Eliot's status in the academic world. What makes Eliot a poet, then? Collingwood's answer is that Eliot's poetry is expression.

The poet writes a poem to express his unexpressed emotion. Unless he expresses the emotion, he cannot know what it is. So, before expressing it, though he feels it he feels it only vaguely and confusedly. This has regularly been taken as a description of the artist's *state of mind* before he starts to work upon a new artwork. Of course, Collingwood's graphic mentalistic descriptions encourage such ways of reading but such a literal reliance upon them is damaging to his central insights. To feel an emotion confusedly is to feel a certain emotion as though partly and at the same time recognize that it is unexpressed. The second aspect - recognition - is where *art* begins. It's not the recognition of an emotion but of its vagueness, its veiled nature. The artist follows this vagueness and expresses the emotion. To follow the vagueness of an emotion is to try to re-understand the things in relation to which it is vague and confusing. So, the recognition of the vagueness of an emotion is also the re-understanding of the clear emotions, that is, earlier expressions.

It would not be surprising if we remember here Eliot's influential essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent':

> "In a peculiar sense he [the poet] will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past ... It is a judgement, a comparison, in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be

> for the work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value ... We say: it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other."[212]

Compare this with the following passage of Collingwood:

> "Originality in art, meaning lack of resemblance to anything that has been done before, is sometimes nowadays regarded as an artistic merit. This, of course, is absurd. If the production of something deliberately designed to be like existing works of art is mere craft, equally so, and for the same reason, is the production of something designed not to be unlike them. There is a sense in which any genuine work of art is original; but originality in that sense does not mean unlikeness to other works of art. It is a name for that fact that this work of art is a work of art and not anything else."[213]

An artwork, if it is a good artwork (or as Eliot says if it is "really new"), "fits in" and is also "new". Its newness is grasped in relation to old works (or to what Eliot calls "ideal order" of "existing monuments"). So, its conformity, its resemblance with older works is an important sign of its being an *art* work. An old artwork which is now a part of the ideal order was at the time of its creation really new and that is why it now occupies its place. The ideal order is nothing else than the realm of art (Collingwood would term this as what art has expressed) that gets constantly changed and enhanced by the creation of really new artworks.

Collingwood almost echoes Eliot's theme. He stresses the importance of both the likeness and the newness of genuine artworks. Originality does not consist in being extremely different from everything else, in being eccentric or exceptional. Collingwood points out that such a pursuit would be an example of craft. 'Originality' is a part and parcel of being expression, another 'name' for true art. In short, a genuine, original, and novel artwork is identified as belonging to a tradition

[212] Eliot 1953, 24
[213] Op. cit., 43

because it is *traditional*.

This Eliot-like line of thinking is in concert with the talk of unexpressed emotion and its expression. A certain emotion of the poet is inchoate and unexpressed in relation to the available artworks, to the ideal order of existing monuments. A new artwork, which is an attempt to express this vague, unexpressed emotion, fills in the deficiency of the existing order and thereby alters our understanding of the whole order including the new artwork. Therefore the new artwork has to first fit in with the order so that such a perspective becomes available.

But, why bring in the notion of 'tradition'?

According to Alan Donagan, who keenly detects the similarity between Collingwood's tacit reliance upon 'tradition' and Eliot's essay, Collingwood believed that if there is a proper aesthetic usage of 'art', then there is a tradition to which artworks belong. Collingwood first identifies that tradition as a critic, that is, by employing methods of criticism and then goes on to theorize about it[214]. This observation is of course very important. However, Donagan does not connect the idea of tradition to Collingwood's central thesis of expression. If we connect these two, Collingwood's descriptions of seemingly personal, private creative action of the artist could be directly applied to the public, objective domain in which the artist really works.

Aaron Ridley rightly argues that if an emotion to be expressed becomes lucid and acquires its peculiar character in the process of expression then this means that its very existence and nature depends upon the expression in the sense that there is no genuine distinction between them. The emotion expressed "is always, and of necessity, mediated"[215]. Although Collingwood's descriptions of the artist's initial experience of a vague emotion and his subsequent enlightenment regarding what he actually feels may lead some of us (Wollheim and Warburton, for instance) to think that the process of expression occurs at the personal level, in the artist's head, it nonetheless takes place in the medium which is public and objective. Thus, Ridley firmly and neatly establishes that the act of expression is what one does to, with and through the medium.

Now, the idea of 'tradition' is an amplification of the idea of 'medium' here. There are two distinct yet interconnected senses of 'tradition': First, when we

[214] Ibid., 98-99
[215] Ibid., 27

consider it in relation to the usage of 'art', it is a set or series of individual artworks which an aesthetician deems as examples of art proper. Second, tradition as medium, that is, tradition is what these artworks have expressed and by which they have expressed it. The artist expresses through a medium means he works in the tradition.

The poet clearly does not use the everyday language for expressive, poetic purposes. That is the domain of what Collingwood calls descriptions. This domain only enables one to attach labels, to manage the feeling practically. The true domain of the artist is the domain of expressions. He has to express his emotion in such a manner that it would prove new and fresh amongst those expressions which have provided him with the medium.

> "Every genuine expression must be an original one. However much it resembles others, this resemblance is due to the fact that the emotion now being expressed resembles emotions that have been expressed before. The artistic activity does not 'use' a 'ready-made' language, it 'creates' language as it goes along."[216]

The similarity and the difference that the really new artwork displays corresponding to the old artworks demonstrates that artworks can 'imply' or 'fit in' with the realm of *art* alone and nothing else. They cannot imply or be part of the everyday, practical, common-sense world as do the craft-products. Crafts are inter-linked and display hierarchies. We noted earlier that the hierarchy of crafts implies and is tied to the everyday practical world is not a minor point. Artworks do not blend in with this practical world; they *stand out* from it.

However, artworks do form an order. But if they are not part of the world then what exactly are they or what exactly is the order they form? Collingwood's answer is: they *are* the world.

> "Because artistic consciousness (that is, consciousness as such) does not distinguish between itself and its world … The artist is a person who comes to know himself, to know his own emotion. This is also knowing his world,

[216] Ibid., 275-76

that is, the sights and sounds and so forth which together make up his total imaginative experience … These sights and sounds are to him steeped in the emotion with which he contemplates them: they are the language in which the emotion utters itself to his consciousness. *His world is his language.*"[217]

[217] Ibid., 291 emphasis added

4.6 A critique of Warburton

In a recently published book, *The Art Question*, Nigel Warburton devotes one whole chapter to Collingwood's aesthetics. Drawing on interesting examples and attractive quotations, he offers Collingwood's theory in an accessible, even enjoyable, form. But, while trying to crown his chic narrative with some sharp criticism, Warburton says:

> "A further criticism of Collingwood's account is that for him the question of whether or not a particular object or activity is a work of art turns entirely upon its aetiology: the history of how it came to be as it is. This history, however, may in some cases be unavailable to any living viewer. The sculpture of the little dancing man described by Collingwood could equally have been a work of craft. Looking at it won't tell us whether or not it was made to a preconceived plan. For Collingwood the question of whether or not something is a work of art cannot be answered by looking at it. Instead it must be answered by consideration of the state of mind of the artist ... Even if Collingwood is correct about what art is, his account will not provide us with a way of discriminating between art proper and art so-called."[218]

This passage of 'criticism' is at best a shining mixture of blunders and follies. In this section, I examine and refute this so-called criticism.

First a catalogue of theses that Warburton absolutely wrongly attributes to Collingwood:

1. A work of craft can never be a work of art.
2. A work of art can never be a work of craft.
3. Our direct, first-hand experience of a work of art is not adequate for judging it to be a work of art; we need additional extrinsic information about it.
4. To decide whether or not something is a work of art, we must know its

[218] Warburton 2003, 61

'aetiology', its history of production.

5. A work of art can never become fully separate from the process of its creation, from its history.

6. A work of art is a mute object with which appreciators cannot and do not interact. So, we need someone - the artist, especially - to tell us that it is a work of art.

7. A work of art is deemed to be an expression only when the artist tells us that he produced it to express his emotion.

8. For something's being a work of art, its being an expression is not a core fact. We associate its expression aspect with it on the artist's testimony.

9. We can accurately understand the artist's state of mind on the basis of what he tells us about it. Two corollaries to this: (9a) Firstly, the artist always knows perfectly well how his state of mind was like prior to or during the creation of a work of art. (9b) Secondly, the artist always speaks the truth.

10. Collingwood's theory does not aim to tell us what art is. For it tells us a story of the general pattern or logic of the creative process, of the 'aetiology' of a work of art.

11. Collingwood's theory does not enable us to discern art from non-art.

Warburton brings together two principal threads in Collingwood's theory to weave his criticism: distinction between art and craft; and, the concept of expression. As discussed previously, Collingwood never ever maintains that a work of craft cannot be a work of art, and vice versa. In the very passage about the sculpture of the little dancing man that Warburton alludes to, Collingwood says that a jar, which is made primarily to satisfy a specific demand and hence in accordance with a certain design or plan, may nonetheless be a work of art[219]. However, that which makes it art is not solely dependent upon, completely reducible to, or fully explained in terms of, its features that make it a product of craft. The same thing may have craft-aspect as well as art-aspect; craft and art are not two watertight kinds of things.

Collingwood's more significant point is that the art-aspect of the jar (or the sculpture of the little dancing man) is not preconceived; it is rather discovered or revealed in the making. The art-aspect of a jar does not reside in, nor is it the result of, a particular feature that transforms it into an expression besides being a craft-product. For the jar itself, the jar as a whole, is art. And, quite contrary to what

[219] *Op. cit.*, 21

Warburton thinks, we can tell *just by looking at it* whether or not it is a work of art. If it looks as art, it is art. If its maker *tells* us that it is art but it does not appear to us as art, then it is certainly not art. That is to say, if the jar transcends the instrumental ways of understanding, if it is more than being an instance of the jar, if it is expression, then it is art. And if it does not do so, it is not art.[220]

Thus, on Collingwood's view, if a work is an expression, it is an artwork. And whether or not a certain work is expression can be seen directly through the encounter with the work. In other words, the artwork is identified as expression *independently* of our knowledge of the history of its creation or the creator's state of mind. For it is the *nature* of the work that makes it an expression and hence art. The potential of the jar to dawn upon us as an art-aspect is what makes it art. We have already examined in detail that a reader of a poem deems a verse an 'expression', a 'poem' when *its words* are found by him to characterize the peculiarity of his own emotion, to make him aware of it. To repeat Coleridge's aphorism quoted by Collingwood, "we know a man for a poet by the fact that he makes us poets". And, Collingwood's theory equips us with more criteria than one on the basis of which we can determine whether a poem is really an expression irrespective of what the poet tells us:

(1) The poem cannot be an expression if it merely states or 'describes' the emotion. The true poem never generalizes, classifies or names the emotion and therefore it does not dissolve but captures the peculiarities of the emotion.

(2) The poem cannot be an expression if its meaning (that is, what it expresses) can be put into different words. For the emotion the poem expresses cannot be grasped without the poem.

(3) The poem cannot be an expression if it is not irreplaceable. If it can be substituted by other poems or paraphrases or anything else, then this means that we know what it expresses already or independently of it.

(4) The poem cannot be an expression if it is parasitic upon other poems, that is, if it

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[220] 'Art-aspect' needs to be taken here in Wittgenstein's way. 'Aspect' is not an inherent, physical property of the object. A certain aspect of the object as a whole dawns upon us as an expression and therefore we regard it as art. This dawning of the art-aspect has nothing to do with the object's status as a craft-product. Interestingly enough, Collingwood's theory seems to be a paradox in the manner of Kant's thesis that an artwork, though created, must look like nature. For Kant if the artwork displays a purposeless purposiveness, it looks like a natural beautiful object like a flower. Similarly, in Collingwood's scheme, whatever the mode of production of the object, it must be 'able' to dawn upon us as expression in order to be an artwork.

merely 'uses' ready-made language and does not 'create' language. The true poem abhors clichés.[221]

(5) The poem cannot be an expression if it can be explained away as a product of craft. In essence, craft aims to produce certain states of mind in us and for that purpose it employs certain means in a certain fashion. The poem is not art proper if it can be fully explicated in this way. The true poem's expression-aspect is a perfect counter-example to the technical theory of art.

(6) The poem cannot be called an expression if it is not 'traditional' as well as 'original'. That is, the poem's being an expression must be of such a nature that it can be seen to belong as well as renew the tradition of poetry proper.

Although he does not make it clear, Warburton seems to think that at the heart of Collingwood's accounts of art-craft distinction and the activity of expression are two factors: the artist's *intention* and the artist's *state of mind.* If the artist had intended to make a craft-product, then the result is the craft-product. If the artist had intended to create an artwork, then the result is the artwork. Now, the artwork, Collingwood says, is expression. So, naturally, if the artist had intended to express his emotion through creating an artwork, then that artwork is an expression. How does the 'state of mind' come in here? If the artist was feeling - to be precise, if he *tells* us that he was feeling - a vague, confused emotion before setting out to create an artwork, and, again, if he tells us that he felt that emotion in a clearer, better way after expressing it, then and then alone can the artwork be called expression. Thus, the artist's reports about his intention and state of mind, according to Warburton, constitute "the history of how it [the artwork] came to be as it is". Warburton naively thinks that if this history, the artist's personal statement is in harmony with Collingwood's accounts then Collingwood would ascribe that artist's creations the status of art proper. However, Collingwood is never in the mood of committing 'the intentional fallacy'. On Collingwood's theory, expression is an achievement, a realization and not merely an effort somehow linked to a vague or clear intention[222]. If a poem is an art proper, it actually expresses, it works; it is not merely intended to

[221] Ibid., 275-276

[222] Wimsatt and Beardsley take 'intention' in a sufficiently broad sense: "Intention is design or plan in the author's mind. Intention has obvious affinities for the author's attitude toward his work, the way he felt, what made him write" (Wimsatt and Beardsley 2001, 333) Unsurprisingly, Wimsatt's and Beardsley's curious insistence that 'internal evidence' for the meaning of a poem is 'public' in character resembles with the spirit of Collingwood's view that a poem proves an expression in the public domain and not in the artist's subjective estimation.

express[223].

Collingwood's graphic word-portrait of our "helpless and oppressed" condition caused by the inchoate, unexpressed emotion, which has been quoted over and over by commentators and critics, has also proved excessively damaging to his central insights[224]. The commentator either embroiders on it with his own examples, as Warburton does, or takes Collingwood to be a thorough romantic in the negative sense that art is all about feelings and emotions[225]. Despite some encouragement from Collingwood's descriptions, we must eschew such literal reliance upon them.

4.7 A critique of Wollheim

Richard Wollheim's criticism, in his *Art and Its Objects*, of what he calls 'Croce-Collingwood theory' has been so influential that it has nearly acquired the status of the definitive refutation of the profound aesthetic theories of the two great aestheticians. In this section, I argue that Wollheim's criticism of Collingwood is seriously flawed.

To begin with, Wollheim, though inspired by Wittgenstein, is not Wittgensteinian enough. He prefers to be held captive by the "usual" practice of lumping Collingwood and Croce together, and of believing that Collingwood differs "only in points of detail or emphasis"[226]. However, "points of detail or emphasis" in Collingwood's monograph make his theory distinctive and so deserve careful attention. Consider one example of injustice inflicted on Collingwood by this methodology of Wollheim's. In Section 22, while considering characteristics of craft given by Collingwood, Wollheim never mentions that Collingwood explicitly noted that "there is, of course, an overlap between these two things [craft and art]"[227]. Wollheim also complains that Collingwood has not indicated the degree of specificity of the knowledge of the end-product[228]. But, Collingwood is abundantly

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[223] Donagan also observes that aesthetic attention and criticism must be exercised on an 'available' object is "a consequence of Collingwood's view as much as of Wimsatt's and Beardsley's" (Donagan 1962, 119).
[224] Op. cit., 109-110
[225] George Dickie remarks: "... it is not at all clear that art *necessarily* "has something to do with emotion."" (Dickie1997, 67). But Collingwood makes it clear that art has to do with other things as well, thoughts and intellectual emotions, for example. See Collingwood 1938, 267-268 and 294-295
[226] Wollheim 1980, 36
[227] Op. cit., 21
[228] Ibid., 39

clear: the craftsman has a precise foreknowledge whereas the artist does not[229]. This means neither that the artist never plans nor that his planning lacks even a single degree of specificity. Thus, a bit more cautious attention to Collingwood's text dispels such preliminary doubts raised by Wollheim.

Before turning to the focal point in Wollheim's criticism, let us briefly deal with two peripheral yet important points.

(1) In Wollheim's opinion, Collingwood's theory maintains that "the work of art consists in an inner state or condition of the artist, called ... an expression"[230].

Such an over-simple picture of the essence of Collingwood's theory is quite understandable if we take into account his apparently queer pronouncements.

> "... what it is that the artist, as such and essentially, produces. We shall find that it is two things. Primarily, it is an 'internal' or 'mental' thing, something (as we commonly say) 'existing in his head' and there only: something of the kind which we commonly call an experience. Secondarily, it is a bodily or perceptible thing (a picture, a statue, &c.) *whose exact relation to this 'mental' thing will need careful definition.*"[231]

Of these two things, one is "the work of art proper" and another is, Collingwood notoriously maintains, "only incidental to the first"[232] A literal reading of such passages without consideration of the total context has led Wollheim as well as others to ascribe to Collingwood the so-called "ideal theory". I do not want to go into the jungle of that debate but just want to indicate that if we place this distinction in the context of the conception of expression together with Collingwood's attempt to characterize the relation between the mental and the perceptible by means of observations on Cézanne, it becomes clear he never holds such an absurd theory[233].

As we have already discussed, expression is inextricably linked to a medium. What the poem expresses is in its words. Without those words that expression does not exist at all. As language is public and social, expression is not something 'inner'

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[229] Ibid., 16 and 21

[230] Op. cit., 36

[231] Op. cit., 37 emphasis added

[232] Ibid., 37

[233] Ridley excellently refutes Wollheim: Ridley 1998a and 1997. Richard Sclafani also maintains that Collingwood never held such an absurd thesis. He points out that the confusion and misreading is partly caused by Collingwood's mixing up of 'imaginary' with 'imaginative' (Sclafani 1976).

or 'mental'. Why does, then, Collingwood give primacy to the mental thing and regard the perceptible thing incidental and secondary? Briefly and swiftly put, the artwork is created *as* the artist grapples and comes to know an experience, and "by an activity which is somehow or other bound up with the development of that experience itself"[234]. To get clear about an experience and to create (and also to appreciate) an artwork is one and the same thing whose essence lies in the enlightenment. To emphasize that this knowledge and enlightenment is crucial, Collingwood exaggeratedly says that the mental is primary and the perceptible secondary. However, if art is, in this specific sense, to be taken as 'mental', then it is not in the head or mind, but out there. For, as we have noted earlier, the artist's and the audience's world *is* language or art. Art is total imaginative experience *of* the world. That is why Collingwood says that a painting is not 'visual' or a poem 'linguistic'. Cézanne paints "blindly" and the hearer of poetry not only hears the words but attends to various sights and tactile experiences[235]. Collingwood is keen on suggesting that the artwork does not remain on the paper or canvas but becomes our cognitive apparatus with which we see the world. To see the world through art is to close our eyes and see blindly, imaginatively. To suggest this is not to maintain that expression is an inner state in the ordinary sense.

(2) Wollheim takes it that on Collingwood's theory "In order to reach the distinctively aesthetic, we must ignore the surface elements"[236].

Well, if by 'surface elements' Wollheim means words of a poem, for instance, then there are numerous instances in which Collingwood is paying microscopic attention to them. He notes that a true poet will avoid the epithet 'dreadful' while expressing terror[237]. He observes when Shakespeare's characters 'rant', that is, when they, rather than expressing themselves, exhibit the symptoms of emotion[238]. In the Conclusion, he describes the way in which the images in Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* define the decay of our civilisation. Collingwood's descriptions of Cézanne's are especially pertinent here. In order to paint a mountain, which is "never looked at, but always felt, as a child feels the table over the back of

[234] Op. cit., 304
[235] Ibid., 144-147
[236] Op. cit., 37
[237] Op. cit, 112
[238] Ibid., 123-124

its head", Cézanne uses colours "to make shapes visible", he "digs" into paper and explores "a solid thing lying inside or behind the paper"[239]. Collingwood appreciates the significance accorded to "tactile values" in what he calls Cézanne-Berenson approach[240]. These observations can be made only by the aesthetician who is interested in the significance of seeing, reading, touching and feeling the surface qualities.

Now let us turn to the focal point of Wollheim's critique.

On the basis of the points considered above, Wollheim paints the Collingwoodean artist as a solitary figure playing with mental entities, "the man whose head is crammed with intuitions though he may know of no medium in which to externalize them"[241]. By conceiving the artist in this manner, Wollheim claims, Collingwood commits a serious error. Collingwood wrongly thinks that "there is an artistic impulse that can be identified independently of the *institutions of art*"[242]. To consider artistic creation as a personal and private activity in Collingwood's fashion is to view it as a manifestation of some natural, biological "artistic instinct". However, an artistic instinct is, Wollheim suggests, more like "matrimonial" than "sexual" instinct. Its manifestation and satisfaction is "mediated by a *practice or institution*"[243]. Thus, Collingwood fails to see that art, like language, is a "form of life"[244].

However, it is not clear here in what specific sense Wollheim uses the term 'the institutions of art' (or 'a practice or institution') in this passage. And his employment of 'form of life' is too metaphorical, too invocatory and so too unhelpful. Of course, a clue can be gleaned, nonetheless. Wollheim seems to suggest that it is possible for us to identify an artist's intention as *artistic* because the artist's intention and his subsequent act *presuppose* something that makes them artistic and that something is the practice or institution of art, or a form of life. What does it mean to say that the artistic intention and artistic activity presuppose an institution?

While discussing the "bricoleur problem", Wollheim says:

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[239] Ibid., 144-145
[240] Ibid., 146
[241] Op. cit., 115
[242] Ibid., 107 emphasis added
[243] Ibid., 105-106 emphasis added
[244] Ibid., 45

"The problem why certain apparently arbitrarily identified stuffs or processes should be the vehicles of art ... is a very real one. ... It is more plausible to believe that the painter thinks in images of paint or the sculptor in images of metal just because these, independently, are the media of art: his thinking presupposes that certain activities in the external world such as charging canvas with paint or welding have already become the accredited processes of art."[245]

Wollheim writes this in Section 23 where he discusses two arguments against the so-called ideal theory, one of which is that "the Ideal theory totally ignores the significance of the medium". Anyone with a sensitivity for arts would unreservedly agree with Wollheim about the significance of the medium in the creation of a work of art. However, Wollheim's conception of medium is too narrow. He identifies certain "stuffs" (such as paint) and certain "processes" (such as welding) as "vehicles of art". Moreover, they are "accredited". A dictionary tells us that the meaning of 'accredited' is "*officially* recognized, *authorized*" [246]. Wollheim wants to draw our attention to the 'fact' that these stuffs and processes have become institutionalized or official. However, the support for the accreditation claim may come from only one source: works of art. They exhibit these vehicles of art. The artistic intention cannot be formed, and the artistic thinking cannot begin, without taking into consideration these vehicles. Thus the use of vehicles in works of art constitutes a certain kind of background which any artist presupposes or uses as the launching pad, so to say. Let us be clear that this background is not exactly institution or practice in Wollheim's specific sense but just a clue we are trying to garner through interpretation of Wollheim's statements.

If we apply this to poetry, does not this mean only that the poet's accredited vehicle or medium is language? And, more importantly, why would Collingwood deny this? Furthermore, Collingwood's conception of medium is not so narrow or conservative as Wollheim's. For Wollheim art is all about accredited, officially recognized vehicles but for Collingwood art is about novel ways of exploring the medium. Again, Collingwood's Cézanne discussion is significant. Until the close of nineteenth century, it was accredited that painting is a visual art and "Then came

[245] Ibid., 23
[246] Coventry 1999, 4

Cézanne and began to paint like a blind man"[247]. In Collingwood's scheme, this innovatory rebellion against the orthodox vehicles is not unusual but quite normal in the realm of art. A genuine artwork is original; unless it is a unique expression, "a certain thing", it cannot become art.

It is evident that Collingwood is not willing to call anything that uses accredited vehicles art. Not *any* sequence of words, however it is like other poems, lofty or lowly, is art proper. And this is decided by what the poem expresses and by, as we have seen, the way it relates to earlier expressions and belongs to their tradition. Art does not consist in using the so-called artistic material. Collingwood writes as if as a reply to Wollheim:

> "A person who writes or paints ... *using the traditional materials* of art as means for exhibiting the symptoms of emotion, may deserve praise as an exhibitionist, but loses for the moment all claim to the title of artist."[248]

Recall the distinction made earlier (on page 11) between "drawing upon art tradition" and "using art tradition". The true poet or the artist proper draws upon art tradition whereas an "exhibitionist" or a mere verse-maker uses art tradition. The poet works upon the medium whereas the verse-maker looks upon the medium as a vehicle to be manipulated. Therefore, Collingwood would never subscribe to the view that the use of "accredited vehicles" turns something into art.

Besides, it must be noted that Collingwood also takes into account a certain kind of institutional aspect of art. We made above a distinction between two levels of meaning of the aesthetic sense of art: the institutional and the artistic. An object which is produced as art and viewed as art is an artwork at the institutional level. That is, it is described or classified as an artwork. However, only those objects, which are expressions, are art proper. Thus, though he too presupposes it, the non-artistic institutional classification is not what determines Collingwood's idea of art. Artistic material such as words and phrases is not the source, ground or starting-point of art but a 'by-product' of art; it is deemed as artistic because true expressions, true artworks have provided us with them.

If this reduction of Wollheim's notion of accredited vehicles of art to 'A

[247] Op. cit., 144
[248] Ibid., 122-123

poem is written in language' and to regard him as conservative on that basis seems oddly simple, let's see a further dimension that he attaches to this talk about institution.

On Wollheim's view, the intention or impulse to write a poem presupposes the institution or practice of literature. Therefore, it is "wrong to postulate, of each work of art, a particular aesthetic intention or impulse which both accounts for that work and can be identified independently of it"[249]. It is immediately clear that as far as we take Collingwoodean artist's 'intention or impulse' to mean his desire to express an emotion we cannot say that this desire can be identified independently of the artwork he creates. For it becomes available through the artwork alone. So Collingwood agrees to what Wollheim has to say on this point. Also, Collingwood insists that what the artwork expresses, the artwork's 'aesthetic intention', so to say, is *particular*. However, the similarity between Wollheim and Collingwood ends at this level. For Wollheim, the 'particularity' of such an intention or that of the reader's attitude towards the poem is intransitive. When it is said that a poem expresses a particular emotion with great intensity the word 'particular' is used intransitively. This does not mean that the poem is 'empty' or that we cannot talk about it. Rather the difference between 'transitive' and 'intransitive' senses of particularity lies in "the way in which we refer to the *inner state*: whether we describe it, or whether we simply draw attention to or gesture towards it"[250]. For, Wollheim remarks, "Art rests on the fact that deep feelings pattern themselves in a coherent way all over our life and behaviour"[251]. So it turns out that it is Wollheim himself who insists upon a mysterious connection between a poem and an 'inner state'. A poem is worthwhile not because what it and it alone expresses but because it somehow plays a certain intransitive role, like many other poems and other kinds of artwork, in patterning feelings. Collingwood rages precisely against this.

In order to show that poetry (as an art-form) has a certain role in this 'patterning' or at least that we value poems for their some or other kind of connection with this patterning, we have to consider the *success* of a particular poem in this matter. In other words, we need to attend to the possibility that a particular poem patterns some of our feelings in a particular way. This is so due to a very

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[249] Op. cit., 110
[250] Ibid., 111 emphasis added
[251] Ibid., 112

simple yet very important reason that the success of a certain poem in patterning feelings cannot be decided by the 'fact' that it has been created against the background of the institution of literature and so it will naturally, automatically will perform its duty. Some poems are trite, they only manage to look like poems; they have nothing to do with 'deep feelings'. In this sense, they fail. Moreover, *some* successful (in the specific sense that they have a significant role in patterning our deep feelings) poems can lead us to both the idea of our experience, in the context of poetry, of deep feeling patterning themselves and the idea of institution of literature.

4.8 Conclusion

Collingwood approaches poetry and art from this diametrically opposed direction. Poems are not expressive because they presuppose the institution of literature. But only truly expressive poems can and should lead us to the idea of poetry and secondarily to the idea of institution. Therefore, Collingwood insists on the transitive particularity of poems because his idea of the success of a poem is that of the poem's capability to be counted as a unique expression. Naturally, the fact *that* the poem expresses a particular feeling intransitively is quite insufficient for him, for the poem is worth reading for *what* it expresses. Collingwood says, with great penetration, that "He [the poet or the artist] does not want a thing of a certain kind, he wants a certain thing"[252].

[252] Op. cit., 114

CHAPTER 5

Poetry as Happening of Truth: A Heideggerian Inquiry

"What is pregiven to the poet, and how it is given, so that it can then be regiven in the poem?"[253]

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I consider Martin Heidegger's major writing on aesthetics, namely, the essay entitled 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (hereafter *OWA*). This would seem a somewhat surprising addition to the discourse this thesis is confined to. In order to defend Bradley and the tradition he belongs to, I devote attention to Kant's and Collingwood's aesthetic theories. It is imperative to do so since Kivy, while attacking Bradley's view, brings in the two philosophers' theories as examples - precursor and successor even - of the same, Bradleyean penchant for conflating form and content, which, in his opinion, is fundamentally flawed. But why Heidegger now? For almost the same reason. Had Kivy paid scant attention to Heidegger, he would have reprimanded the German philosopher by making him sit in the same row as Kant, Bradley and Collingwood. One of the most prominent contentions in *OWA* is, I argue, that since the form-content dichotomy has proved terribly misleading for understanding the nature of art, we ought to discard it. Heidegger also suggests an alternative innovative model of philosophising about art: an artwork is an interplay between what he calls the 'world' and the 'earth'. These are not two distinct elements of the artwork; they are two facets of the singular unified whole that is the artwork. Naturally Kivy would have found it utterly convenient to pigeonhole Heidegger's theory as yet another refined instance of the form-content identity thesis. It is attention-worthy that Heidegger too, in concert with Kant, Bradley and Collingwood, thinks it necessary to distinguish between mechanical production and artistic creation. As we shall see later on, his examination

[253] Heidegger 1971, 37

of the notion of thing as formed matter equips him to combat in rather an avant-garde fashion a commonplace tendency to take art as craft . So, I hope, it will be quite rewarding to study what Heidegger has to say about the murky issues by which Bradley has been plagued in 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake'. Besides it is of great consequence to defend Heidegger's refreshingly novel notions of world and earth against apparently natural attempts to translate them into the form-content parlance. In what follows I address myself to these two philosophical tasks.

5.2 Is artwork formed matter?

As the title suggests, Heidegger's essay is a philosophical inquiry into the origin of the artwork. By 'origin' he means "that from and by which something is what it is and as it is". The origin of an artwork is something that is the source of its nature[254]. Now, nothing is more obvious than to say that the origin of an artwork is the artist, for it originates in the act of the artist - the poet is the origin of the poem. However, someone becomes the poet by virtue of his writing the poem, that is, it is the written or finished poem that actually confers the poethood on him. So, as producing a poem and becoming a poet are conceptually concurrent, ascription of primacy to the poet would seem rather arbitrary. Naturally, then, we are led to look for "a third thing, which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work of art their names - art"[255]. Thus, art, not the artist, seems to be the origin of the artwork. But can we search for the origin of art without paying attention to individual artworks? Although the question of the origin of the work turns out to be the question about the nature of art, we cannot ignore the fact that "Art is present in the art work". Thus we begin to move in a circle. In order to decide what art is, we have to first look at works of art. But how can we know that the objects we want to focus on are works *of art*? To know already which objects are artworks is precisely to know what art is. This circularity seems a big logical difficulty. However, according to Heidegger, "we are compelled to follow the circle". He proceeds to the actual artwork, to ask it "what and how it is"[256].

We are all familiar with artworks. We see paintings, go to plays, read poems.

[254] Ibid., 17
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid. 18

What are these works? Well, they are, to begin with, things. They are present as all sorts of things are. For instance, they are shipped like coal or are hanged on a wall like a hat. A hat is a thing; so is a painting or a poem. In other words, all artworks have "thingly character". It is obvious that no artwork can exist without its thingly character. Rather, Heidegger notes, the thingly element of an artwork is "so irremovably present in the art work" that we are compelled rather to say that the painting is *in* colour or the poem is *in* language[257]. A poem is nothing without its language just as a painting without its colours. Therefore, to arrive at the nature of art, we have to inquire into the thingly character of an artwork.

However, there crops up a difficulty. Those who experience and enjoy artworks would refuse to consider them as mere things. For they encounter poems or paintings as "something else over and above the thingly element"[258]. They think that this extra element constitutes the artwork's truly artistic or aesthetic nature. No doubt an artwork is a physical object, but it says or expresses something else than its physicality. So, an artwork is seen as an allegory; its perceptible, thingly element is taken to manifest something beyond itself. Or, it is considered a symbol; the made physical thing and some or other meaning are seen as conjoined or brought together in it.

To regard an artwork as an allegory or a symbol is, Heidegger observes, "the conceptual scheme within whose channel of vision the art work has for a long time been characterized." One crucial implication of this influential conceptual frame is that the thingly element is seen as a "substructure into and upon which the other, authentic element is built."[259] This leads to the bifurcation of the artwork into the subsidiary, made, physical substructure and the principal, more authentic, more worthwhile, artistic manifestation. Now, although the former is secondary, it is more concrete or tangible than the latter. So it is easier to point to it when one faces the question, What is it that the artist actually makes? Consequently, since the physical substructure is a product of handiwork, an artwork is seen as a product of a certain craft. Furthermore, such approach gives rise to one troublesome question: How exactly the other, more authentic, artistic element is carved in or imposed on the thingly element?

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[257] Ibid., 19
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid., 20

Thus, any artwork first appears to us as a thing. Therefore, to understand the obvious, tangible thingly aspect of an artwork, we have to ask a more general question: What is a thing? As Heidegger puts it, What the thing-being or thingness of a thing consist in?

What is a thing exactly? Well, almost anything that immediately comes to mind is a thing of one sort or another: a stone in the road, a jug, a cloud, a hawk or a man even, God or death. Thing is "whatever is not simply nothing"[260]. Artworks are things in this sense. But not all items in this nearly endless list are *mere* things. That is, though a human being is a thing in the sense that he or she is not nothing, we hesitate to call him or her a thing. And, though we will be quite happy to call a hammer or a shoe thing, on second reflection we realize that such useful utensils too are not mere things. Mere things are pure things in the sense that they are simply things and nothing more[261]. An utensil like a hammer is a thing whereas the clod in the field is a mere thing. To make sense of this we can say that a thing, in Heidegger's view, plays a certain part in some or other human domain whereas a mere thing does not. That is, it sounds somewhat odd to try and decode the apparent opaqueness of a mere thing in a busy everyday life. Heidegger notes that thingness of thing must be determined in reference to such mere things. He then turns his attention to three traditional conceptions or interpretations of thing. First, a thing is defined as a substance with attributes. Second, a thing is seen as a unity of the manifold of sensations. And, third, a thing is regarded as formed matter. According to Heidegger, each one of these three conceptions fails to get around the nature of a mere thing.

On the first conception, a thing is the substance that has different attributes. Hardness, heaviness, bulkiness are properties or attributes of a block of granite, but the block of granite is something around which these properties are assembled. Our usual way of description like 'The block of granite is heavy' seems to reflect this conception. The subject of the sentence - 'the block' - stands for the substance whereas the predicate - 'is heavy' - for its attribute. Heidegger wonders whether this way of description determines the conception or the conception encourages this way of description. The point to be noted is that this way of looking at a thing is well-entrenched in our understanding of things, including our everyday language.

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[260] Ibid., 21
[261] Ibid., 22

However, Heidegger is not satisfied with this conception. We may recall that we have to determine thingness of thing in reference to mere things. But the conception of thing-as-substance apparently applies to every kind of thing, not to mere things alone. Besides, in Heidegger's opinion, it does not capture the "independent and self-contained character"[262] of a mere thing. Here the philosopher relies on our "feeling or mood"[263] which perceives this conception to be a violent assault on the thing. Instead of mystifying it, we can only say that Heidegger here alludes to our intuition that this conception of thing makes the thing appear more open to our perceptivity than its native self-containment or opaqueness allows.

On the second conception, a thing is the unity of the various sensations that it gives us. After all, we come to know of things through what our senses of sight, sound or touch inform us about them. A thing is the sum or totality of these sensations. Heidegger's main objection to this conception is that "Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves. We hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds."[264]

Thus, if the first conception keeps the thing away from us, the second tries to bring it too close to us. They represent two extremes. We need to find out a middle way, a more viable conception that would do justice to the self-containment of the thing. Thus Heidegger turns to the third conception according to which the thing is formed matter.

On the third conception, a thing is matter that has a certain form. It is matter that is hard, heavy or coloured. It is matter that gives the thing its constancy. And when we begin to analyse thing in this way, 'form' is almost naturally co-posited with 'matter': "This interpretation appeals to the immediate view with which the thing solicits us by its looks (*eidos*)."[265] The thing appears to us as a synthesis of matter and form. This conception seems to provide an answer to our initial question about the thingly character of an artwork. The thingly character of an artwork is its matter which the artist shapes in a certain form. Thus the third conception also seems to correspond to the influential conceptual frame within which an artwork is regarded as a symbol or an allegory. We saw that on this view an artwork is its

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[262] Ibid., 25
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid., 26
[265] Ibid.

physicality *plus* something extra that is artistic. What the artist actually makes is what appears to us as a thing. And, what appears to us as its more authentic part - that is, its artistic aspect - arises due to the artist's formative action upon the matter. Thus the conception of thing as formed matter almost provides us with a key to the question about the thingly character of an artwork. But as with the earlier two conceptions Heidegger mistrusts this one too. Noting that this conception applies to mere things like the block of granite as well as objects of daily use like a knife, Heidegger thinks it necessary to raise a question about the sphere in which the thing is looked at as a form-matter synthesis. This is a crucial step in Heidegger's essay.

Now, needless to state, the pair of form and matter (or content) is quite ubiquitous in the domain of art. Aestheticians like Peter Kivy tend tendentiously to think of poetry in these terms: words are the form of the poem, and what those words mean or express is its matter. The poet's job qua poet is not to discover or invent matter but to compose form, to shape its thingly character. Thus it seems that aesthetics is the sphere in which this pair is born and brought up. But is this assumption correct? Heidegger writes:

> "The distinction of matter and form is *the conceptual schema which is used, in the greatest variety of ways, quite generally for all art theory and aesthetics*. This incontestable fact, however, proves neither that the distinction of matter and form is adequately founded, nor that it belongs originally to the domain of art and the art work ... Form and content are the most hackneyed concepts under which anything and everything may be subsumed. And if form is correlated with the rational and matter with the irrational; if the rational is taken to be the logical and the irrational the alogical ... then representation has at its command a conceptual machinery that nothing is capable of withstanding."[266]

We can see now how Peter Kivy's view of poetry is governed throughout by this conceptual schema. Kivy reverses the order of significance, though. But Heidegger's account leaves room for such variations. Kivy regards the matter of a poem as rational or intellectual, and the form as its attractive but non-rational vehicle.

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[266] Ibid., 27 emphasis as in the original

Accordingly, he accuses Kant, for instance, of conferring on the non-rational, decorative vehicle the status of the true aesthetic content of the poem. On Kivy's doctrine, the poet's art is restricted to contriving the non-rational form. Heidegger makes the ubiquity of the pair of form and matter suspicious, and asks us to trace its origin.

To return to *OWA*, the block of granite is "something material in a definite if unshapely form." Here form is the distribution and arrangement of the material parts eventuating in a certain shape. A jug is also "matter occurring in a form". However, as regards the block of granite, the matter is *prior* to the form; the form is the result of the distribution of the (nature-made) matter. On the other hand, the form of the jug is *not* the result or product of the prior distribution of the matter. On the contrary, the form of the jug is prior to the matter in the sense that it determines the arrangement of the matter. The form not only determines the arrangement of the matter but also its kind - we select impermeable matter for making jugs. Furthermore, the synthesis of form and matter that is the jug is, writes Heidegger:

> " ... controlled beforehand by the purposes served by jug ... Such usefulness is never assigned or added on afterward to a being of the type of a jug ... But neither is it something that floats somewhere above it as an end.
>
> Usefulness is the basic feature from which this entity regards us, that is, flashes at us and thereby is present and thus is this entity ... As determinations of beings, accordingly, matter and form has their proper place in the essential nature of equipment."[267]

The matter of a jug is determined by its form, which, in turn, is determined by the purpose the jug is meant to serve. This purpose or usefulness is, thus, the inbuilt principle that continually governs the form-matter synthesis and makes it flash at us as a jug. One crucial consequence of this is that if we are to maintain consistently that an artwork too is a combination of form and matter, then we have to make out *what* it flashes at us *as*. That is, we have to find out its purpose, its usefulness. And if we fail to do so, we have to *assign* some or other purpose to it.

Thus Heidegger's investigation of the origin of art leads him to a critique of

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[267] Ibid., 28

the three traditional interpretations of thingness of thing. One of them is so predominant in aesthetics that it seems to be its original home. However, Heidegger shows us that the conception of thing as synthesis of form and matter primarily applies to use-objects or equipments like a jug. In the production of a jug, not only the form determines the matter but also the form-matter fusion is determined by the usefulness of the thing to be made. By way of showing this, Heidegger warns us against the possibility that viewing an artwork as a combination of form and matter compels us to discover or invent a purpose, a function for it. But does art have such usefulness?

5.3 Is artwork equipment?

Heidegger's detour through the traditional interpretations of thing phenomenologically reveals three kinds of thing and their respective features.

There are artworks with their thingly characters. There are things: both mere things and things made by man for certain purposes. Mere things are confined in themselves, as it were. For self-containment is their prime characteristic. Use-objects, on the contrary, do not just lie in themselves. They come out of their self-containment, and flash at us as, say, jugs or shoes. For they are deliberately made keeping specific purposes in mind.

Now, the mere thing is natural. An equipment is not natural; it is made by man. But as a finished product it is also self-contained like the mere thing. Though it shares this feature with the mere thing, it "does not have the character of having taken shape by itself". Then comes the artwork. It is also man-made like an equipment. It is self-contained too. But is it self-contained in the manner of an equipment? No. Heidegger says, " ... by its self-sufficient presence the work of art is similar rather to the mere thing which has taken shape by itself ..."[268]. It would not be surprising if we recall here Kant's dictum that an artwork, though a product of intentional human act, must look as if it is natural.

In a nutshell, insofar as it displays thingliness and is man-made, an equipment is in part thing and in part art work. But, crucially, it lacks the self-sufficiency in the manner of an artwork. The conceptual schema of matter and form,

[268] Ibid., 29

though applicable to equipment and to an aspect of the artwork as well, cannot shed light on the self-sufficiency of the artwork. But does the application of the form-matter structure fully explain the nature of equipment or the equipmentality of equipment, in Heidegger's idiom, to which it primarily pertains?

The equipment occupies an intermediate position between the mere thing and the artwork. The mere thing proves 'mere' vis-à-vis the equipment. The block of granite, though it has certain properties, does not flash at us as an use-object. Besides, it is not made; it is natural. In this sense, the block of granite is a mere thing. This implies that the conception of mere thing is purely a negative one: that which is devoid of equipmentality is a mere thing. But does this approach really lets us view its thingly character?

So, there is a realm or domain an equipment fits in for it plays there a certain part, performs a certain function. But a mere thing does not make much of a sense in this realm. These two realms are not watertight compartments of the world but two sides or facets of our phenomenologically grasped life-world. A hammer or shoes too can appear as a mere thing. However, *an artwork does not seem to belong to any of these two realms*. For, Heidegger contends, it is the artwork that offers us an opportunity to view the nature of these two realms and thereby make visible the equipmentality of equipment as well as thingliness of thing.

5.4 Artwork as happening of truth

We saw that it is the usefulness that determines both the form and the matter of an equipment. But what is this usefulness itself? We noted above that Heidegger judges the form-matter schema to be somewhat inadequate to answer this question. What facet of the equipment eludes this explanation? Heidegger focuses on a pair of shoes and on a painting of Van Gogh which depicts a peasant woman's shoes.

Let us keep it in mind that our main purpose at this stage is to decide what the equipmentality consists in, and so our primary question is: What are shoes? Well, we all are acquainted with them. They are usually made of leather. They serve to clothe the feet. The craftsmen who make them are called cobblers. But, this is "what

we already know"[269]. In order to know what shoes truly are, we must strive to see how they are actually used, and how and what they *mean* to the user in the actual use. For in the use shoes are genuinely what they are. According to Heidegger, Van Gogh's painting reveals this. Let me quote at least a few lines from Heidegger's oft-quoted, coded and captivating, passage about the painting:

> "A pair of peasant shoes and nothing more. And yet -
>
> From the dark opening of the worn inside of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge ... On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls ... This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want ... This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself.
>
> But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, on the other hand, only wears them. If only this simple wearing were so simple. When she takes off her shoes late in the evening, in deep but healthy fatigue, and reaches out for them again in the still dim dawn ... she knows all this without noticing or reflecting."[270]

To be prosaic, Heidegger cautiously indicates that *perhaps* in the painting we come to notice things that are not even implied by our ordinary acquaintance or knowledge of shoes. This cautiousness on the part of Heidegger underlines the fact that his observations and comments on Van Gogh's artwork offer an *aesthetic* description. That is, the description is an articulation of the imaginative experience that Heidegger has undergone in the company of the artwork. The description is not a philosophical theory about what art in general is. We shall discuss this issue in later sections.

Heidegger italicizes two words in the passage: earth and world. These are key twin concepts in Heidegger's inquiry. He comments later on, "World and earth exist

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[269] Ibid., 33

[270] Ibid., 33-34 emphases as in the original

for her … in the equipment"[271]. Now we can see the difference between our ordinary knowledge of shoes and what the painting reveals about them. Our ordinary knowledge is abstract whereas the painting depicts the shoes as aesthetically revealing their original physical and cultural environment that bestows on them significance which their user is tacitly aware of while using them. Let us consider the earth as the peasant woman's physical environment, namely, the field, and the world as the total context of her life constituted by her wants and needs, and, her activities and meanings she attaches to them. To state it in a formula, shoes are what they are in the realm defined by the peasant woman's world and earth. Heidegger terms this as the 'truth' of shoes. So what the painting does is to disclose the truth of shoes; it lets us know what shoes are in truth[272].

There is another, maybe Collingwoodean, way of understanding Heidegger's aesthetic description of the painting. Heidegger notes that the peasant woman's wearing her foot-gear is not that simple, that is, there are some fleeting moments when she looks at them reflectively and realizes that her world and earth 'reside' in them. Van Gogh's painting *expresses* this momentarily and vaguely felt emotion of the peasant woman. Thus our hitherto tacit, transient awareness gets expressed in the artwork.

There is yet another way of interpretation. The world is the human realm in which the pair of shoes as a piece of equipment plays a certain role whereas the earth is the realm where it just subsists in the manner of a mere thing, stripped of its equipmentality and devoid of any human significance. Heidegger seems to me to allude to this when he mentions the equipment's "resting-within-itself". In a manner of speaking, when shoes accept the identity imposed on them and present themselves as shoes, they take part in the world. On the other hand, when they abandon this identity and stay put as a bare, stubborn existent, they retire to the earth. The artwork shows us both the aspects of the same entity. In other words, it shows both the equipmentality of equipment and the thingliness of the mere thing.

To recap, Heidegger brought us before the Van Gogh painting so as to enable us to see what shoes really are. And the painting did that by disclosing the truth of shoes. But this also tells us something about art and artwork. An artwork, that is, a true or good artwork, on Heidegger's view, lets an entity emerge into the

[271] Ibid., 34
[272] Ibid., 35

unconcealedness of its being. He provides us with a neat definition: "If there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work."[273]

So, according to Heidegger, an artwork is a place where truth happens or occurs. He goes further and claims: "The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work." He wants to maintain that truth happens in an artwork *because* truth sets itself to work through it. That is, for truth art is the most natural way, perhaps *the* way, to set itself to work and occur. What does Heidegger mean by this?

5.5 Happening of truth is not representation

Linking art to truth customarily invokes the view that an artwork is a reflection, representation, or imitation of reality. On this view, an artwork can be true in the sense that it correctly portrays what exists. The concept of truth underlying this view is that of a statement's or depiction's corresponding to or agreeing with what is taken to be reality. However, this is not what Heidegger has in mind when he contends that truth happens in Van Gogh's painting. Van Gogh's painting does not reproduce some particular entity in the world. Does it, then, reproduce the general essence of that entity? At this point, Heidegger introduces his another example, namely, a Greek temple: "Who could maintain the impossible view that the Idea of Temple is represented in the building?"[274]

It is of course understandable why Heidegger thinks it necessary to bring in the temple instead of sticking to the earlier example, the Van Gogh painting. For it is far easier to think or claim that a painting of shoes is a portrayal of some real, existing pair of shoes whereas it is not that easy to say that a temple too is a portrayal of something in the external world. So, although it is equally inconceivable to view an artwork as a portrayal of the Idea of Temple or of the Idea of Shoes, in order to emphasize that not even an artwork about mundane things like shoes portrays an existing object, Heidegger thinks reference to the Greek temple would be rather helpful. But he goes on to compound the matter himself. In the next section titled

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[273] Ibid., 36
[274] Ibid., 37

'The work and truth'[275], he declares that only great art is the subject of his inquiry[276], and discusses in detail the work of the Greek temple. It is tempting to conclude that Heidegger does not regard the Van Gogh painting as an instance of great art, and so he chooses the Greek temple as his next, even paradigmatic, example. However, he explicitly states in the preceding section that he does not deem the Van Gogh painting to be an artwork because it successfully depicts an actual pair of shoes[277]. Therefore, it is quite clear that the Van Gogh painting too is an instance of great art in Heidegger's eyes. Even so, his *not* sticking to the same painting remains puzzling. This transition from one artwork to another might seem to be Heidegger's ploy to suggest that there remains a faint possibility that the Van Gogh painting *may* be taken as a representational art, whereas the Greek temple would *never* be seen as representational. Undoubtedly, Heidegger would maintain that representational art is concerned with truth as correspondence, but, in contrast, in great art truth happens, truth is unconcealed. However, an intriguing question arises: Why does Heidegger have to contrast great art with *representational art* in order to accentuate its greatness? That is, is there any other, deeper reason why he thinks it necessary to deal with representational art? For it dos not require much philosophical exercise to see the differences between the two senses of truth, namely, portrayal and disclosure, though accounting for the latter is a considerable task.

John Bruin has paid some attention to this matter in his insightful paper, 'Heidegger and Two Kinds of Art'. To say that art does not depict or portray anything in the world is not a novel idea, Bruin observes. Hence we need to interpret Heidegger's exercise as regards representational art in a different fashion.

Bruin's central claim is that in Heidegger's scheme of things representational and great are not two types or kinds of art but "historically different ways of comporting ourselves in the midst of works of art"[278]. 'Great' or 'representational' is not a technical classification in the sense that it depends on an artwork's possession or lack of certain features. That is, it is not the case that an artwork is representational because it is imitative, or great due to some imposing quality. These two categories have more to do with our ways of regarding or seeing artworks. So it

[275] Ibid., 39-57
[276] Ibid., 40
[277] Ibid., 37
[278] Bruin 1994, 447

is our attitude that makes art representational. This is what Heidegger seems to hold. What is he up to? Bruin proposes that for Heidegger representational art

> "is not about an imitation of shoes and bed-frames. In manner of speaking, it is rather about cobblers and carpenters. It is about an historically and metaphysically conditioned mode of seeing the work of art within the horizon of the workshop. This is so in two complementary ways. First of all, about the *process* of production, the artist is seen as a kind of craftsman. And second, about the *product itself* of this production, the artwork is seen as a kind of utensil that does not amount to much of anything. We cannot, for instance, fit our feet into the Van Gogh painting."[279]

Thus, on Bruin's reading, in Heidegger's theory art *becomes* representational when we see it "within the horizon of the workshop", that is, as a species of craft like carpentry. Seeing art as a craft is to think about it in terms of form and matter. For, as we saw above, the conceptual schema of form and matter have their original home in what Bruin calls here the workshop. However, art theory and aesthetics seem to be their native place. This is owing to the trivialization of art by subsuming it under the genus of 'craft'.

The thingly element of the artwork is its obvious, concrete, perceptible part. As we noted above, when a question like 'What is it that the artist makes?' is raised, it is common to refer to this tangible thingly element. However, those who experience art, draw our attention to the fact that this thingly element points to or manifests something other in which lies the true artistic essence of the artwork. So, roughly speaking for now, the thingly element is the form, and that which it points to is its matter or content. The sequence of words, the linguistic artefact that the poet makes is the form, and what this linguistic artefact points to is the matter or content of the poem. Bruin sharply detects a far-reaching consequence of this view:

> "Subsequently the truth of a work … is in principle "spiritually" independent of, and beyond, the sensuous presentation of that work. In proportion as the artwork faithfully re-presents "something other", which is outside and

[279] Ibid., 452

external to the work, the truth of the work is *derivative* of that something other. And what does the job of representing this "something other" is the content."[280]

We have to take into account interrelations between four concepts in Bruin's account: form, content, something other pointed to by the artwork, and the truth of the artwork. The way of regarding an artwork as representational takes the truth of an artwork to lie in something other pointed to by, and lying outside, the artwork. The content is what represents this external thing in the artwork. The form is the sensuous way of presenting the content. On the representational view, an artwork is true insofar as its content represents or reflects something other external to it. Thus the worth of the artwork's content is determined by something that is independent of the artwork, that is part of the outside world. In addition, the content's relation with the form is not organic.

Once we impose the form-matter structure on an artwork, it begins to look like an odd sort of equipment, that is, it "stands out as somewhat "unemployed"", to use Bruin's apposite expression[281]. Shoes are made for a specific purpose; hence they flash at us as shoes. That is their identity or, in Heidegger's language, truth. But the Van Gogh painting of shoes just remains idle, its truth does not flash at us. Note that this happens because we *regard* it as a craft-product, as one amongst the chain of equipments, as representational. So, to continue on the path of thinking dictated by this mode of thinking, we are compelled to look for a suitable function or truth for it. It may serve a didactic or religiously edifying end, for instance. But, Bruin says, "whatever the use may be to which the artwork is put, it is in every case directed to some element or aspect of "reality" which lies outside the work." However, any specific use is "a specification of something more general and "originary". So far as we regard the nature of the production of the artwork within the horizon of the workshop, we regard that work as having already fulfilled its end. The general end which the work is culturally regarded as having already fulfilled is the representation of "reality". As to which specific element or aspect of reality that may be, that is to be determined or "interpreted" afterwards."[282]

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[280] Ibid., 452-53 emphasis as in the original
[281] Ibid., 453
[282] Ibid., 453

So, according to Bruin, 'representation' is Heidegger's general category that incorporates what Bradley, for example, calls 'ulterior' ends served by poetry. Not only this. Seeing art as representational *gives rise to* thinking about poetry in terms of such ulterior, non-poetic ends or purposes. The odd-seeming, out-standing entity like a painting or a poem is somehow fitted in with the world. What it shows is seen as a mirror-image, as an oblique or playful presentation of the familiar. The poet, on this view, turns out to be a kind of craftsman expert in producing mirror-like utensils. Thus, the view that an artwork is an allegory or a symbol, is in fact an *extension* of treating art as representational.

What Heidegger wants to drive home by expending so much philosophical energy on the apparently simple view that art is not portrayal is that the truth of an artwork is not derivative but original. Art can be an origin. But if we regard art's value to lie in something outside it, we make it representational, and do not allow it to realize its potential to be great art, to be origin, to be a unique revelation of truth about our life and world.

Seen against the backdrop of R. G. Collingwood's theory that we discussed in the previous chapter, a remarkable similarity in his and Heidegger's way of philosophizing about art and poetry comes to the fore. The significant portion of Collingwood's project consists in detecting a vulgar error which reduces art to a kind of craft. Broadly speaking, what Heidegger calls treating art as representation Collingwood terms as the technical theory of art. About form and matter, Collingwood writes:

> "In every work of art there is something which ... may be called form. There is ... something in the nature of the rhythm, pattern, organization, design, or structure. But it does not follow that there is a distinction between form and matter. Where that distinction does exist, namely, in artifacts, the matter was there in the shape of raw material before the form was imposed upon it, and the form was there in the shape of a preconceived plan before being imposed upon the matter ... None of these statements applies to a work of art."[283]

Obviously, Collingwood also tries to show that the form-matter duality applies well

[283] Collingwood 1938, 23-24

to artefacts, but is quite foreign to art. It is impossible to segregate what may be called matter of a work of art from its form. Note that Collingwood's assertion that there is no separable matter and separable form in a work of art takes the form of the denial of the distinction between form and matter. Somehow Collingwood begins to seem an advocate of the form-matter identity thesis like A. C. Bradley.

In contrast, in my view, Heidegger escapes this trap. He associates the form-matter schema only with artefacts and crafts. He could do so by tracing their origin back to usefulness as such rather than specific purposes - Collingwood's "ends" - served by individual artefacts like knife or pen. In artefacts, usefulness is the constitutive governing principle of their form-matter synthesis. This is a slightly misleading way of putting things. For the usefulness that dictates the form-matter synthesis does not belong merely to the artefact but to the whole sphere in which the user uses it, that is, to the everyday practical world. This enables Heidegger to nip in the bud the possibility of giving primacy to one of them. At the same time, credit must be given to Collingwood for inscribing in his sixth characteristic of craft its hierarchical nature. One craft implies another in the sense that one's finished products are raw materials of another's. Thus all the crafts constitute the crisscrossing and overlapping everyday practical world in Collingwood's sketch too.

Following the clues provided by John Bruin, we have been engaged in seeing that representational art and great art, an apparently odd contrast, have to do more with ways of regarding the artwork than with artworks' innate qualities. This implies that the same product may be viewed as, and hence become, representational or great depending on the manner of our seeing. The Van Gogh painting of the peasant woman's shoes discloses the truth about shoes. It does so not by portraying the actual shoes, but by expressing the peasant woman's tacit awareness of her world and earth. To use Heidegger's language, it does so by bringing the shoes into unconcealedness of their Being. Seeing art as great is to look at it in this fashion, that is, to comport oneself with its disclosure of the hidden truth.

Here again similarity to Collingwood's thought is striking. To express an emotion is to know it, according to Collingwood. When we evade this task, we corrupt our consciousness. For in that evasion, we almost disown our ununderstood thoughts and emotions. In a parallel way, in Heidegger's theory, seeing art as the disclosure of truth about the world in which we live and thereby letting it be great, is,

on Heidegger's view, an authentic - truly aesthetic, we may say - approach to art. When we do not do so, that is, when we allow art to stoop to be representational, we let the epoch sustained by great art fall or degrade. Then art does not exist in the world; it only lingers as a name, as a non-denoting label.

However, if art becomes great because we let it be so, then does it mean that any artwork, or anything that can be presented as an artwork, can become great? Is Heidegger only concerned with enlightening us about the right attitude towards art? This takes us to another aspect of *OWA*.

5.6 Making and Creating

So far we have seen that the mixture of two prevalent conceptual frames, namely, the form-matter schema and the allegory/symbol schema forces us to think about the nature of the artwork fallaciously. For under their influence the question 'What is an artwork?' becomes a question "not about the work but half about a thing and half about equipment."[284] However, we learn something from these grave errors. Maybe we can arrive at the nature of an artwork if we pay close attention to its self-sufficiency like the mere thing and its artificiality, that is, the fact that it is made or crated. It is these two features of an artwork - its self-sufficiency and its "createdness" - are what make it so distinctive that it stands out or towers up.

Even if it sounds obvious, as we noted at the outset, to say that the artwork originates in the artist, it is "the artist's most peculiar intention" that the work is released "to its pure self-subsistence". Heidegger writes, "It is precisely in great art - and only such art is under consideration here - that the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge."[285] The artist destroying himself - that sounds like an equally dramatic ancestor of "the death of the author" as well as in tune with the detectors of the "intentional fallacy". When authorial intention is given the sole privilege of determining the meaning of a poem, it is viewing art as representational, Heidegger would say. For it connects art to the external world.

However, according to Heidegger, "To be a work means to set up a world". But setting up a world is only the first aspect of "the work-being of the work". The

[284] Op. cit., 39
[285] Ibid., 40

second aspect has to do with the earth. According to Heidegger, creating an artwork is setting up a world and setting forth the earth. The self-sufficiency and self-subsistence of an artwork is sustained by the interaction between its world and earth. And it is this world-earth interplay that makes the artwork distinctive, outstanding and exceptional. Let us try to understand this.

An artwork is made by man. It needs to be made out of something like stone, wood, colour, or language. Thus when a work is created, it is brought forth out of work-material. The artwork has a peculiar relation with its work-material. To put it swiftly, the artwork *is* its work-material. What we called its physicality or thingly character early on is constitutive of its particularity or individuality. Bruin captures it nicely: "The "what" of the artwork is for that reason ill-suited to the requirements of conceptualization, and therefore generalization. *This* entity stands out, elusively and obstinately, as if it were a separate species unto itself. Its "this-ness", or "inscape" as the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins might call it, is "just what is unusual" about this entity."[286]

Although an equipment too is made out of some or other material, bringing forth the artwork out of its work-material is fundamentally different from manufacturing of an equipment. This is the difference between 'making' and 'creating'.

> "Because it is determined by usefulness and serviceability, equipment takes into its service that of which it consists: the matter. In fabricating equipment - e.g., an ax [sic] - stone is used, and used up. It disappears into usefulness ... By contrast the temple-work, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time ... The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer ... the word to speak. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone ... and into the naming power of the word.
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> That into which the work sets itself back and which it causes to come forth in this setting back of itself we called the earth."[287]

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[286] Op. cit., 449-50
[287] Op. cit., 46

Now we can see that what appeared to us initially as the thingly character of the artwork is not matter but the *earth*. Roughly speaking, matter disappears in the equipment whereas it re-appears in the artwork. The words of a poem seem to regain their original power to name things, to express our awareness of the world. They are no longer clichéd descriptions of the same old world, but new and fresh names of almost unfamiliar things. It is as if for the first time in history the word acquires this magical capacity. It is important to keep in mind that the ordinary words' regaining their original power and the old things' emerging as unfamiliar are two sides or aspects of the same process. "The setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth are two essential features in the work-being of the work. They belong together, however, in the unity of the work-being."[288]

Peter Kivy would readily have labelled this strand in *OWA* as a version of the form-content identity thesis. The earth is like the form and the world the content expressed by it. In Heidegger's terminology the world rises up from, and sets itself back into, the earth. Kivy would find this another attractive way of saying that the poetic content is somehow inseparable from its form.

However, I think the conception of the artwork as unity of world and earth can provide us with a firm ground to understand Heidegger's apparently mystifying notions of concealment and deconcealment of truth as well as setting up of a world and setting forth the earth.

Both the equipment and the artwork are made, are brought forth. But bringing forth an equipment is making whereas bringing forth an artwork is creating. The act of making or craft involved is traversed as the equipment is brought forth. On the contrary, "createdness" is part and parcel of the artwork[289]. This is not to deny the importance for art-creation of craftsmanship, which is prized highly and painstakingly cultivated by great artists[290]. Indeed, the Greeks, Heidegger observes, display great insight by using the same word *techne* for both craft and art. However, though *techne* included both art and craft, it meant something different:

> "The word *techne* denotes rather a mode of knowing. To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is

[288] Ibid., 48
[289] Ibid., 58
[290] Ibid., 59

present, as such. For Greek thought the nature of knowing consists in *aletheia*, that is, in the uncovering of beings ... *Techne*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth present beings as such beings out of concealedness and specifically into the unconcealedness of their appearance; *techne* never signifies the action of making."[291]

So, on Heidegger's account, art, in the sense of the Greek word *techne*, is primarily seeing what is. However, it is not ordinary seeing. Ordinary seeing rather hides what is present. But art as seeing removes the veil that keeps hidden what is present. How does this happen? As the poet composes a poem, he not only sets forth a striking sequence of words out of the ordinary language, but also brings forth what is present. The bringing forth of what is present becomes possible *through* the setting forth of the poetic composition. In other words, creating a poem and seeing what is present are indissolubly linked with each other. In this sense, art is a mode of knowing. In Collingwood's aesthetics, 'description' veils the peculiar nature of a felt emotion by generalizing it. However, expression captures its peculiarity. The vital difference is that the artwork, as Heidegger conceives it, has in it both the earlier, vague emotion and the expressed, lucid emotion. Roughly speaking, the world is the lucid, expressed emotion whereas the earth is the unexpressed, vague emotion. That is, in Heideggerian artwork what is elucidated and its elucidation are present at the same time. The appreciator can see that *this* is out of which the elucidated has come forward, has acquired its meaningfulness, and also that *this* is that is the elucidated.

Another important feature of Heidegger's account is that he detects intimate connections between what is elucidated, the elucidation and the medium through which elucidation can take place. It is the ordinary use of the medium that hides what is present. And it is bringing forth a striking linguistic composition out of the overworked ordinary language that rescues, so to say, what it has hidden. "To be sure, the poet also uses the word - not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word."[292]

We have been engaged in seeing that Heidegger distinguishes creating from

[291] Ibid., 59
[292] Ibid., 47-48

making. The conceptual framework inspired by the process of making a utensil, on Heidegger's view, cannot be strictly applied to creation of an artwork. The vital difference between the two kinds of production can be put as follows.

Making of a utensil can be fully explicated in terms of its form and matter. The purpose the utensil serves in the world determines its form, which, in turn, determines its matter. This is not to say that we cannot define form and matter in other ways or that all of their operative meanings can be reduced to the ones we attribute to them here. As Heidegger sees it, regarding one element – the form, in the case of equipment – as more authentic or more important stems from the framework of making. When this pair is applied to the artwork, the matter (or content) is generally considered to be superior. The content is viewed as a properly artistic or aesthetic element of the artwork, and its counterpart, the form, on the other hand, is seen to be a result of handiwork, a product of craft. Besides this, the content is seen as pointing towards something outside the work which determines the work's worth. Consequently, creation of the form comes to be seen as secondary in importance, even negligible. In other words, art's value is regarded as lying in something or other that belongs to the world. This way of seeing art as representational does not let art reveal its own nature.

Therefore, instead of adjusting the form-matter theory to suit the nature of art, we must simply discard it as it realizes its defining powers not in the realm of art but in the domain of equipment. This is Heidegger's line of thought. Now, it may be argued that Heidegger commits here genetic fallacy. For he seems to base his claim on a reasoning that since the form-matter schema *originates* in the case of equipment, it cannot be applied to other artefacts. However, here we must keep in mind that Heidegger's use of the word 'originate' is not chronological or historical in character. It is not that the form-matter schema was invented for explicating the making of utensils *before* it was applied to artworks. Heidegger talks about two *simultaneous* domains, so to speak. Heidegger's use of another phrase, 'realizing defining powers'[293] is worth taking into account here. As if standing outside, or keeping a certain distance from, the realm of art as well as the realm of equipment, Heidegger asks us to see whether the form-matter schema truly realizes its defining power in the realm of artworks, equipment or mere things. At first glance it seems to

[293] Ibid., 28

be applicable to all of them. But, as both 'form' and 'matter' are invented conceptual categories, maybe they spring from a third concept which acts as their governing principle. Heidegger locates this governing principle in usefulness of use-objects or equipments.

No doubt this sounds quite Kantian – the form of a thing determined by its purposiveness. However, Heidegger does not stretch the language of form so far as Kant does. That is, he does not set up a discourse of certain kinds of things whose form is parasitical upon the practical purposes they are meant to serve, and, certain things which have forms that are apparently similar to the purposive forms, but are not tied to any practical purposes. In other words, Heidegger cuts the troublesome Kantian link between the purposiveness of a thing and its being an artwork. In common with Collingwood, he maintains that craft-aspect and art-aspect may co-exist but are fundamentally distinct.

5.7 World and Earth

Perhaps the most obvious reason why *OWA* seems obscure is that it uses the words 'world' and 'earth' in quite an unusual way. Let us try to see what they mean for Heidegger and how they help him to think about art in a fresh way.

Consider what happens to the so-called material in the creation of an artwork. Heidegger's use of the mysterious-sounding term 'earth' is an attempt to shed light on ways in which the material participates in disclosing truth. To begin with, materials that the artist uses – say, colours or words – are the earth, for they are physical or earthy. However, earthy material has its expressive side too. That is, colours shine and words have meanings, for instance. A word, as a mark or sound, is rather opaque and inaccessible almost like a mere thing. Heidegger calls it the earth. But due to its expressive side, due to its meaning, it speaks to us, appeals to us. Heidegger calls this aspect the world. Thus at the most basic level word-as-mere-thing is the earth and word-as-a-meaning is the world. That is, to follow Heidegger, in the poem, the word's meaning seems to suddenly rise up from its earthy opaqueness, from its mere-thing-ness, and, at the same time, after this rising up to return to that opaqueness. In order to capture this phenomenon, Heidegger coins the notions of earth, world, and their interplay.

One crucial implication follows from this. Different meanings can rise up out

of the basic sequence of words that the poet creates. The earth of the poem, in this sense, is a pure potential that has no fixed or unchangeable nature, that has no hard and fast core or essence that can be fully summarized or paraphrased.

To render it even more accessible, compare Heideggerian earth and world with what Virgil Aldrich calls 'material' and 'medium'. The colour that the painter smears on the canvas is his material but the emergent colour-tone is an element of his medium, with which or through which he paints his painting. In Heidegger's terminology, this is a process how the world emerges out of the earth.

Let us listen to his own pronouncements on what world and earth are. First the world:

> "The world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are just there. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things. The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject ... "[294]

Now as to the earth:

> "That into which the work sets itself back and which it causes to come forth in this setting back of itself we [call] the earth. Earth is that which comes forth and shelters ... *The work lets the earth be an earth* ... A stone presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness exerts an opposite pressure on us it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such a penetration by breaking open the rock, it still does not display in its fragments anything inward that has been disclosed ... When we analyze it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate into it ... To set forth the earth means to bring it into the

[294] Ibid., 44

Open as the self-secluding."[295]

Let us focus on the mere thing as we did at the outset of this chapter. A stone is a mere thing in the sense that it is not directly useful as shoes are. Furthermore, it is so self-contained that it remains almost inaccessible. However, a mere thing does not appear as a mere thing within the domain in which human beings usually orient themselves. That is we often see mere things as such only with reference to equipments. To be specific, our very notion of a mere thing is that of 'something that is without equipmentality'. It is the work of art that offers us an opportunity to encounter the mere thing as it is in itself. How does the artwork do this? In order to allow its self-sufficient nature reveal itself, the artwork sets up a world, that is, opens up a realm in which it is partly intelligible. In this sense the artwork lets the earth be an earth.

Several attempts have been made to decipher what exactly Heidegger has in mind when he uses these terms. In one of the earliest expository papers, Hans Jaeger maintains that the earth and the world are 'existing reality' and the 'being of existing reality' respectively. On this reading, the earthy, material side of the artwork is one of the realized possibility of Being[296]. Hubert Dreyfus, casting an anthropological glance at *OWA*, maintains a view that comes somewhat closer to what we contended in connection with the earth rendering the artwork as paraphrase-proof:

> "Heidegger calls the way the artwork solicits the culture to make the artwork explicit, coherent, and encompassing the *world* aspect of the work. He calls the way the artwork and its associated practices resist such totalization the *earth*."[297]

Note that in Dreyfus's view, quite contrary to Jaeger's reading, the immediate accessibility belongs more to the world than to the earth. To move towards a more recent period, Julian Young notes that *OWA* becomes confusing because of the ambiguity of the 'earth'. He says:

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[295] Ibid., 46-47
[296] Jaeger 1958. Robert Stulberg also offers a similar interpretation: Stulberg 1973
[297] Dreyfus 1993, 300

" ... 'earth' possesses at least three meanings: (1) non-human nature as disclosed within the 'world' constitutive of an historical epoch for a culture, (2) the medium of an artwork, (3) that which in the 'clearing' of disclosure always remains unlit, dark, concealed ..."[298]

Young is quite perceptive here. To recall Bradley's simplistic terminology, a subject is something the poem is about but is outside the poem, and substance is what the subject becomes in the poem. Now, we can conceive two forms or states of the subject: the subject as we know it and the subject as it is in itself. So what the poem is really about is the subject-as-it-is-in-itself. Young calls it 'non-human nature'. And he takes the subject-as-we-know-it to be non-human nature disclosed in a certain manner. These are two aspects of the earth. One is more accessible than the other. However, the artwork does not merely reflect how the subject gets rendered accessible ordinarily. It rather sets up a world against whose backdrop we encounter it, not merely apprehend it intellectually. So the substance of a Heideggerian artwork is neither the totally inaccessible and bewildering subject-as-it-is-in-itself nor the relatively accessible and familiar subject-as-we-know-it. Rather, it emerges through their interaction.[299]

What to choose from this rich abundance? Do these divergent, at times rather contrary, interpretations spring from Heidegger's basic muddle in *OWA*? However, let us recall that we termed Heidegger's comments on the Van Gogh painting of shoes as aesthetic descriptions. The main reason behind this suggestion is that what Heidegger says there is an appreciative reaction rather than an attempt to put forth an ultimate truth about art that rests on a certain philosophical theory. This is not to deny that his notions of world, earth, or truth as unconcealedness are not inspired by his general metaphysics of being as famously expounded in his masterpiece *Being and Time*. However, when it comes to art, Heidegger does not hesitate to renew his conceptual framework. What is expected of the reader of a poem or any appreciator of an artwork is that he *preserve* the work:

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[298] Young 1997, 123 f. n.

[299] What Collingwood calls 'description' is a description *of* the subject - a feeling of anger, say - as it in fact exists or occurs. The poet is concerned with not only expressing the feeling but also exposing the groundlessness, triviality or ultimate falsity of descriptions. Expression is a transformation of the feeling. Does this mean, however, that the vague feeling leaves no residue at all? Or is it rather the case that even an expressed, clear feeling too is vague and inchoate from a certain viewpoint and so needs the further act of expression? Something of this kind is tackled in Heidegger's doctrine.

> "Preserving the work does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them into affiliation with the truth happening in the work ... The proper way to preserve the work is cocreated and prescribed only and exclusively by the work ... The preservers of a work belong to its createdness with an essentiality equal to that of the creators."[300]

So Heidegger's aesthetic descriptions of artworks are his attempts at preservation of the truth happening in those works. In tune with Collingwood, Heidegger would also subscribe to Coleridge's maxim that he is the poet who makes us, the readers, poets. Most importantly, Heidegger emphasizes that it is the "createdness" of the artwork that "prescribes" the way of looking at it, experiencing it. To experience an artwork is not merely to retire to our private, hedonistic, self-indulgent worlds. It is to imaginatively engage with the odyssey that the artist had undertakes for himself as well as for us.

I find an able predecessor in Stephen Mulhall who paves the way for such aesthetic readings of *OWA*. Mulhall suggests that Heidegger uses his jargon in *OWA* to articulate "a facet of aesthetic experience ...namely, the inclination to characterize major works of art as iconic embodiments of their meaning or significance."[301] Mulhall says further:

> " ... Heidegger's assertion that a work of art is the site for strife between world and earth should be viewed as a means of evoking crucial features of the relevant aesthetic experience (one which relies upon connotations and associations woven around the concepts of 'world' and 'earth' by his text and by his metaphysical framework) rather than as a quasi-scientific claim to have discerned new forces of nature."[302]

If we are open-minded like Mulhall, we can see the open-ended nature of *OWA*.

This thesis started off with Bradley's emphasis on the poem's value residing in the singular imaginative experience given by it, and we have reached Heidegger's

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[300] Op. cit., 68-69, 71
[301] Mulhall 1990, 156
[302] Ibid., 158

suggestion that philosophizing about poetry should be inspired primarily by it.

5.8 Conclusion

According to Heidegger's theory of art as presented in *OWA*, poetry is not representational in the sense that it is not craft serving a specific purpose in the everyday practical world. In this respect *OWA* shows similarity with Collingwood's thesis that art is no craft. Interestingly, Heidegger associates two types of art - representational and great - more with our ways of seeing them than with their high or low stature. So, preservation, that is, what the appreciator does with the artwork, is as much crucial as the artist's act in letting truth happen in it. The artwork is a happening of truth. That is, truth is disclosed in it. It can disclose truth by being an interplay, a strife between the world and the earth. World and earth are richly ambiguous categories because they are largely aesthetic in character. Throughout the chapter, I have compared *OWA* with Collingwood's aesthetics. These two thinkers do not just display superficial similarities but belong to what I would call a medium-centered tradition in aesthetics.

CONCLUSION

This thesis started off with the debate between A. C. Bradley and Peter Kivy, and subsequently turned to the theories of poetry advanced by Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger.

The Bradley-Kivy debate is a representative quarrel between two fundamentally different approaches to poetry. Bradley maintains that the value of a poem *as a poem* is intrinsic. Accordingly, he exhorts us to experience the poem for its own sake. On the other hand, Kivy believes that we can explain the value of poetry in purely instrumentalist terms. A poem is a vehicle of content that can be available through means other than poetry. The very idea of experiencing the poem for its own sake seems rather obscure to him. He contends that the notions of the unparaphrasable poetic content are gimmicks to claim for poetry not only a special sort of content but also a kind of ineffable knowledge.

The question posed by the Bradley-Kivy debate is not so much about which approach is more correct as about whether Bradley's plea - to experience the poem for its own sake - is refuted by Kivy's arguments against the claims about the form-content identity displayed by the poem or the uniqueness of its meaning. The chapters on Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger are attempts to answer the question whether we can entertain Bradley's position or not *in spite of* Kivy's severe objections to the supporting arguments employed by Bradley. The sole point or purpose of the detailed treatment of Kivy's criticism of Bradley is, thus, not to prove that Kivy is absolutely wrong, but to sketch a background, a context against which the aesthetic theories of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger, whose cardinal tenet is that a poem offers us something that is singular and insubstitutable, can be better explored.

Thus, I look upon Bradley as a 'practitioner' of the view that the value of a poem may be intrinsic. As a literary critic (in the era not infected by 'theory'), his principal methodological tool to 'prove' the view is to ask the reader of poetry to experience the poem first-hand in order to realize for himself that what the poem provides cannot be gained through other means. Consequently, the plausibility of the view that Bradley 'practices' largely depends upon the particular way of reading poetry. That the poem is valuable in itself cannot be realized unless we experience it

in a particular way: this is what Bradley's position boils down to. All other possible justifications such as 'the poem is an indivisible unity of form and content' or 'the meaning of a poem cannot be fully captured by its paraphrase' are, in a certain sense, lame excuses. Inevitably, Bradley's position presents itself as a literary-critical recommendation regarding how to read poetry, which of course may not be followed by all.

Kivy too is a contemporary representative of a certain way of thinking about poetry. Kivy's conceptions that the poem is a reminder of things we have experienced before or that it is a vehicle of content that is not especially poetic, are instances of the instrumentalist view. As a philosopher, Kivy does not have at his disposal a literary-critical methodological tool like appealing to a certain feature of our experience of the poem. He puts forth philosophical arguments. However, detecting flaws in Kivy's arguments does not strengthen the view that Bradley practices and I want to defend. For instance, I uncover in the second chapter that Kivy mixes up the two distinct claims that the form and content of the poem cannot be prised apart and that the poem cannot be paraphrased. But this does not help me to qualify further or support Bradley's position.

As a result, the intuitive plausibility of the 'practice' of the view that a poem is intrinsically valuable needs to be philosophically supported. I look upon Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger as three major philosophical exponents of the view that what a good poem offers us is its unique gift. Thus, the three aestheticians' philosophical theories are our resources for defending the view that poetry is for the sake of poetry.

The aesthetic theories of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger are inspired by an insight that a poem is something that is derived, or arrived at, through the exploratory play with the medium. The poem is carved in the medium in such a way that it becomes a kind of cognitive apparatus through which we experience what it alone can make available or comprehensible. Hence, in my view, the aesthetic theories of Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger constitute a 'medium-centered tradition' of philosophizing about poetry.

Thus, what appears, at the practitioner's level, as the view that a poem is to be read and experienced for its own sake, is, at the philosopher's level, the medium-centered approach to poetry. In order to defend the poetry-for-poetry's-sake view, I delve deep into the medium-centered tradition.

Now, the foundational claim in the theories of poetry advanced by Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger is *not* that poetry is for poetry's sake. That is, they do not argue that reading and experiencing a poem is an end in itself. This is the literary critic's language. He has to see to it that readers do not approach poetry with some practical interests in mind. On the other hand, the three philosophers in the medium-centered tradition lavishly praise poetry for *doing* certain things for us. For instance, Collingwood says that a poem helps us to understand our feelings or thoughts, or Heidegger holds that a poem discloses truth, or Kant thinks that the pleasure of reading a poem fortifies the mind. Are not these practical, non-poetic ends served by poetry, then?

We must note, however, that Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger firmly maintain that a poem is irreplaceable. That is, whatever work it *does,* it does it through its being an irreplaceable work of art. Moreover, the poem cannot perform its work independently of the reader who experiences it in a certain way. That is, the work performed by the poem is not divorced from what happens in the mind of the reader when he experiences it. This is what I referred to above as the poem's being a cognitive apparatus. Hence, the three theories of poetry are studied here as three different accounts of *what* happens in the intrinsically valuable experience of a poem; *what* happens when one reads a poem poetically, when one looks upon it as a work of art carved in the medium.

In Kant's theory, aesthetic ideas constitute the spirit of the poem, they enliven the poem. It is genius that creates them. As I argued in Chapter 3, an inquiry into this aspect of Kant's theory makes the concept of genius more comprehensible. It shows that genius is a medium-centric concept. How does genius create aesthetic ideas? They arise when the imagination synthesizes intuitions in its own way. However, not anything that the imagination can fabricate can be expressed through the medium; it should be intelligible to the understanding as well and it should induce the pleasurable interplay between the imagination and the understanding. So, to compose a poem is to hit upon such an expression through the skilful exploration of the medium. The product of this act is an 'original' artwork. When the poet writes an original poem in this sense, he is said to have genius. That is, genius is the poet's potential to write a poem, and the finished poem is an embodiment of the realized genius. Thus, genius, arguably the most important concept in Kant's theory of fine art, is not some mysterious, supernatural power, but a medium-centric notion.

According to Collingwood, one cannot understand what one feels unless he expresses it. That is, to express an emotion is not to articulate what we already know about it, nor is it to give vent to an emotion. To express an emotion *is* to know it. From this it follows that the expression and the expressed emotion are not distinct and separate; one is not without the other. Now, one needs a medium for expression. So, the mediated expression is part and parcel of the emotion that gets expressed. I argued in Chapter 4 that the main concepts in Collingwood's theory, namely, the unexpressed emotion, the expression and the expressed emotion are all medium-bound notions.

Similarly, in Heidegger's *OWA*, the foremost characteristic of an artwork is its earthy nature. That is, an artwork is a unique event, an outstanding phenomenon due to its earth-bound nature. The earth is at once the physical material, the artistic medium and the subject out of which the world of an artwork - its intelligible aspect - reveals itself. However, the intelligibility of an artwork also tends to hide itself back into the earth. Heidegger describes this as truth concealing itself and attaining to the unconcealedness. Kant and Collingwood characterize this phenomenon as the poem's description-defying nature.

So, now the overall conclusion of this thesis can be stated quickly. In order to do justice to the peculiar nature of poetry, we ought to adopt a medium-centered approach. A medium-centered approach in aesthetics may be defined as that which looks at an artwork as a play upon, in or through a medium. A poem is basically a play with or within its medium. Our critical engagement with the philosophical views of poetry advanced by Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger shows that these aestheticians advocate this approach.

Let me digress a bit and make a few observations as someone whose first language is Marathi, not English. If we ask a native speaker of Marathi to paraphrase a certain poem, he would be annoyed. 'You can't summarize a poem,' he would retort. For the Marathi word that comes close to 'paraphrase' (as a noun) is *saaraansh*, which is almost never used with reference to poetry. The word *saaraansh* is made up of two words - *saara* and *ansh. Saara* means juice squeezed out of a fruit, core or essence. And *ansh* means part or element. So, *saaraansh* means the most important or core element. The Marathi speaker would speak of the 'meaning' of a poem, but would almost never talk about its *saaraansh,* about its most important element. He would

recognize that an obscure poem may call for a bit of elucidation, but would refuse to resort to presenting its *saaraansh* as an alternative way of understanding the poem. However, the same person would not hesitate at all to write the *saaraansh* of a prose passage, provided the passage is prosaic enough. If the prose passage exudes a bit of a linguistic charm, the Marathi speaker would remark 'It is *kaavya* (poetry).' Do not use the word *saaraansh* in connection with a piece of language which exudes *kaavya* - a native speaker of Marathi seems to follow this unstated maxim. A philosophically interesting aspect of this is that for the Marathi-speaking person one of the crucial features of *kaavya,* of poetry is that it is resistant to *saaraansh.*

The predominant Marathi word for a piece of literary-critical commentary on a poem is *rasagrahan*, which derives from Sanskrit poetics. *Rasa*, which literally means juice, flavour or essence, is what we experience when we read a poem poetically. So, the Marathi word *rasagrahan* implies that a literary-critical commentary's purpose is to explicate the reader's *rasa*-experience, rather than to state and explain in other words the meaning of the poem. Alternatively, the objective of a critical commentary is said to explicate the poem's *bhavaartha*. This word is made up of two components: *bhaava*, which means emotion, feeling or mood; and, *artha*, which means meaning. So, the poem does not have meaning in the ordinary sense, but *bhavaartha*, emotional or 'feelingful' meaning. Thus, a native speaker of Marathi has got an implicit philosophy of poetry whose cardinal principles are: 1. A poem does not have meaning in the ordinary sense. It has *bhavaartha* or feelingful meaning. 2. As a poem is an instance of *kaavya* (poetry), it is resistant to paraphrase. 3. To elucidate, or to comment on, a poem is not to state its meaning but to explicate the experience of *rasa* offered by it.

Whether this really amounts to an implicit philosophy or not is a different issue altogether, but the controversies and confusions that the English word 'paraphrase' generates remain somewhat outlandish in Marathi. I mentioned above that the Marathi word that comes close to 'paraphrase' is *saaraansh*, which means the central part, the core or the essence. While claiming this we have assumed that 'paraphrasing a poem', in a predominant English sense of 'paraphrase', means 'stating the essence or the essential meaning of a poem'. Is it right?

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'paraphrase' as "a statement that expresses [something] that [somebody] has written or said using different words,

especially in order to make it easier to understand"[303]. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* states that a paraphrase is "an expression in other words of [the] sense of any passage or text; a free rendering or amplification of a passage." Further in the entry Dryden is quoted as saying that while paraphrasing a text, "the author is kept in view ... but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense."[304]

Thus, a paraphrase is a re-statement of the original text for the sake of clearer understanding. However, note the way in which Dryden puts the 'words' on the one hand and the 'sense' on the other. Such bifurcation makes the activity of paraphrasing possible. A paraphrase can be regarded as a phrase parallel to the original text only if it 'follows' its sense or meaning. Hence, although it is taken for granted that they are one and the same, there is a subtle difference between 'the paraphrase as a re-statement of the original text' and 'the paraphrase of the meaning of the original text.'

Many of the ordinary statements, not only their meaning, can be re-stated. That is, their restatements are in no way pale shadows of the original statements: they can perform the assigned task as effectively and successfully as the original statements. In other words, they can *replace* the original statements.

But when we turn to poetry, although the idea of re-stating the *poem* sounds odd, re-stating its *meaning* seems natural. That is, one at least tacitly admits that a poem cannot be replaced in the sense in which an ordinary statement can be, though another set of words can surely express the meaning of a poem. However, the difference between the re-statement of the original text and that of its meaning is so subtle that the latter, which intuitively seems more plausible, usurps the former: a paraphrase tends to be seen as a re-statement of the poem itself. It is taken for granted that to paraphrase the meaning of a poem *is* to paraphrase the poem itself. This is the sense in which the English word 'paraphrase' is predominantly used. Therefore, I could compare 'paraphrase' with *saaraansh*.

One crucial implication of this operational sense of 'paraphrase' is that the poem gets identified with the meaning captured by the paraphrase. That is, other elements of the poem such as metaphors or sound pattern are supposed to be ignored in order to extract its most vital part, that is, its meaning. They are seen as the elements that becloud the meaning rather than reveal it. This does injustice to the

[303] Hornby 2000, 919
[304] Onions 1985, 1510

poet's creative act.

However, the operational meaning of paraphrase should not make us believe that within the world-view of the English language the possibility of the view that a poem cannot be reduced to its so-called meaning is just absent. Otherwise, Cleanth Brooks's 'Heresy of Paraphrase' would not have become so famous.

We observed that the speaker of Marathi tends to believe that a poem is resistant to paraphrase, for it has 'emotional meaning' which is to be experienced first-hand. That the poem is irreplaceable is inbuilt in the Marathi notions related with poetry. But the aesthetician working in English has first to fight for the irreducibility or insubstitutability of the poem in order to drive home that poetry could be for poetry's sake. This is the mandatory negative duty of the aesthetician working within what I call the medium-centered tradition of philosophizing about poetry.

Long before the New Critic Brooks proclaimed the heresy of paraphrase, A. C. Bradley, another of the most influential literary critics of the twentieth century, had described it as heretical to locate the poem's value in either its content or its form. However, as I argued in the first chapter, Bradley's principal positive thesis is that the unique poetic value of a good poem lies in the imaginative experience it provides us. But, while anticipating and confuting possible misapprehensions, Bradley holds the unity of form and content to be a crucial mark of genuine poetry.

Peter Kivy, a prominent contemporary aesthetician, comes forward to complicate the scene. Kivy terms the form-content identity thesis as the no-paraphrase claim. To say that form and content are inseparable is to say that to paraphrase a poem is impossible. Note that the concept of paraphrase takes an interesting turn here. To paraphrase a poem, at least to Kivy's mind, is to detach its content, which is its more important element, from its form. Poetry is reduced here to form-making. Furthermore, Kivy takes 'content' to mean not meaning, in the sense in which the word is normally applied to poetry, but a piece of knowledge produced by a discipline, a branch of knowledge like physics or philosophy. So, according to the picture partly sketched and partly suggested by Kivy, poetry is not only an embellished way of expressing meanings but a vehicle for intellectual content. Now, the conception of poetry as an embellished way of saying ordinary or known meanings is held by many of us. But, though unjust on the whole, it is far less

harmful than the conception that poetry is a mere vehicle of content of knowledge-generating enterprises. Kivy seems to be a formidable antagonist of the poetry-for-poetry's-sake philosophers not only because he links poetic content with the knowledge produced by systematic disciplines but also due to his strong contention that the poetry-for-poetry's-sake views were developed largely to claim for poetry a special, higher, and superior kind of knowledge. As Kivy sees it, the form-content identity thesis, the no-paraphrase claim or the thesis that poetry is for its own sake are all expressions of this tendency. To deny to believe that a poem can be paraphrased is to claim that it produces knowledge that is too esoteric that it cannot be uttered at all except in the poem.

To crown it all, Kivy shrewdly claims to trace the genesis of this tendency back to Kant's concept of aesthetic ideas. In the *Critique of Judgment*, an aesthetic idea is an intuition of the creative imagination for which an adequate concept or linguistic expression can never be found. Such aesthetic ideas bestow spirit on the poem and enliven it. Accordingly, Kant seems to claim that what is distinctive about the poem is its peculiar kind of content that is immune to conceptual understanding as well as linguistic re-statement. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Bradley makes a similar claim choosing the idiom of form, content and their inseparability or identity.

Kivy, thus, sets up a complex battlefield for the aesthetician keen on maintaining that poetry is for the sake of poetry.

One of the minor conclusions of this thesis is that too many dramatic scenes in Kivy's "*a priori* history" of the origin of the form-content identity thesis *vis-à-vis* the claim about a peculiar type of knowledge as poetry's specialty rest on the confusion between 'verse' and 'poetry'. This is not a great finding, but Kivy does make such a simplistic mistake. What Lucretius did was to use verse to convey his scientific or philosophical findings. So, however modest it may be, Kivy's contention that poetry is a vehicle of intellectual content is applicable at least to some poetry pertains to verse, not poetry. 'Using verse' is a craft, not art. Poetry, on the other hand, is art in the sense that in it verse is explored, played with, and made to reveal its own qualities. In poetry, verse is not traversed. Whatever the poem means is meant by its verse as well. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth are two sides of the same coin, to put it in Heidegger's manner. Kivy reduces poetry to disposable verse-vehicle; he identifies poetry with intellectual content.

Had Kivy only identified poetry with intellectual content, it would have been much easier to refute him. One could have afforded to overlook him in that case. But for him poetry is valuable owing to its splendid content *as well as* its splendid form. To maintain that the form and the content are inseparable is, in his view, to move towards a mystical extreme. This charge of Kivy's is serious, and it surely cannot be evaded.

As I have shown, the vital difference between Bradley's and Kivy's use of the notions 'form' and 'content' is that Bradley displays an acute awareness that they are invented categories, whereas Kivy simply takes them to be given realities. The ubiquity of the pair in our talk about art and poetry forces Kivy to commit this error.

Collingwood and Heidegger place the pair within its original domain, namely, craft. On Collingwood's theory, one of the main characteristics of craft is the distinction between its raw material and finished product. The finished product differs from the raw material in that it has acquired a new form in the process of making. This form is dictated by the practical purpose the craft-product is intended to serve. The application of this dualism to poetry coerces us to view a poem as a thing made for a certain purpose. Thus, once a prey of the form-content way of thinking, an artwork flashes at us as an unemployed utensil whose purpose is yet to be determined or assigned.

This way of looking at poetry Heidegger characterizes as making poetry 'representational'. To consider poetry as representational is to forget that it is original, to forget that it is an origin of our awareness of the world. Therefore, Kivy's insistence that poetry conveys what has been found by other means such as methods used in natural or social sciences makes poetry stoop to the level of representational art. Now, according to Heidegger, poetry *becomes* representational when we regard it as such. That is, great poetry, original poetry cannot come into being without its readers's efforts. We can almost listen to Heidegger's lamentation about the passing away of the epoch of great art when people chose to stand within the realm opened up by the artwork. Indeed, Heidegger defines art as "the creative preserving of truth in the work".

Correspondingly, there is a marked social dimension to Collingwood's seemingly romantic theory of art as expression. To compose a poem is to express an emotion. However, the poet expresses not only his own emotion but also his readers's emotion. The poet only solves the problem of expression, takes "the

initiative in expressing what all feel, and all can express". An artwork is thus an indispensable, singular expression of what all have felt but have not expressed. Collingwood's theory, thus, leaves no space for the artist to build his ivory tower. Now, since the readers as well as the poet do not come to know what they feel and think unless or until they express it in the words of the poem, the expressed emotion and the expression are not distinct things. Emotion and its expression, emotion expressed by the poem and its words are indissolubly intertwined. A major implication of this is that expressing one's emotion is to explore not only the emotion but also the medium of expression. In Collingwood's theory, playing with medium does not remain a merely playful activity; it is a serious undertaking towards attaining to self-knowledge. For it is through an art we achieve clear understanding of what we had been sensing, feeling and thinking.

As in Heidegger's *OWA*, Collingwood's artwork is a unique, original, description-defying expression, that is, the origin of our understanding of the world we inhabit. We can see in Collingwood a warning not dissimilar to Heidegger's lamentation about the disappearance of the era of great art. To refuse to regard an artwork as expression, to reduce it to description and thereby deny to achieve self-understanding is, according to Collingwood, to corrupt our consciousness. As we saw in Chapter 4, when the artist engages in using art tradition rather than merely drawing upon it to explore his medium, he corrupts his consciousness. To put it in a nutshell, using clichéd art material to fabricate art-like craft-product is a kind of self-deception. Heidegger would say that it is making art representational.

Kivy's conception of poetry, as it reduces art to craft, poetry to verse-vehicle, seems to me to lead us to self-deception. By claiming that a poem is a mixture of content and form, it offers us justifications to evade our ethical duty to see poetry as art.

It is a modest discovery of this thesis that Collingwood and Heidegger can be read in tandem. This can help us to de-romanticize Collingwood and to de-mystify Heidegger.

In Chapter 3, which is devoted to Kant, we saw that Kivy is mistaken in his understanding of the concept of aesthetic ideas. Again he commits a simplistic mistake of regarding anything that is labelled 'rational' as intellectually finer and hence more worthwhile. But the Kantian technical concept of 'rational idea' is not

equivalent with its theme that is largely intellectual.

Our positive engagement with aesthetic ideas leads us to see that a finished poem is genius realized. Our detour through implications of Kant's remarks on honeybees, I hope, render the mysterious concept of 'genius' more accessible. Contrary to Kant's explicit declarations to the effect that it is a nature-given boon, what he really holds is that it is a potential to be realised. It is another modest discovery of this thesis that genius is Kant's medium-centered concept. Kant emphasizes that art is a matter of doing. One cannot create an artwork merely on the basis of knowledge about how to create it; one needs skill for that. Does this mean that art-creation is a technical activity like craft? But Kant also emphasizes that art is a 'free' activity, which has its own 'constraint'. I propose that Kant means by this the skilful artist's free exploration of the medium to embody aesthetic ideas of the creative imagination. Now, generation of aesthetic ideas does not take place independently of the skilful exploration of the medium. Hitting upon a way of embodying them is part and parcel of the creation of them. Kant calls this 'expression'. It is original and exemplary. Original and exemplary expression is genius realised.

Bradley maintains that the poem's poetic value lies in the experience that it gives us. This experience cannot be had independently of the poem. So the poem is irreplaceable. Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger provide us with three different accounts of *what* happens in the intrinsically valuable imaginative experience offered by the poem. However, these three accounts are centered around the concept of medium. Kant maintains that a poem shows us an unperceived aspect of nature. Collingwood holds that a poem expresses our emotions and renders it as comprehensible. Heidegger says that a poem, by setting up a world and setting forth the earth, discloses truth. Bradley is a literary advocate of these philosophical views. Given the ubiquity and apparent naturalness of form and content in the context of poetry, Bradley seeks to exhort us that a poem is an integrated, organic whole which can be seen as form or content from different perspectives and for different purposes. Kant, Collingwood and Heidegger pave the way for demonstrating the uniqueness of the value of a poem without falling back on the muddled language of form and content.

To conclude, the lesson to be drawn from this study of the medium-centered tradition

of philosophizing about poetry is that a poem is, in Collingwood's words, not a thing of a certain kind, but *a certain thing*.

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