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Morality As Art: Dewey, Metaphor, and Moral Imagination

A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination....¹

— Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*

Obtuseness is a moral failing; its opposite can be cultivated.²

— Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*

Moral philosophy is typically thought to be a non-empirical discipline that ascertains how we ought to deliberate and act. Meanwhile, the psychological and sociological facts about thinking and acting, though deemed pertinent to the inquiries of social science, have been taken to be of no direct relevance to value inquiry. That is, the question "How *ought* I to live?" has been severed from the question "How *do* human beings actually make sense of their moral experience?" Philosophers' inattention to this latter question has led them to ignore moral imagination.

Imagination has even been ignored by those who recognize that moral theories must be psychologically plausible. This is because it is misconstrued as a purely subjective capacity of little relevance to practical intelligence. This is partly due to the Romantic glorification of the numinous spontaneity of imagination. In turning from the straight and narrow path of an anemic reason toward the more passionate orbit of the life of imagination, the Romantics accepted the traditional opposition of reason and imagination. In this context, to claim that moral decision-making is a fundamentally imaginative endeavor would seem tantamount to replacing earnest moral reflection with whimsical flights of fancy. At best, our flickering imaginations are thought merely to form a preintentional (i.e., not directed beyond itself) "background" for rational

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thought, as John Searle proposes³; at worst, imagination is thought to be no more than a self-contained faculty for forming fanciful images.

Yet recent developments inspire hope. According to the *Philosopher's Index*, over fifty books and articles in philosophy touched on the subject between 1990 and 1998, compared to six in the 1960s. Although Hume's and Kant's theories of imagination have recently been the focus of careful study, John Dewey's fecund insights remain largely untapped. In Dewey scholarship, the import of imagination is often acknowledged but seldom examined, resulting in an attenuated appreciation of his theory of intelligence as indirect exploratory action (see QC, LW 4:178).⁴

In contrast to the tradition of marginalizing imagination, on Dewey's view our capacity for having a conceptually coherent world is imaginative through and through. Thinking is imaginative. "The imagination is as much a normal and integral part of human activity as is muscular movement" (DE, MW 9:245). Peirce observes likewise that imagination is as inherent in humans as dam-building for beavers or nest-building for birds: "the whole business of ratiocination, and all that makes us intellectual beings, is performed in imagination."⁵

Since Dewey does not use this (or seemingly any) term univocally, it will help to elaborate. The most important function of imagination is that it is our capacity, guided by past meanings, to take in the often bewildering scope of a situation and to transform the present in light of anticipated consequences and ideal values.

Dewey recognizes the "verbal difficulties owing to our frequent use of the word 'imagination' to denote fantasy and doubtful reality" (ACF, LW 9:30), and he cautions against the custom of identifying "the imaginative with the imaginary." The imaginative is "a warm and intimate taking in of the full scope of a situation" (DE, MW 9:244), whereas imaginary flights such as "mind-wandering and wayward fancy are nothing but the unexpressible imagination cut loose from concern with what is done" (DE, MW 9:245).

A Hindu poet once affirmed that the world is not composed of atoms; it is composed of stories. Dewey makes a related point: It is through imagination that we have a *world* rather than a meaningless hodge-podge of brute existences. "The engagement of the imagination is the only thing that makes any activity more than mechanical" (DE, MW 9:244). A mishmash that would otherwise call forth a mechanical reflex is resolved into a coherent, demarcatable whole that can be dealt with reflectively. Thus "imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field" (DE, MW 9:244). In the struggle to establish coherence and continuity in our experience, imagination enables us to take in particulars in all their baffling intricacy, to see things whole and in their relations. It "is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole. It is the large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world" (AE, LW 10:271).

As Thomas Alexander notes, "imagination constitutes an extension of the environment to which we respond."⁶ Most significantly, it enables us to see present circumstances in relation to past meanings and ideal possibilities. "We do not use the present to control the future. We use the foresight of the future to refine and expand present activity" (HNC, MW 14:215). Imagination expands our attention beyond what is immediately experienced so that the lessons of the past (embodied in our educated habits) and as-yet-unrealized potentialities "come home to us and have power to stir us" (ACF, LW 9:30). Imagination is "seeing, in terms of possibilities, ...old things in new relations" (ACF, LW 9:34). In *Art As Experience*, Dewey explains:

[A]ll conscious experience has of necessity some degree of imaginative quality. ...Imagination is the only gateway through which these meanings [derived from prior experiences] can find their way into a present interaction; or rather, as we have just seen, the conscious adjustment of the new and the old *is* imagination. (AE, LW 10:276)

Alexander defines imagination as synonymous with experimental intelligence. It is a capacity "to see the actual in light of the possible." He explains:

It is a phase of activity...in which possible activities are envisaged in relation to our own situations, thereby amplifying the meaning of the present and creating the context from which present values may be criticized, thus liberating the course of action itself. ...Imagination is temporally complex, an operation in the present, establishing continuity with the past, anticipating the future, so that a continuous process of activity may unfold in the most meaningful and value-rich way possible.⁷

This underscores that imagination is more than a niche for flights of fancy or fictional embellishments, as when we speak of an "over-active imagination" or "imagining things." It is integrated with everyday life. Since "only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual" (AE, LW 10:348), imagination is very much at the foreground of thinking.

Dewey's most protracted attempt to explore the function of imagination in moral conduct is his theory of deliberation as dramatic rehearsal.⁸ Imagination is kindled whenever conflicting factors in a situation provoke a search for ways to make circumstances manageable: "Any imagination is a sign that impulse is impeded and is groping for utterance" (HNC, MW 14:113). Dramatic rehearsal is the reflective phase of this groping process. In deliberation, we hunt

for ways to settle difficulties by scoping out alternatives and picturing ourselves taking part in them. In a complete deliberation, imagination continues until we are stimulated to act by a course that appears to harmonize the pressing interests, needs, and other factors of the disharmonized scene. This appraisal betrays no certificate of certitude, so it must be entertained subject to revision and correction by ongoing observation and questioning (1932 *Ethics*, LW 7:273). The more refined one's imagination (a function of one's stock of relevant habits), the richer one's fund of possibilities for mediating between conflicting values and the more reliable one's valuations (HNC, MW 14:123). Of course, dramatic rehearsal is not uppermost in some decisions. Faced with some difficulty I may seek a sign from God, consult astrology charts, throw dice, clutch crystals, et cetera. In decision-making at its best, however, we rehearse possible avenues for acting before trying them out, and we do not abdicate intelligence by cutting this process short.

Dewey's theory of imagination provides a framework for accommodating and expanding more recent work on the ways human beings make sense of tangled circumstances and compose meaningful lives. His theory can be further articulated by empirical studies of how we project ourselves into a situation's possibilities. Some work in cognitive science (in the field of cognitive semantics)⁹ is of particular interest. This work illuminates our capacity for imaginative rehearsal by studying the centrality of conventionalized metaphors in human understanding. In contrast with the prevalent view of imagination as internal and subjective, contemporary research on metaphorical understanding clarifies the decisive role of our cultural inheritance. This gives concreteness to Dewey's conception of shared habits:

The community...in which we, together with those not born, are enmeshed...is the matrix within which our ideal aspirations are born and bred. It is the source of the values that the moral imagination projects as directive criteria and as shaping purposes. (ACF, LW 9:56)

Mark Johnson argues in *Moral Imagination* that metaphor is "the locus of our imaginative exploration of possibilities for action."¹⁰ Courses for action, he contends, become options for us because the metaphor(s) we use to make sense of a situation marks out these alternatives. Conventional metaphors are part of our mostly unconscious horizon of inherited interpretive structures — our socialized habits — that enable us to communicate so that we may envision a future together. Metaphors emerge through our interactions: we act on the basis of our metaphorical understanding, the world speaks back to us, and our metaphors in turn persist or change. Far from rendering deliberation arbitrary or unstructured, metaphors tether deliberations, both highlighting and concealing alternatives for conduct.

The classical pragmatists understood that it *matters* what order we throw realities into. Since there is no single correct way to take things, we must ask about the effects of taking them this way rather than that. And we need to know how our latest empirical findings help us to answer this question.

According to cognitive semantics, then, deliberation is structured in part by metaphors shared in a culture. For example, we conventionally speak of arguments as things that can be won or lost. In an argument, we may "gain" or "lose ground," "attack" or "defend a position." Possible avenues for thought and action are opened up or closed off for us in accordance with our understanding of one kind of thing (arguments) in terms of another (warfare). Not only do we use this language; we actually *experience* arguments as battles. If this metaphor is operative in a predicament where there is a conflict of opinion, truculent pathways may seem natural and inevitable while possibilities for growth through communication may be obscured. Taken by itself, this metaphor does not open up communicative possibilities as would, say, understanding differences of opinion in terms of jazz musicians catching each other's cadence.

With some metaphors the stakes are even higher. For example, we perceive one set of possibilities for medical diagnosis, treatment, and research if we conceive the body as a machine with highly specific, detachable parts which can break down and require localized adjustment, repair, or replacement. But we picture different possibilities if we understand the body as a homeostatic organism which adapts in a more general and coordinated way to disturbances so as to preserve functional equilibrium in its overall system. Widespread acceptance of the homeostatic metaphor significantly affected the course of twentieth century medicine by opening up new avenues for inquiry. This leads Johnson to assert that: "The emergence of the new metaphorical structuring opened up new questions, made possible new discriminations, and suggested new connections. ...What is possible under one metaphorical understanding is not always possible under another."¹¹

In politics, possibilities differ depending on what metaphor for government is uppermost. Is it, on the one hand, a strict father disciplining its progeny through distribution of rewards and punishments based on individual desert? If so, then oppose welfare because it rewards rather than punishes people for not working. Or is government, on the other hand, a nurturant parent establishing material and social conditions for the self-actualization of its offspring? If so, then support social programs that give people a leg up, lest they never reach sanctioned ends.¹²

In a love relationship, one set of possible goals, expectations, and values will be highlighted for someone who understands a relationship as a market exchange (e.g., "I *invested* a lot in that relationship, but I got nothing *in return*"), and quite another set will guide the deliberations of one who conceives it as, say, an ecological system.¹³ If a relationship is an exploitable resource, in-

vestment, or commodity, the most sensible question is "What am I getting out of this?" This presupposes atomistic individuals who meet each other's needs not out of sympathetic regard but because rules of fair exchange demand this. Creative possibilities for communication and empathy are ignored, shriveling the job of intelligence to incessant calculation of what is owed to each other. If a relationship is conceived as an ecological system, however, interrelatedness and interdependence are emphasized. Individual parts of the system such as a companion's needs are treated with an inclusive eye to the way they affect values elsewhere in the system.

To claim that our dramatic rehearsals are guided by metaphorical projections is not to support an emotivist view of moral reasoning as arbitrary rather than structured. To the contrary, metaphors are social habits that emerge through our interactions as organized ways of comprehending and adapting to our environments. As George Herbert Mead reveals, social habits structure our public communication with others as well as our innermost private thoughts. To a significant extent, an organization of avenues for acting would be unavailable if our stock of metaphors did not mark them out. Instead of a knee-jerk reflex act with no coherence, an intelligent inquiry is organized along the lines highlighted by the metaphor (or, as is often the case, a tangled inquiry along the lines highlighted by conflicting metaphors). Possibilities not highlighted remain objectively available but are overshadowed by the brilliance of alternatives brought into focus.

To ignore metaphor is to leave one of morality's most valuable resources drifting capriciously. With a knowledge of encultured metaphors — the variety of these tools as well as their inner-workings — we are supplied an in-road to disclosing formerly concealed cognitive processes so that we might bring these processes under artful control. Aristotle wisely observed that our habits form our characters, so ignorance of these habits leaves character to haphazard development. If we do not own our habits, they will own us.

Much work remains to be done on the role of metaphorical thinking in morality. In addition to further investigating the key metaphors that guide our deliberations this way rather than that (metaphors we use to frame situations), we need to explore the metaphors that help to define such basic moral concepts as rights, justice, and duty.¹⁴

Furthermore, we must explore alternatives to our culture's dominant metaphors for morality, such as Moral Accounting, in which moral interactions are understood in terms of economic transactions. Although a wealth of metaphors might be explored (e.g., organic growth, balance, evolutionary adaptation, scientific experimentation), the remainder of this essay explores one that emphasizes the neglected imaginative dimension of moral life, Morality as Art. As Johnson observes, "the kind of imaginative judgment... appropriate to the making, experiencing, and evaluating of artworks can serve as a model of moral judgment, insofar as it is pervasively imaginative in many of the same re-

spects."¹⁵ Because of this, we can fruitfully understand morality metaphorically as art. We thereby highlight critical features of morality ignored by conceiving it as the work of a calculating accountant.

Art, the Aesthetic, and the Moral

I shall take for granted Dewey's view that inquiry into artistic-aesthetic experience is revelatory of the nature of any meaningful experience. "Art is the most direct and complete manifestation there is of experience as experience" (AE, LW 10:301). "Esthetic experience is experience in its integrity" (AE, LW 10:278). I here pursue the hypothesis that our moral experiences could be as richly developed as are those experiences consummated in the peaks of the fine arts.

Art is conceived here along Dewey's lines as imaginative social communication through culturally refined skills. Inasmuch as art is popularly identified with physical products that stand apart from experience, the title of this essay may be misleading, for I hope to illuminate the *activity* of morality (especially deliberation) rather than its discrete outcomes. In lieu of the draconian step of expunging the word art, I offer Dewey's proviso: "the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience" (AE, LW 10:9).

Art is "the culminating event of nature" (EN, LW 1:8). The *work* of art "is the impregnation of sensuous material with imaginative values" (AE, LW 10:297). It is *not* understood here as "the beauty parlor of civilization" (AE, LW 10:346) producing idyllic pleasantries, nor as unconstrained feeling. This must be borne in mind, since art construed along these latter lines would teach us little about effective moral deliberation. A metaphor for morality must be richer than this would afford. It must enable us to recognize the inherent ambiguities of moral judgment, the genuineness of moral conflict, and the pitfalls often encountered in even the best of decisions.

Approaching morality from the standpoint of aesthetic experience may strike some as, at best, incoherent. Worse, it may appear to be an opening for "anything goes" relativism. Such a judgment is conditioned by our Enlightenment heritage, which teaches that aesthetic and moral experiences are discontinuous. Kant can be held up as a model: Understanding (*Verstand*), according to Kant, is constrained by our universal conceptual structure and has nothing to do with feeling. In understanding, fixed concepts functioning in a purely formal realm enable classification of a presented image in the material realm. An aesthetic judgment, by contrast, has no such determinateness. It is a matter of subjective feeling (albeit "common" or universal feeling, for Kant). With the aesthetic, Kant writes in the *Critique of Judgment*, "the basis determining [the judgment] is the subject's feeling and not the concept of an object."¹⁶ Meanwhile, he argues in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, in a moral judgment "moral concepts have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in reason."¹⁷ Thus Kant subjectivizes the aesthetic and severs it from a transcendental

rationality that legislates moral laws that are "unconditioned and indeed objective and hence universally valid."¹⁸

The assumptions surrounding Kant's conception of a morality based on transcendental rationality were powerfully criticized by the classical pragmatists. According to Kant, human rationality is: (a) disembodied (ontologically separated from the body); (b) dispassionate (able to be cleaved from feelings and bodily inclinations); (c) a-cultural (separable from any cultural conditioning); (d) atemporal and ahistorical (transcending time and not conditioned by the history of what went before); and (e) radically individual (at its best when detached from a community of co-investigators). In contrast, on Dewey's view moral thinking is embodied, aesthetic, encultured, temporal, historical, and communal.

Despite their growing disrepute, Enlightenment assumptions about reason still set the context for contemporary moral inquiries. Consequently, any attempt to de-compartmentalize the supposedly autonomous spheres of the moral and aesthetic, treating them as "dominantly different" (AE, LW 10:44) features of a unified field of value, raises a suspicious eyebrow because it seems to radically subjectivize morality.¹⁹ Let me remove this suspicion before investigating the metaphor Morality as Art.

One of Dewey's greatest contributions to value inquiry was to restore continuity between the peaks of artistic-aesthetic experience and the valleys of everyday life. Contrary to the prevailing view, artistic making and enjoyment are not ethereal things too cut off from ordinary life to reward study by a moral philosopher. In fact, I propose that if we wish to actualize our creative potential for moral doings and undergoings we *must* attend to its analogue in artistic productions and appreciations. Moral deliberation has always been ineliminatively imaginative; the philosophical task ahead is to clarify this insight, develop it, and make it explicit. In art we find imagination in its most complete expression — even more so than in science, the handmaiden of art (EN, LW 1:269) — so we turn there to learn how best to spread the wings of moral imagination. Thus human conduct, infused with an imagination hitherto beleaguered in its development, may become artful.

Far from being a lofty, elite, or contrived ideal, rendering morality artful requires cultivation of what already goes on incessantly. What goes on, as Vincent Colapietro observes, is "the dynamic interpenetration of aesthetic discernment and artistic execution."²⁰ To get a clearer idea of what this means it is necessary to elaborate on Dewey's terminology. He writes: "'artistic' refers primarily to the act of production and 'esthetic' to that of perception and enjoyment" (AE, LW 10:53). A practical upshot of the aesthetic for moral conduct is that with acts that destroy, divide, or dull, there is usually production (the potentially artistic) with a minimum of perception (the aesthetic). More inclusive and enduring ends escape notice, often eclipsed by obsessive focus on the task at hand (see HNC, MW 14:138). We rightly call such an experience

(im)moral rather than (an)aesthetic in order to emphasize its practical rather than immediately felt effects, but we must not lose sight of the fact that aesthetically impoverished experience, like all events, has consequences. Although perceptiveness does not guarantee a good outcome, the stilted perception of anaesthetic experience is a sure route to miserable conduct because it abandons moral intelligence to the edicts of chance and momentary impulses.

The aesthetic, then, is far more than a subjective delight that characterizes such activities as writing a poem. It is a felt opening of awareness of a situation's *objective* potentialities, and it emerges from ordinary life rather than being the exclusive domain of formalized art. For example, in *Art As Experience* Dewey shows how an ordinary job interview, insofar as it is sufficiently demarcated from other experiences to be called *an* experience, is aesthetically guided (and fundamentally imaginative):

The employer sees by means of his own emotional reactions the character of the one applying. He projects him imaginatively into the work to be done and judges his fitness by the way in which the elements of the scene assemble and either clash or fit together. The presence and behavior of the applicant either harmonize with his own attitudes and desires or they conflict and jar. Such factors as these, inherently esthetic in quality, are the forces that carry the varied elements of the interview to a decisive issue. They enter into the settlement of every situation, whatever its dominant nature, in which there are uncertainty and suspense. (AE, LW 10:50)

Although the employer's decision-making is not dominantly an aesthetic experience, his deliberations nonetheless have an inescapable and indispensable aesthetic character. The same holds for moral experiences. They are more emphatically practical than emotional, so we do not label them aesthetic experiences. But moral intelligence *is* irreducibly aesthetic.

This emphasis on artistic-aesthetic experience helps to make moral theory more relevant to bewildering social complexities. In traditional moral theory, particulars must be scrutinized only insofar as there are anomalies that make subordination to a governing principle troublesome. Faced with such irregularities, one seldom hears a moral theorist declaim on the critical importance of subtle perceptiveness, sensitivity, and empathy. She or he typically pontificates on how we must extend our list of precepts and develop our skills at applying them. This leaves moral imagination coarse and monochromatic, whereas attention to artistic-aesthetic experience fortifies situational intelligence.

This is in keeping with Dewey's ideal of democracy. Since our aspirations are not isolated from those of others, our wisest moral "productions" must be socially responsive. We require a democratized imagination that aesthetically per-

ceives and artistically responds to the entire system of exigencies in a troubled situation. When interests conflict, we must skillfully elicit differences and give them a hearing instead of sacrificing them on the altar of preconceived plans or biases. From this expansive field of contact an integrative value may emerge to reconstruct and harmonize conflicting values so that we can mutually grow. Since real incompatibles emerge, success is not certain. But theoretical strategies designed to purify moral reasoning of attention to practical conflicts promote stupidity by ignoring the virtues of vigilant perceptiveness and responsiveness. Attention to art and the aesthetic illuminates a path beyond such impotent, mono-focused moral schemas.

Of course, a democratic way of life requires more than cloistered speculations about what others *might* think, need, or feel. Democratic imagination at its best is also consultative. As James Gouinlock observes, the best way "to adjust and reconcile human conflicts and bring welcome ends into existence" is to consult with others rather than approaching deliberations solipsistically.²¹ We must rely on pooled, social intelligence, encouraging colloquy over soliloquy. This stands in stark contrast with Kant's disparaging of interpersonal moral discourse: "Inexperienced in the course of the world and incapable of being prepared for all its contingencies, I only ask *myself* whether I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law."²²

Moral intelligence at its best must, then, be perceptive, creative, skillful, and responsive. Such traits are exemplified by artistic activity, so we can conclude that democratized imagination is personified by a sort of moral artistry. (This generalization about artistic activity — which arts? we rightly wonder — is clarified in the next section.) These are among the reasons we can and must decompartmentalize the moral and aesthetic. Far from collapsing into extreme subjectivism, this opens the door to a more responsible ethic.

Morality As Art

Our dominant conventional metaphor for morality is Moral Accounting. According to Johnson's analysis of this metaphor:

1. Moral deeds are objects in transactions ("In *return* for our kindness, she *gave* us nothing but trouble")
2. Well-being is wealth ("I've had a *rich* life")
3. The moral account is a record of transactions ("His despicable lying *counts against* him in my book")
4. Moral balance is a balance of transactions ("His noble deeds far *outweigh* his sins")
5. Doing moral deeds is accumulating credit ("I've got to *give you credit* for your sacrifices")
6. Benefiting from moral deeds is accumulating debt ("He is *indebted* to her for her help")
7. Doing immoral deeds is accumulating debt ("He *owes a debt* to society

for his crimes")²³

The Moral Accounting metaphor suppresses crucial features of morality. It ignores the dramatic and qualitative aspects of moral thinking and focuses exclusively on isolated actions of atomistic individuals seeking fixed ends. Although this metaphor may be worth preserving, we need to explore metaphors that highlight features of morality concealed by understanding moral interactions as business transactions.

Unlike the Moral Accounting metaphor, Morality as Art is not a dominant metaphor in this culture. But it could be. It could, to appropriate the words of Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, "provide an organization of important [moral] experiences that our conventional conceptual system does not make available."²⁴ Understanding moral thinking as artistry is supported by the nature of our best everyday decisions. The metaphor highlights the role of an expansive imagination that enables sensitivity to the social bearings and consequences of possible avenues for action.

This point becomes clearer when we focus on particular arts, so we turn there before investigating the generalized metaphor. In what follows, note that metaphors for morality which derive their structures from the particular arts vary markedly in their abilities to disclose salient features of the moral life. I try here simply to scratch the surface of work needed in this important but neglected area of inquiry.

Sculptors begin with a medium — stone, wood, clay, plaster, bronze. The medium suggests the formal possibilities for the artwork just as our relatedness to others constrains possibilities for moral productions. Yet, the moral sculptor metaphor has shortcomings. Sculpting aptly emphasizes the power of moral agents to give coherent form to their environments, while tending to downplay the tragic extent of our frailty in the face of impersonal environmental forces. A more significant limitation is that clay, bronze, or wood, while recalcitrant, are wanting as a source domain for our metaphorical understanding of persons with whom we interact. People's purposes are less malleable than sculptors' clay. Others' aims, urges, and needs might be better conceived, for example, as threads to be woven with other threads in a unified tapestry.

Or consider moral deliberation as dramatic writing. In a manner analogous to the creative imagination of a fiction writer or playwright (if understood in an Aristotelian vein), we run through a dramatic moral scene in our imaginations and thereby discover mediating courses that may temper our original impulses. Just as the good dramatist rigorously imagines her characters thinking, feeling, and acting in ways that will be continuous with their past behaviors, so we act in ways continuous with the established habits that form our characters. To take a low-brow example, Bill Watterson discusses his comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*: "When I come up with a topic, I look at it through Calvin's eyes. Calvin's personality dictates a range of possible reactions to any subject, so I just tag along and see what he does."²⁵ Furthermore, like good dramatists, good

moral thinkers compose successive drafts before signing off on the product.²⁶ A refined moral imagination enables the moral dramatist to configure an action with a rich sense for a maturing situation's possibilities.

We may be dramatists, but, as Shakespeare writes, we are also stage players: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts...."²⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre uses the stage metaphor to underscore that a person is not an isolated entity. He writes:

We are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please. ...We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others.²⁸

Individuals are co-authored dramas which interlock with other dramas. MacIntyre states this more generally: "The narrative of any life is part of an interlocking set of narratives."²⁹ Of course, the moral drama is not scripted in advance by a playwright; like an improvisational actor we must, Nussbaum exhorts, be "prepared to see and respond to any new feature that the scene brings forward" rather than viewing a situation "simply as the scene for the application of antecedent rules."³⁰ Nussbaum forestalls criticism of improvisational morality as unprincipled or arbitrary:

The actress who improvises well is *not* free to do anything at all. She must at every moment — far more than one who goes by an external script — be responsively alive and committed to the other actors, to the evolving narrative, to the laws and constraints of the genre and its history.³¹

If we are to discover how others' life-dramas can develop coordinately with our own, we must attend to the constraints imposed and possibilities made available by other dramas enacted on stage with us. We must also be able imaginatively to take on the "role" of others if we are to excel at "taking what the other actor gives and going with it."³²

In what is arguably one of the best metaphors for morality, the improvisation of a jazz combo is a source for conceiving the sympathetic and impromptu character of our moral compositions. Since we can never be fully prepared for novelties, we must be ready to improvise. At our moral best, we skillfully wing it in response to each other with the aim of harmonizing interests. But coordinated impromptu thinking is difficult. Jazz pianist Bill Evans discusses the chal-

enge of group improvisation on new material, observing of his collaboration with Miles Davis: "Aside from the weighty technical problem of collective coherent thinking, there is the very human, even social need for sympathy from all members to bend for the common result."³³ The guiding principle is not an individualist "live and let live" but a cooperative "live and help live."³⁴ In Meadian fashion, a jazz musician takes up the role of others by catching a cadence from the group's signals while anticipating the group's response to her or his own signals.³⁵ This is creative intelligence at its best. She or he plays *into* the past tone to discover the possibilities for future tones in just the way moral imagination enables us to see "in terms of possibilities, ...old things in new relations" (ACF, LW 9:34). Just as improvising musicians cannot simply impose their individual rhythms or tones on the rest of the group, moral agents must respond empathetically to each other instead of imposing insular designs, and they must rigorously imagine how others will respond to their actions. Jazz musician and poet Michael Harper explains: "It's a matter of waiting for an opening rather than just rushing into what's happening."³⁶

In jazz as in morality, tradition structures group improvisation and is itself re-made *through* innovation. This partnership between innovation and tradition is illuminated by Nussbaum's comparison of a symphony player with a jazz musician. For the symphony player,

all commitments and continuities are external; they come from the score and from the conductor. The player reads them off like anyone else. The jazz player, actively forging continuity, must choose in full awareness of and responsibility to the historical traditions of the form, and must actively honor at every moment his commitments to his fellow musicians, whom he had better know as well as possible as unique individuals. He should be more responsible than the score reader, and not less, to the unfolding continuities and structures of the work.³⁷

I now turn from particular arts to analysis of the more generic metaphor of Morality as Art. A healthy skepticism on the part of the reader will doubtless attend any generalizations about art. Bear in mind that the generalizations are intended to be functional and operational, so the inevitable discovery of exceptions is "the antecedently conditioning means to further inquiries" (LTI, LW 12:197) rather than final grounds for abandonment.

In contrast with the popular view, metaphors are here understood to be far more than rhetorical flourishes, replaceable ornaments, or arresting comparisons. They are, in Lakoff and Johnson's terminology, "cross-domain conceptual mappings" that are indispensable for human understanding and expertise.³⁸ I am not simply *comparing* literal similarities between art and morality.

This would mistakenly presume that we already know perfectly well what morality is independent of our metaphorical understanding of it. If that is the case, the current essay is academic in the pejorative sense. To the contrary, since this metaphor is not part of our cultural inheritance, neither is the concomitant way of thinking about morality.³⁹

The correspondences or parallels between the concepts of art and morality are mappings between a "source" and a "target" domain. The logic of the source domain is projected onto the target, so aspects of our knowledge about artistic deliberation (the source) map onto *and structure* aspects of our understanding of moral deliberation (the target). I employ the following distinctions to help categorize the parallels: good artists are characterized, in part, by perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, and skill.⁴⁰ The parallels here treated, although far from comprehensive, appear to be among the most salient. Of course, as Johnson admits, "there are many aspects of prototypical artistic activity that are not part of moral reasoning, and vice versa."⁴¹ For brevity's sake, I single out some parallels in each of five categories for special emphasis. This analysis is intended to be evocative rather than definitive.

Perceptiveness

Most situations are too unique to be subordinated to antecedently fixed principles. What is needed, as Dewey realized, is to reject the quest for "a single, fixed and final good" and "transfer the weight and burden of morality to intelligence" (RP, MW 12:172-73). When moral philosophy is refocused on "specific situations that require amelioration" (RP, MW 12:175), tedious polemics about formulas, universal prescriptions, sets of *prima facie* duties, or socially contractual rules give way to urgent entreaties for habits of engaged intelligence and finely textured perception. In "Three Independent Factors in Morals" Dewey notes that this leads people "to attend more fully to the concrete elements entering into the situations in which they have to act" (LW 5:288).⁴²

Martha Nussbaum's re-introduction of Aristotelian practical wisdom has contributed a great deal to this refocusing on the concrete and particular. Although she lacks what Alexander calls Dewey's "robust theory of experimental moral conduct, conflict resolution, and the pluralistic, integrative ideals of the democratic life," she exemplifies the pragmatic spirit by retrieving moral theory from formalistic abstractions and returning it to worldly interactions. She writes in *The Fragility of Goodness*:

Practical wisdom, then, uses rules only as summaries and guides; it must itself be flexible, ready for surprise, prepared to see, resourceful at improvisation. This being so, Aristotle stresses that the crucial prerequisite for practical wisdom is a long experience of life that yields an ability to understand and grasp the salient features, the practical meaning, of the con-

crete particulars. ... Practical insight is... the ability to recognize, acknowledge, respond to, pick out certain salient features of a complex situation.⁴⁴

In a poignant passage in *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum sums up this attitude when she observes that moral knowledge entails "seeing a complex, concrete reality in a highly lucid and richly responsive way; it is taking in what is there, with imagination and feeling."⁴⁵ The great moral vice is not failure to universalize maxims or calculate pleasurable consequences; it is obtuseness. Morality requires refined sensitivity and immersion in events. It is a matter of artistry. "A responsible action... is a highly context-specific and nuanced and responsive thing whose rightness could not be captured in a description that fell short of the artistic."⁴⁶

No decision tree can substitute for the process of feeling one's way skillfully through a tangled web of relationships with a discerning imagination for possible ways in which this web may be artfully spun. Artists exemplify this receptiveness fused with orchestrating power. They disclose and create relations that otherwise go unnoticed.

The moral artist, like the prototypical artist, must have an amplified receptivity to the potential of the present. We fail morally primarily because our range of creative prospects becomes contracted. So, the moral thinker's dramatic rehearsal of possibilities for constructive action can be understood in terms of the imaginative perception and probing of artistic production. Furthermore, like our appreciation or evaluation of an artwork, moral attention must be fine-tuned and nuanced. In an additional parallel, what is often called moral intuition (a habituated felt sense of the 'rightness' of a projected action) corresponds to an artist's felt sense of the 'rightness' of a work.

Unfortunately, in much of our experience imagination is contracted. This poses a problem for morality when it abridges reflection. Abbreviated deliberations impair fine-tuned resolution of moral problems and render actions impulsive. Consequently, a rich imagination is as much a moral requirement as it is an artistic requirement.

The contraction of imagination is attributable in great measure to a culture-wide inversion of the fact that morality, like art, requires process-orientation rather than product-orientation (a failure of Benthamite utilitarianism).⁴⁷ The two principal reasons this inversion is problematic are brought together in Dewey's discussion of the present and future in *Human Nature and Conduct*. First, subordinating the present process to the future product indefinitely postpones the goods for which we currently struggle. As G. E. Moore noted, for the utilitarian the "here and now never has any value itself."⁴⁸ Second, such subordination limits our capacity to forecast possible courses for attaining good in the future. Dewey implores:

What sense is there in increased control except to increase the intrinsic significance of living? The future that is foreseen is a future that is sometime to be a present. Is the value of *that* present also to be postponed to a future date, and so on indefinitely? Or, if the good we are struggling to attain in the future is one to be actually realized when that future becomes present, why should not the good of *this* present be equally precious? And is there, again, any intelligent way of modifying the future except to attend to the full possibilities of the present? Scamping the present in behalf of the future leads only to rendering the future less manageable. It increases the probability of molestation by future events. (HNC, MW 14:184)

This is implicitly a critique of calculation theories of deliberation, but it is also a damning cultural critique. Working conditions (whether blue or white collar) divorce workers from a direct interest in the ends of production, so daily activities are anaesthetic. Dewey insists, by contrast, on conditions in which acts of production are aesthetically enhanced for all individuals so that the "realization of their capacities may be the law of their life" (LSA, LW 11:41). A stirring passage from *Experience and Nature* clarifies this:

The existence of activities that have no immediate enjoyed intrinsic meaning is undeniable. They include much of our labors in home, factory, laboratory, and study. By no stretch of language can they be termed either artistic or esthetic. ... So we optimistically call them 'useful' and let it go at that.... If we were to ask useful for what? we should be obliged to examine their actual consequences, and when we once honestly and fully faced these consequences we should probably find ground for calling such activities detrimental rather than useful. (EN, LW 1:271-2)

Imagination is the only means we have for transforming old habits in order to meet novel demands, and it is through refinement of imagination that we achieve the "nuance and fine detail of tone" required for perceptive moral communication.⁴⁹ Due to this central role of imagination, if acts are to be more than "flat and toneless and lifeless"⁵⁰ it is necessary to reconstruct social arrangements which reinforce pursuing ends with the imaginative amplitude of moths thronging to a flame. Attention to the insistent present makes situations more manageable (so long as we are not hypnotized by the swirling confusion around us). When mindfulness to the particulars of the present is sacrificed, the quality of the product suffers.

Products emerge as present conditions are transformed in light of latent pos-

sibilities. A Zen garden, for example, takes on its form through the alternating appreciations and productions of gardening. Lest the garden be poor and artless, exactly what form the product will take is unknown prior to raking the sand and placing the stones. The moral analogue is that thinking of ends as predetermined impoverishes our imaginative survey of alternative futures. This leads to insensitive and imperceptive moral actions.

In contrast to the moral accountant, the moral artist does not subordinate the present to a remote outcome. Dewey defines art with respect to "the relation of means and consequence, process and product, the instrumental and consummatory. Any activity that is simultaneously both...is art" (EN, LW 1:271). In just the way that means and consequences are fused in the imaginative art of the aforementioned gardener, they are fused in the art of morality. Cultivating moral artistry meets the demand for a rich imagination, without which life is barren of constructive prospects.

This plea for rich imaginations exhorts moral theorists to focus on the aesthetic. Sequestering the aesthetic from everyday deliberations, far from celebrating imagination, is a recipe for moral sterility, fragmentation, and alienation. Imagination cannot be democratic in such straits, so it eventually turns (as it historically has turned) either to radically individual pursuits or to the promotion of authoritarian control.

Creativity

Artists make things that transform our perceptions. The best artists break out of old ruts in order to experiment with novel ways in which to see, hear, feel, and think rather than merely giftwrapping sanctioned values.⁵¹ Likewise, moral action at its best is an ongoing experiment with novel possibilities. We venture beyond established moral canons. In spite of the sad fact that our educational, religious, and political institutions have tended to be deaf to the need for flexible mores, the flexible logic of human imagination occasionally comes up with "imaginative new forms of personal and institutional relationships."⁵² Artistic creativity thus finds its analogue in moral creativity.

Contrary to the conventional view of artistic creativity as arbitrary and wholly spontaneous, formal possibilities of art are not unconstrained, radically free impositions by an artist on chaos. Artistic forms are achieved in a cultural and historical context, and they are constrained by a medium that has definite properties. The socio-cultural and historical context of artistic production is a source for understanding the context of moral judgments. As MacIntyre shows in *After Virtue*, both artistic and moral practices are embedded in larger narrative histories of social roles and institutions.⁵³

In a related parallel, if we conceive our interactions with the world in terms of an artist's interactions with her medium, then the conflicting purposes of others and ourselves that press for attention can be understood as the recalcitrance of the medium. Social experience resists our throwing it into just any

order. In place of the authority of a mythical Right and Wrong, the moral artist relies on the authority of exigencies and pressures in situations. And moral imagination is our best means for perceiving these and investigating effectual prospects for action.

Expressiveness

The disturbances that attend experience often incite knee-jerk reactions or spewings forth of feelings, "as meaningless as a gust of wind on a mudpuddle" (HNC, MW 14:65). But if our enthusiasms are controlled, something more than sound and fury may result. Disturbances may kindle us to exert ourselves, as William James says, toward "newly taken and freshly understood" ends.⁵⁴ The former is a case of mere venting; the latter is an act of expression. Dewey explains what is involved in this distinction:

A gush of tears may bring relief, a spasm of destruction may give outlet to inward rage. But when there is no administration of objective conditions, no shaping of materials in the interest of embodying the excitement, there is no expression. What is sometimes called an act of self-expression might better be termed one of self-exposure; it discloses character — or lack of character — to others. In itself, it is only a spewing forth. (AE, LW 10:68)

Both artists and moral thinkers struggle to discover forms that will effect a controlled transformation from old ways of thinking and feeling to new ways. This struggle yields expressive forms — as opposed to blind, wasteful spasms — that redefine our world. Artistic investigation is an expressive activity through which the artist struggles to configure emotions, desires, images, and the like. Analogously, moral agents strive to act in ways that coherently express their overall moral characters rather than blindly giving way to a fleeting albeit terrifyingly powerful impulse. Morality, as Johnson insists, is "one of our primary forms of self-expression and self-definition. It is the main arena in which we project ourselves and pursue our sense of what we hope to become."⁵⁵

Skill

To be moral requires skills as delicately refined as the skills of an artist. These skills — habits, for Dewey — are the tools of artistic and moral imagination. They constitute a horizon of possibilities for action beyond which we cannot see, and they enable our intuitive sense of the probable outcomes of actions. So, effective moral habits can be understood as masterful artistic technical skills.

Response of the Other

An artist's anticipation of an audience (along with the actual response of that audience) enables a dialectical interaction that gives point and focus to art. Likewise, a moral agent's forecast of others' responses to a proposed act informs her deliberations, while their actual responses inform her future deliberations. Finally, the artworld's appraisal or criticism of the artwork is analogous to society's appraisal of a moral act.

Limitations of the Metaphor

I touch on some possible limitations of this metaphor to suggest a course for future analyses and criticisms. First, contemporary artists often revel in values that seem exactly opposite of values important to the moral life. They value expressive acts of discord and imbalance rather than harmony and equilibrium; creative deconstructions instead of prototypically beautiful productions; perceptible subversion as opposed to preservation and stability; skillful presentations of discontinuity rather than continuity. But note that the generic characterizations of artistry remain unchanged. The product may be fractured or subversive, but it is a skillful presentation of disharmony, or a perceptible shattering of the status quo. Insofar as it is the product of an act of expression instead of the end-result of an evincing of raw feeling, its production involves skill, creativity, and perceptiveness. These are traits that characterize moral deliberation at its best.

Second, artists typically have finished products, but the moral artist's work is always in process. In response to this, consider that an artist's life is not a series of finished projects, but is instead an ongoing exploration with consummations of projects along the way. Just so, morality is an ongoing process characterized by consummated experiences, each having their beginnings, middles, and closures.

Third, artistic actions might be blotted out or painted over. An aesthetic decision may irreversibly change the character of the work or world, but an overt mistake is not generally fatal in art as it may be in morality. Nonetheless, both art and morality are ongoing processes of growth often wrought with counterproductive mistakes. Both involve experimental explorations (sometimes very playful) of possible paths for acting. Just as an artist grows through trials and errors, we grow through moral mistakes.

Fourth, fine art is prototypically completed in a studio. But in morality there is often an immediate demand to produce in the tempestuous present without studio-like reflection. As Dewey observes in a 1917 letter: "There are situations in which action is required to clear the air; in which continued deliberation and discussion simply weave a spell."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, regardless of how pressing matters are, our better actions are characterized by perception, creativity, and skill — traits that characterize good artists as much as their deficiency characterizes bad ones. It is the generic logic of artistic inquiry, not the manifold de-

tails, that is revelatory of the potencies of moral inquiry. That an artist interacts perceptively with a medium is critical; that this takes place in a studio, maybe even through the hands of a wild-eyed eccentric, is of marginal interest. What is crucial is to observe the generic traits of artistic production, the way a good artist exemplifies the aesthetic dimension of *all* human experience.

All metaphors hide and highlight, so conceiving moral thinkers as artists may hide features of moral experience while over-emphasizing relatively unimportant ones. But its main limitation is vagueness. Perhaps the best way to surmount this is to follow the course earlier suggested, focusing on a more basic level of categorization. Instead of limiting ourselves to broad discussion of artists as a source for rethinking morality — for what is art, and what is an artist? — we can focus on writers, actors, jazz musicians, sculptors, weavers, dancers, and the like.

Conclusion

In addition to investigating metaphors that guide our deliberations and those that structure our shared moral concepts, we must also explore alternative metaphors for morality itself. Morality as Art emphasizes the aesthetic dimension of morality that is ignored by the Moral Accounting metaphor. Although our habits of moral accounting cannot be magically willed away, imaginative dimensions of moral deliberation hitherto deemphasized can be elucidated by examining features of artistic production, experience, and evaluation. Conceiving morality as art highlights the fact that we imagine most effectively when we live in an aesthetically funded present.

It is widely recognized that many today think of value commitments as simply my opinion (or the opinion of the most determined propagandist) against yours. Responding to this, moral philosophers share a sense of urgency about the need to fortify moral intelligence, but their carefully argued diagnoses and prescriptions almost invariably ignore imagination. They attribute moral mud-dies to an inability to agree on and correctly apply ultimate moral criteria, or to flawed *a priori* reasoning or defective moral accounting. Restriction to such outlooks is a sure route to obuseness. Remediable moral failure is due much more to mal-developed imagination and botched moral artistry. Everyday moral decisions can be as richly developed as artistic productions, but we must first focus beyond rules to cultivation of nuanced perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, and skill.⁵⁷

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NOTES

1. In Norton Anthology, fifth ed., Vol. 2, 785. Dewey quotes a portion of this at the close of *Art As Experience* (LW 10:351).
2. Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 156.
3. John Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge University Press, 1983). See ch. 5, "The Background." For a critique of Searle's account of imagination, see Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 178-191.
4. The most comprehensive and illuminating recent studies of Dewey's theory of intelligence are Michael Eldridge's *Transforming Experience* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1998) and Ray Boisvert's *John Dewey: Rethinking Our Time* (SUNY Press, 1998).
5. CP 6.286. Quoted in Vincent Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self* (SUNY Press, 1989), 114.
6. Thomas Alexander, "John Dewey and the Moral Imagination: Beyond Putnam and Rorty toward a Postmodern Ethics" in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 29, no. 3 (1993), 387.
7. Alexander, "John Dewey and the Moral Imagination," 384-386. Cf. Thomas Alexander, "The Art of Life: Dewey's Aesthetics," in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*, Larry Hickman, ed. (Indiana University Press, 1998), 1-22.
8. In MW 5:293; LW 7:275; MW 14:132-3; LW 8:200. Cf. Steven Fesmire, "Dramatic Rehearsal and The Moral Artist: A Deweyan Theory of Moral Understanding" in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 31, no. 3 (1995), 568-597.
9. Cognitive semantics is founded on the methodological assumption that any theory of meaning, concepts, reasoning, or language must be congruous with our most reliable empirical inquiries into the nature of human cognition. See the first issue of the *Cognitive Linguistics* journal (Vol. 1, No. 1, 1990).
10. Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 35.
11. Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, 132-36. For Johnson's analysis of the work of Hans Selye on stress reactions in the context of Walter B. Cannon's homeopathic theory, see 127-137.
12. For a comprehensive look at conservative vs. liberal metaphors in American politics, see George Lakoff's *Moral Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).
13. Johnson analyzes Love as a Market Transaction versus Love as an Organic Unity in *Moral Imagination*, 53-61.
14. See Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh* (Basic Books, 1998) for the most recent account of work in this area.
15. Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 214-15.
16. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Trans. W. Pluhar (1790; Hackett, 1987), S. 17, Ak. 231.
17. Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. James W. Ellington, 3rd edition (Hackett, 1993), 22, Ak. 411. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant nonetheless probes theoretical links (even analogical mappings) between aesthetic and moral judgments. See Casey Haskins, "Kant and the Autonomy of Art," *The Jour-*

with counterexamples like the following: With "Sally is a block of ice," there are no literal similarities (relevant to the operation of the metaphor) between Sally and blocks of ice. Her "coldness," for instance, is a metaphorical rather than a literal feature. Likewise with "Richard is a gorilla." Richard may be ill-tempered and prone to violent outbursts, but this is part of our (unwarranted, as Jane Goodall has shown) folk image of a gorilla rather than a literal feature. Searle, *Expression and Meaning* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), 76-116.

40. My use of these categories is indebted to Johnson's discussion of the Morality as Art metaphor in *Moral Imagination*, 210-15.

41. *Ibid.*, 210.

42. For a helpful overview of Dewey's ethics that takes stock of recent scholarship, see Gregory F. Pappas, "Dewey's Ethics: Morality as Experience," in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*, Larry Hickman, ed., 100-123.

43. Alexander, "John Dewey and the Moral Imagination," 395.

44. Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 305.

45. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 152. Cf. Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 210-11. Perception involves more than taking intellectual note of a situation's features; it is acknowledgment fused with appropriate feeling. As Nussbaum explains Aristotle's theory of deliberation: "To have correct perception of the death of a loved one is not simply to take note of this fact with intellect or judgment. If someone noted the fact but was devoid of passionate response, we would be inclined to say that he did not really see, take in, recognize, what had happened; that he did not acknowledge the situation for what it was." Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 309.

46. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 154. Havelock Ellis explored a similar thesis in his 1923 book, *The Dance of Life*: "The academic philosophers of ethics, had they possessed virility enough to enter the field of real life, would have realised ... that the slavery to rigid formulas which they preached was the death of all high moral responsibility. Life must always be a great adventure, with risks on every hand; a clear-sighted eye, a many-sided sympathy, a fine daring, an endless patience, are for ever necessary to all good living. With such qualities alone may the artist in life reach success; without them even the most devoted slave to formulas can only meet disaster." Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, "The Art of Morals", (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923), 270.

47. Dewey criticizes the Benthamite metaphor which understands "deliberation upon what purposes to form" in terms of "business calculation of profit and loss" (HNC, MW 14:146-49). Happiness is logically "a maximum net gain of pleasures." The metaphor lends itself only to calculating future gain or loss of a fixed end, namely pleasure.

48. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (1903; Cambridge University Press, 1929), 106.

49. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 154.

50. *Ibid.*, 154.

51. Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 212.

52. *Ibid.*, 213.

53. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188.

54. James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I (New York: Dover), 255.

55. Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 211.

nal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Winter 1989.

18. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 26, Ak. 416.

19. On this "aestheticist turn" in value inquiry, see Casey Haskins, "Dewey's Art As Experience: The Tension Between Aesthetics and Aestheticism," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 28, No. 4 (1992).

20. Vincent Colapietro, "Art and Philosophy: A Fareful Entanglement," ch. 3 of *Reason, Subjectivity, and Agency: Postmodern Themes and Pragmatic Challenges* (SUNY Press, forthcoming). Quoted from working draft. As Joseph Kupfer explains, "we judge whether our imaginative projection of alternative futures proceeds in an aesthetically complete way." Kupfer, *Experience As Art* (SUNY Press, 1983), 142.

21. James Gouinlock, *Rediscovering the Moral Life* (Prometheus Books, 1993), 130. My critical review of this book appeared in *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 32 (1998). Gouinlock's emphasis on consultation offers a needed refinement to Dewey's claim in *Human Nature and Conduct* that moral thinking "is carried on by tentative rehearsals in thought which do not affect physical facts outside the body" (MW 14:133).

22. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 15, Ak. 403. Emphasis is Gouinlock's, *Rediscovering the Moral Life*, 134.

23. *Ibid.*, 45-6.

24. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), 141.

25. Bill Watterson, *The Calvin and Hobbes Tenth Anniversary Book* (Andrews and McMeel, 1995), 20.

26. On the creative imagination of the fiction writer, see John Gardner, "Moral Fiction," in *The Pushcart Prize, III: Best of the Small Presses*, Bill Henderson, ed. (Avon, 1978).

27. Shakespeare, "As You Like It," Act II, Scene VII.

28. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 213.

29. *Ibid.*, 218.

30. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 157.

31. *Ibid.*, 155.

32. *Ibid.*, 157.

33. Bill Evans, liner notes from original 1959 release of Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* (Columbia Records).

34. A distinction made by Horace Kallen in a discussion of secularism and tolerance, in *Secularism is the Will of God* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1954), 13.

35. See G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1934), chs. 18-20.

36. In Bill Moyers, *The Language of Life* (Doubleday, 1995), 173.

37. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 155.

38. On the history of theories of metaphor, see the introduction to *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, Mark Johnson, ed. (University of Minnesota Press, 1981). Also see Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd edition, Andrew Ortony, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

39. In "Metaphor," John Searle challenged the "comparison theory"

56. Letter 02991; 1917/10/10; to Edwin R. A. Seligman. The Center for Dewey Studies, Carbondale, Illinois.
57. Earlier drafts of this essay were presented to the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and to the Tennessee Philosophical Association. I am grateful to Casey Haskins and Mary Magada-Ward for their insightful comments.

Peirce's Inkstand as an External Embodiment of Mind

In one of the most arresting passages in his opus, Peirce seizes upon the image of his inkstand to epitomize a central thesis of his philosophy — a thesis which, I shall argue, is also of central importance to us for our present-day understanding of the latter-day descendant of the inkstand and its relation to us as thinkers. I am referring, of course, to the digital computer.

The passage, written in 1905, reads as follows:¹

A psychologist cuts out a lobe of my brain (*nihil animale a me ali-enum puto*) and then, when I find I cannot express myself, he says, "You see, your faculty of language was localized in that lobe." No doubt it was; and so, if he had filched my inkstand, I should not have been able to continue my discussion until I had got another. Yea, the very thoughts would not come to me. So my faculty of discussion is equally localized in my inkstand. (CP, 7.366)

I want to make two claims regarding the present-day significance this passage. First, I take it that Peirce is not *only* making the point that without ink he would not be able to express his thoughts, but rather the point that thoughts come to him in and through the act of writing, so that having writing implemented is a condition for having certain thoughts — e.g. those thoughts that issue from trains of thought too long to be entertained in human consciousness. This would seem to be the point of saying, "the very thoughts would not come to me," and it is also consistent with the central Peircean doctrine — inherited from John Locke — that thoughts are signs. In this respect Peirce gives aid and comfort to some version of the thesis, articulated in various forms by Eric Havelock, Harold Innis, and Walter Ong, among others, that literacy enables modes of thought, and hence contents of thought, unavailable to a purely oral culture. Peirce's own frequent insistence on the cognitively empowering role of specific types of logical and mathematical notation is echoed in Havelock's insistence on the similar function of the Greek alphabet. Among

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