



*John Dewey*  
*and*  
*Moral Imagination*

Pragmatism in Ethics



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## SEVEN

### *The Moral Artist*



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

—Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*

#### MORAL CONDUCT AS ART

The student of imagination turns naturally to art and aesthetic experience for subject matter. The moral power of art is well known and as widely feared. Art challenges convention, educates emotions, rescues perception from numbness. Lionel Trilling perceived this in his 1947 remark that “for our time the most effective agent of the moral imagination has been the novel.”<sup>1</sup>

Art can directly and literally contribute to moral imagination and character. The most famous account of this forms part of Plato’s argument for censorship in the *Republic*, which begins with Socrates’ claim that stories about gods “warring, fighting, or plotting against one another” are bad theology and set poor models for the young (378cd and 380c). Socrates goes on to argue that musical and poetic grace and harmony penetrate the soul to produce fine and beautiful moral character: “And gracelessness, bad rhythm, and disharmony are akin to . . . bad character, while their opposites are akin to . . . a moderate and good character” (401a). He concludes with the psychologically simplistic claim that “rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it most strongly and bringing it grace, so that if someone is properly educated in music and poetry, it makes him graceful, but if not, then the opposite” (401de).

It is a familiar thesis that art affects moral imagination. But as a *metaphor* or model for moral experience, artistic production and enjoyment have been overlooked. This is no small oversight, not because artists are more saintly than the rest of us, but because seeing imagination so blatantly manifested gives us new eyes with which to see what can be made of imagination in everyday life. In fact, as illustrated in the previous chapter

with jazz improvisation, artistic creation offers a rich model for understanding the sort of social imagination that is essential to moral deliberation.

This suggests a more substantial way of expressing and advancing the Deweyan ideal than the somewhat vague idea of growth. It suggests what Hilary Putnam calls a "moral image of the world," a more apt and trustworthy metaphor—or better yet, myriad complementary metaphors—for organizing moral lives and giving meaning to ethical claims:

A moral image, in the sense in which I am using the term, is not a declaration that this or that is a virtue, or that this or that is what one ought to do; it is rather a picture of how our virtues and ideals hang together with one another and of what they have to do with the position we are in. It may be as vague as the notions of 'sisterhood and brotherhood'; indeed, millions of human beings have found in those metaphors moral images that could organize their moral lives—and this notwithstanding the enormous problem of interpreting them and of deciding what it could possibly mean to make them *effective*.<sup>2</sup>

Putnam implies that ethics is better served by exploring such tethering centers than by constrictive argumentation that is insensitive to what James calls the world's "relational mosaic."

No moral image will prove ultimately satisfactory. Wallace Stevens exhorts: "It would be the merest improvisation to say of any image of the world, even though it was an image with which a vast accumulation of imaginations had been content, that it was the chief image. The imagination itself would not remain content with it nor allow us to do so. It is the irrepressible revolutionist."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the virtues and ideals of moral artistry are not final or definitive, but they embody the democratic ideal and contribute to a socially responsible, experimentally plausible, and ecologically sensitive moral image of the world. To the degree that these virtues and ideals are *justified*, it is not by the metaphor (which on its own can only highlight, not critically appraise) but by their actual contribution to interlocking lives. All moral theories, as with theories of farming, surgery, or navigation, need to be run through pragmatism's experimentalist winnowing fan in which "only chaff goes, though perhaps the chaff had once been treasured" (EN, LW 1:4; cf. LTI, LW 12:108).

The great challenge here is to respect the uniqueness of imagination, artistry, the aesthetic, and the moral as traits of lived experience, while also disclosing their relationships with one another. Central to Dewey's aesthetic theory—discussed more extensively in relation to morality in the final section of this chapter—is the claim that "art is the most direct and complete manifestation there is of experience *as experience*" (AE, LW 10:301).

Inquiry into artistic and aesthetic experience is revelatory of the nature of any complete experience because "esthetic experience is experience in its integrity" (AE, LW 10:278). The upshot is that moral experiences could be as richly developed as those consummated in the peaks of the arts.<sup>4</sup>

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 chapter may be misleading, for the aim is to illuminate the *activity* of ethical engagement rather than its discrete outcomes. In lieu of the draconian step of expunging the word *art*, Dewey stipulates "the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience" (AE, LW 10:9). Boisvert explains, "An art 'product' is potentially an art 'work.'"<sup>5</sup>

The working of art, Dewey declares with a little-recognized penchant for erotic metaphors, "is the impregnation of sensuous material with imaginative values" (AE, LW 10:297). It is *not* merely "the beauty parlor of civilization" (AE, LW 10:346) producing idyllic pleasantries, nor uproars of feeling. This must be borne in mind, since the latter would be a barren model.

The prevailing view of art as ethereal has contributed to its neglect by moral philosophers, since on this view artistic peaks are cut off from everyday life. But we ignore the moral analogue of artistic productions and appreciations to our detriment. To say that "art is more moral than moralities" (AE, LW 10:350) is to highlight our capacity to imaginatively outrun hardened habits of the status quo. This is exemplified by art not relegated to beauty parlor work. Moral reflection has always been ineliminatively imaginative, but this capacity has been restrained like an oak in a flowerpot by consigning morals and art to their own safe compartments. In art imagination finds its most complete expression as "the culminating event of nature" (EN, LW 1:8)—even more so than science, itself an art whose proper role is to serve aesthetic enjoyments (EN, LW 1:269). So we turn there to learn how best to spread the hitherto clipped wings of moral imagination.

Unfortunately, modeling ethical engagement on art brings us up against the dominant moral accounting metaphor, in which moral interactions are understood as business transactions. According to Johnson's analysis:

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")<sup>6</sup>

This suppresses qualitative aspects of moral thinking such as empathy and focuses exclusively on isolated actions of atomistic individuals seeking fixed ends. A wealth of alternative metaphors might be explored. For example, organic growth, evolutionary adaptation, scientific experimentation, technological innovation, and art are all key metaphors in Dewey's philosophy. Although no metaphor is alone sufficient, those of artistry provide a promising model. Yet, unlike the accounting metaphor, metaphors of morality (or more precisely, of moral conduct) as art are not in the mainstream. They could be, to the extent that customs are plastic. To appropriate the words of Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, they could "provide an organization of important [moral] experiences that our conventional conceptual system does not make available."<sup>7</sup>

Understanding ethical reflection as artistry is supported by the nature of our wisest everyday decisions. It highlights the role of an expansive imagination that enables sensitivity to social bearings and consequences, intervenes widely and deeply in experience, and brings diverse elements together in a unified experience (AE, LW 10:272). This is perhaps clearest when focusing on particular arts, as with jazz. The arts are not created equal in disclosing salient features of moral life. For example, interpersonal arts such as jazz single out colloquy and communication better than individual-centered arts such as sculpting. The jazz metaphor highlights an interpersonal ideal, yet it may be inadequate for comprehending situations in which parties are ill-intentioned.

Sculptors begin with a medium—stone, wood, clay, plaster, bronze. The beauty of the sculpture demands absolute respect for the medium; otherwise the art "product" will fail as an art "work." The medium suggests the formal possibilities for the artwork just as relatedness to others constrains possibilities for moral acts of grace and beauty. The sculpting metaphor aptly emphasizes the power of moral-agent/patients to form their environments; nonetheless, it downplays the tragic extent of human frailty in the face of impersonal environmental forces. (When it's you against the world, Kafka says, bet on the world.)<sup>8</sup> And thankfully, even the despot finds that people's purposes and nature's ways are less malleable than sculptors' clay, bronze, or wood. Others' aims, urges, and needs might be better conceived as threads to be collaboratively 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 scene in imagination and thereby discover mediating courses that may temper initial inclinations. At our best, we do this with a cultivated awareness of human foibles and a deep respect for the consequences of events. The good dramatist rigorously imagines her characters thinking, feeling, and acting in ways continuous with their past behaviors, and she selects and rejects what happens next by shuttling in imagination back to what went before. To take a lowbrow 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."<sup>9</sup> Moral action, when it is not anesthetic, has this same growing meaning, and it likewise depends on continuity of character. Moreover, like good dramatists, good moral thinkers compose successive drafts before signing off on the product.<sup>10</sup> A refined moral imagination enables the moral dramatist to configure an action richly aware of connections and possibilities. Unfortunately, this metaphor of composing a life seems compatible with reducing others to the status of texts and downplaying colloquy.

We may be dramatists, but, as Shakespeare's fool expressed, 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."<sup>11</sup> MacIntyre uses the stage metaphor to underscore that a person is not an isolated entity, which underscores the role of community and the need for dialogue better than the dramatist metaphor:

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.<sup>12</sup>

Individual lives are dramatic narratives that interlock as major or minor characters in other dramas. MacIntyre states this more generally: "The narrative of any life is part of an interlocking set of narratives." We are not essentially private, rule-following animals, but social, story-telling animals. What we should do depends on the story or stories in which we find ourselves playing a part.<sup>13</sup> When gripped by the suspense of a story we ask, "What happens next?" not "What rule applies here?"

Yet the moral drama is not scripted in advance by a playwright; like a resourceful 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." 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." To discover how others' life-dramas can develop coordinately with one's own requires attention to the constraints imposed and possibilities made available by other dramas enacted on the same stage. Most importantly, one must be able to imaginatively take on the role of others if one is to excel at "taking what the other actor gives and going with it."<sup>14</sup> There is a crucial element of obligation or duty in this if the drama is to come off.

As we turn from particular arts to analysis of the generic metaphor of moral conduct as art, a healthy skepticism on the part of the reader will understandably attend any generalizations about art. But the generalizations that follow are intended to be 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.

Recall that, in contrast with the popular view, what Lakoff and Johnson call conceptual metaphors are far more than mere rhetorical flourishes, replaceable ornaments, or arresting comparisons. They are "cross-domain conceptual mappings" indispensable for human understanding and experience.<sup>15</sup> Thus an analysis does not simply compare pre-existing literal features of art and morality; it explores how the logic of artistry and aesthetic experience is ferried over to conduct so we conceive moral life in a new way.

In "Metaphor," John Searle followed the legacy of Max Black in criticizing the "comparison theory," the root of which is the idea that metaphors are elliptical similes. Searle deploys counterexamples such as 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 (exaggerated, as Dian Fossey showed) folk image of a gorilla rather than a constant literal feature.<sup>16</sup>

So, the following analysis does not simply compare pre-existing literal similarities of art and morality. In addition to being bad philosophy of language, the opposing view would make several suspect assumptions. First, it would assume that we can circumscribe in advance what behaviors will be

morally significant and insignificant, or at least it would suppose that morality has a fixed form if not a finished content. The view that morality has a finished form or content hangs on the thread of suspect a priori assumptions. The view that the moral realm can be circumscribed in advance misses that any act, no matter how seemingly innocuous, could potentially have morally significant consequences.<sup>17</sup> Second, the comparison view here implies that analytically sophisticated specialists in ethics already know perfectly well what it means to be moral and can exhaustively analyze the nature and limits of moral conduct independent of any metaphorical understanding of it. This is far from apparent. Since the metaphor of morality as art, unlike the moral accounting metaphor, is not part of our cultural inheritance, neither is the concomitant way of thinking.

In fact, to the extent that there are *literal* similarities between moral conduct and art relevant to the operation of the metaphor, this stems from the fact that moral and artistic inquiries *are* structurally similar as forms of life-experience. They follow the "story" or "journey" structure already discussed. The same principle of development holds for "morals, politics, religion, science, philosophy itself, as well as the fine arts" (LW 16:397). Any literal description of the generic traits of experience is minimal and skeletal, which is why Dewey's corpus is so heavily dependent on artistic, technological, and biological metaphors, which lend differentiating hues to Dewey scholarship. The metaphor of moral conduct as art, with art understood as a form of social communication, is so revealing because artistic and aesthetic experiences illustrate the shared developmental traits of all experiences so well. It is probably "the simplest and most direct way to lay hold of what is fundamental in all the forms of experience" (LW 16:396).

Good artists are characterized, in part, by perceptiveness, creativity, expressiveness, and skill.<sup>18</sup> These parallels, 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."<sup>19</sup> A brief analysis must seek to be evocative, not definitive.

#### *Perceptiveness*

Nussbaum's reintroduction of Aristotelian practical wisdom (*phronesis*) has contributed a great deal to refocusing moral philosophy on the concrete and particular. Although she may, in Alexander's words, lack Dewey's "robust theory of experimental moral conduct, conflict resolution, and the pluralistic, integrative ideals of the democratic life," she carries on the pragmatic spirit by retrieving moral theory from formalistic abstractions and returning it to worldly interactions.<sup>20</sup> 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 concrete particulars. . . . Practical insight is . . . the ability to recognize, acknowledge, respond to, pick out certain salient features of a complex situation.<sup>21</sup>

Like Dewey's call to educate democratic imagination, Aristotle's ideal of citizen perceivers (his ideal for both public and private spheres) demands a great deal from public institutions. In *The Politics* he follows Thucydides in criticizing Spartan moral education for despotically drilling citizens to be subservient, and he praises the nobility of the Athenian system for cultivating personal intelligence and emotional engagement. On Aristotle's view, codified rules are a practical necessity for economizing effort, guarding against bias, and providing parameters for bad reasoners. But flexible practical wisdom, not unthinking subjugation to law, is the *ideal* for citizens, legislators, and judges.<sup>22</sup> Nussbaum explains:

Aristotelian education is aimed at producing citizens who are perceivers. It begins with the confident belief that each member of the heterogeneous citizenry is a potential person of practical wisdom, with the basic (that is, as yet undeveloped) ability to cultivate practical perception and to use it on behalf of the entire group. It aims at bringing these basic abilities to full actuality.<sup>23</sup>

Perception involves more than taking intellectual note of a situation's features; it is acknowledgment fused with appropriate feeling. Nussbaum clarifies 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 passional 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."<sup>24</sup>

The great moral vice is not failure to universalize motives or calculate pleasurable consequences; it is obtuseness. Mill too hastily agreed with Enlightenment ethics when he asserted at the outset of *Utilitarianism*, "the morality of an individual action is not a question of direct perception, but of the application of a law to an individual case."<sup>25</sup> Better to heed Pericles who, in Nussbaum's words, "wants neither subservient followers nor calculating technocrats; he wants improvisers whose creativity is animated by passion."<sup>26</sup>

No decision tree or test can substitute for feeling one's way with a discerning imagination through a tangled web of relationships. Artists embody this receptiveness fused with orchestrating power. They disclose and create relations that otherwise go unnoticed, and it is especially for this that they are esteemed. The moral artist, like the prototypical artist, must have a dilated eye (to borrow Emerson's metaphor)<sup>27</sup>—an amplified receptivity to the potential of the present. People fail morally in part because, like Raskolnikov, their range of creative prospects becomes contracted. Resultant acts lack the Greek virtue of *kalokagathia*: They fail to blend the beautiful (*kalos*) and the good (*agathos*), so they are disproportionate, cacophonous, graceless. Contrariwise, Kierkegaard points out in *Either/Or* that imagination may also be overwhelmed by an *overabundance* of possibilities, to the same ill effect.<sup>28</sup>

Contraction of perception is attributable in part to a culture-wide inversion of the fact that moral engagement, like artistic activity, falls flat when product-orientation (a failure of Benthamite utilitarianism) supersedes process-orientation. It would not occur to anyone to think Louis Armstrong played his trumpet merely as a means to some future enjoyment, yet because people are so accustomed to mistaking moral and artistic experiences as disparate kinds, they ignore the immediacy of meaning in moral deliberation. This comes at a high price. Subordinating the present process—conceived not as a knife-edge, but as a complex, story-structured field event (HNC, MW 14:194–195)—to the future product indefinitely postpones goods. Consequently, as Moore criticized utilitarianism, the "here and now never has any value itself."<sup>29</sup> And such subordination limits one's capacity to forecast possible courses for attaining good in the future. Dewey implores: "[Is there] 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 14:183–184).<sup>30</sup>

Buddhists have long understood that when mindfulness to the present is sacrificed, the quality of the product suffers, at least so long as we are not hypnotized by the swirling confusion around us. Products emerge as present conditions are transformed in light of latent possibilities. A Japanese Zen garden 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 patiently discovered through raking the sand and placing the stones. In kind, thinking of moral ends as "out there," and of deliberation as recognizing a familiar case to be lumped under a predetermined class of ends, anesthetizes imagination. This leads to artless be-

havior. Much moral reflection is not immediately experienced as significant, so it has no instrumental worth in the pregnant sense that playing a musical instrument has worth. In this case, things are not appreciated in their particularities and relations. In aesthetic terms, because we do not have a "cultivated taste" (EN, LW 1:299), we merely recognize without perceiving (AE, LW 10:30).<sup>31</sup>

The 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, rather than in alternation and displacement, is art" (EN, LW 1:271). As the instrumental and consummatory are fused in the art of the Zen gardener, they are fused in the art of conduct. Rich imaginations achieve the "nuance and fine detail of tone" of perceptive moral communication.<sup>32</sup> Sequestering art and the aesthetic from everyday reflection, far from celebrating imagination, is a recipe for moral sterility, fragmentation, and alienation. Imagination cannot be democratic when it is "flat and toneless and lifeless," so it has historically turned either to radically individual pursuits or to promotion of authoritarian control.

### *Creativity*

Artists make things that transform cultural perceptions. The best artists break out of old ruts or explore new directions in order to experiment with novel ways in which to see, hear, feel, and think.<sup>33</sup> "The architect, the musician, and the dancer," Boisvert notes, "explore untapped possibilities in the uses of space, sound, and movement."<sup>34</sup> They do not merely duplicate conventions or gift-wrap sanctioned ideals.

Conceived in this way, moral action is an ongoing experiment with novel possibilities. We venture beyond moral canons, often in playful ways common to art yet inconceivable on the accounting metaphor. In spite of the sad fact that educational, religious, and political institutions have tended to be deaf to the need for flexible mores and have conditioned against improvisational thinking, the "flexible logic" of human imagination occasionally comes up with "imaginative new forms of personal and institutional relationships."<sup>35</sup> Yet moral creativity all too easily succumbs to the inertia of habit. Dewey cautions:

Conversion into doctrinal teachings of the imaginative relations of life with which great moral artists have dowered humanity has been the great cause of their ossification into harsh dogmas; illuminating insight into the relations and goods of life has been lost, and an arbitrary code of precepts and rules substituted. (EN, LW 1:322)

Contrary to a popular view of artistic creativity, formal possibilities of art are not 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. To the extent that creative expressions are spontaneous, they are at least preceded by a period of subconscious maturation (AE, LW 10:79). This sociocultural, historical, and personal context of artistic production is a fit source for conceiving the complex horizon of moral judgments.

The recalcitrance of the artist's medium gives rise to another parallel. Social experience resists throwing it into just any order, so one must be perceptive of the encompassing whole. The whole, Thomas McCollough observes in *The Moral Imagination and Public Life*, "is not only the complex interrelated functional aspects of society, economic, political, social institutions. It is also the traditions, beliefs, values, ideals, and hopes of its members, who constitute a community with a stake in the good life and a hopeful future."<sup>36</sup> This whole is situated within the larger whole of the natural environment. The moral artist responds—as a normative ideal, though not in fact—to the entire system of exigencies in a troubled scene, deals with conflicts of long-range ends and short-range ends-in-view, attends to pressing interests of self and others, negotiates contingencies, and cares for her ecological household. Freed of the myopic demand for an authoritative first principle, she relies on the authority of circumstantial pressures. "Social pressure is but a name for the interactions which are always going on and in which we participate, living so far as we partake and dying so far as we do not" (HNC, MW 14:223–224). Moral imagination is the means for perceiving these pressures and investigating effectual prospects in a broadened and deepened context.

### *Expressiveness*

Disturbances to habits often incite knee-jerk reactions or a spewing of feelings, "as meaningless as a gust of wind on a mudpuddle" (HNC, MW 14:65). But if enthusiasms are controlled, something more than sound and fury may result. Disturbances may kindle us to exert ourselves, as James says, toward "newly taken and freshly understood" ends (PP, I, 255). The former is a case of venting, the latter, if married to makings, an act of expression. "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" (AE, LW 10:68).

Both artists and moral thinkers must have courage to discover, through what Keats speaks of as "innumerable compositions and decompositions,"



forms that will effect a controlled transformation from old ways of thinking and feeling to new ways. This probing yields expressive forms—as opposed to blind, wasteful spasms—that redefine the world. 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.”<sup>37</sup> Artistic investigation is an expressive activity through which the artist struggles to configure emotions, desires, images, and the like. The art product opens up possibilities that awaken and enliven. Analogously, the best conduct coherently expresses overall character rather than blindly giving way to either custom or fleeting impulse. These acts may be appreciated for revealing possibilities that refresh life and restore courage. Seen as an expression of character, such acts become role models.

### *Skill*

Delicately refined skills—habits, for Dewey—are the tools of artistic and moral imagination. On a pragmatic view, it is not the quantity of possibilities available to imagination, but their fittedness to the situation that counts for wise deliberation. To skilled perception, possibilities come in neither droughts nor floods. Rules are indispensable here. In the way rules of composition in painting (say, that there should be a focal point, positional and color balance, flow) economize discrimination of workable possibilities, social rules are helps to moral reflection. Skilled use of rules as instruments is the mean proportional between obeisance and flouting. Moral skillfulness also funds intuition, a habituated felt sense of the rightness of a projected action that parallels an artist’s trained sense of the rightness of an artistic act. Effective moral habits may then be understood in terms of masterful artistic technical skills. Habits are intelligent rather than routine in art, and in this sense morality *is* art.

### *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. Communication is called forth, whether or not it is intended.<sup>38</sup> In fact, an artist responds to herself as an audience as she selects and rejects. The artist, and analogously one engaged in ethical deliberation, “embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works” (AE, LW 10:55). Moreover, a moral agent’s forecast of others’ responses to a proposed act informs her deliberations, while their actual responses inform future deliberations. And the art world’s criticism of the artwork is analogous to communal appraisal of a moral act. The social world furnishes materials for the act of expression and also reacts.

### *Highlighting and Hiding*

All metaphors highlight and hide. Touching on several possible limitations of the art metaphor suggests a course for further criticisms. To begin with, contemporary artists often revel in values that seem exactly opposite of virtues and ideals important to moral life. They may value expressive acts of discord and imbalance rather than harmony and equilibrium; creative deconstructions instead of prototypically beautiful productions; perceptive subversion, not preservation and stability; skillful presentations of discontinuity rather than continuity. But the generic traits of artistry are more stable. The product may be fractured or subversive, but if there is cause for taking it more seriously than a temper tantrum, it is a skillful presentation of disharmony, or a perceptive shattering of the status quo. Art that attempts to problematize customary meanings, “to unexpress the expressible”<sup>39</sup>—is not the end-result of an uncontrolled evincing of raw feeling. As an act of expression its production involves skill, creativity, and perceptiveness. These are traits that also characterize admirable ethical reflection.

Another concern is that 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, moral conduct is an ongoing process characterized by consummated experiences, each having their beginnings, middles, and closures.

Artistic actions might be blotted out or painted over. It is possible that an artistic decision will irreversibly change the character of the work or world, but an overt mistake is not generally as irrevocable in art as it might be in conduct. This is a minor detail, overshadowed by the fact that, as Kekes points out, the main corrective available for imaginative rehearsal, moral or artistic, is assessment of past counterproductive mistakes.

A more substantial criticism of the metaphor is that in conduct there is often a demand to produce in the tempestuous present without studio-like reflection. 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.”<sup>40</sup> Additional criticisms can be piled on, but they are mitigated by clarifying the thesis: it is the generic logic of artistry, not the manifold details, that is revelatory of the potencies of moral inquiry. That an artist interacts perceptively with a medium is crucial; that this may take place in a studio, even through the hands of a wild-eyed misanthrope, is of marginal interest. What is crucial, as will be clarified in the next section on aesthetics and ethics, is to observe the way the arts, and aesthetic experiences deliberately cultivated in the arts, exemplify the aesthetic phase found as a primary dimension of *all* human experience.

## THE AESTHETIC AND THE MORAL

In a contemporaneous review of Dewey's 1932 *Ethics*, Dewitt H. Parker spoke of "one great defect": "an insufficient sense for the tragic in moral conflicts, with the related absence of any appreciation of the bearing of . . . art (except historically) on ethical problems."<sup>41</sup> These are sound demands. It is by now evident that the latter criticism is unfounded, but what of the former?

Art is popularly associated with the idyllic and pleasant, the stuff of Grandma Moses's nostalgic paintings of rural Vermont and New York life. Does bringing it to bear on morals imply that moral reflection is invariably a pretty or pleasant affair? An adequate moral theory must respond to the inherent ambiguities of moral judgment, to the genuineness of tragic moral conflict, and to the pitfalls often encountered in even the best of decisions. Can a theory of moral artistry pass muster?

To associate art and aesthetic experiences strictly with pleasure is of course unwarranted. In the domain of art narrowly construed, Wordsworth's "The Daffodils" is delightful:

I wander'd lonely as a cloud,  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils,  
Beside a lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* is not:

For three straight days, during which time ceased to exist for him, he struggled desperately in that black sack into which an unseen, invincible force was thrusting him. He struggled as a man condemned to death struggles in the hands of an executioner, knowing there is no escape.<sup>42</sup>

Ivan Ilyich's horrific encounter with his mortality was intensely aesthetic in what Dewey would call its "consummatory phase," but it was hardly pleasant. Encounter with this novel is painful yet transformative. The reader experiences moral growth permeated with dread. Dewey speaks to this:

For "taking in" in any vital experience is something more than placing something on top of consciousness over what was previously known. It involves reconstruction which may be painful. Whether the necessary undergoing phase is by itself pleasurable or painful is a matter of particular conditions.

It is indifferent to the total esthetic quality, save that there are few intense esthetic experiences that are wholly gleeful. (AE, LW 10:48)

Moral artistry is not an idyllic ideal. Deliberation may be consummated in a moral outcome of unconventional beauty. When an addict is given methadone to help curb an addiction to crack, this may be artistry. Its beauty may be wrenching, but there is no immunization that would make the moral life a series of rosy events. Deliberations are sometimes consummated in the face of insurmountable contingencies when the better route is not one marked by smooth terrain. The best course discernable—if one is discernable at all—may lead to dissatisfying employment, ruptured friendships, harassment, political imprisonment. A moral theory can contribute to better lives, but it cannot "do away with moral struggle and defeat. It would not make the moral life as simple a matter as wending one's way along a well-lighted boulevard" (HNC, MW 14:10).

To more directly address Parker's criticism: Moral artistry deals as responsibly with the tragic dimension of experience—that is, situations with incompatible yet genuine goods—as with the comic. Universalist moral philosophies, even when confronting complex issues of distributive justice, have taught that human reason is capable of sifting through a merely apparent competition of values to discover the "Right" channel that will satisfy all rational agents (i.e., those using the right critical principle). This assumes an ideal universe in which all "legitimate" desires (those in accord with duty) can blossom into action simultaneously. A truly moral education forges tools needed to face conflicts and dilemmas rather than taking refuge in a phantom universe that explains away tragic conflicts when they arise. And it does not pretend situations come prepackaged with one and only one right solution.

Theoretical strategies such as the utilitarian or Kantian are designed to purify moral reasoning of attention to practical conflicts and moral dilemmas. But these theories gain the virtues of clarity and simplicity at the expense of much genuine amelioration. They wish, as a norm for moral reasoning, to rise above and pinpoint "the ethical issue" and formulate the right response. As an unintended result, they ignore virtues of vigilant perception and dismiss as morally irrelevant whatever exigencies do not fit into their hardened schemes.<sup>43</sup>

In *Moral Dilemmas*, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong distinguishes "moral requirement conflicts" from "moral dilemmas." Requirements in moral *conflicts* may be realistically ranked, whereas in genuine moral *dilemmas* "neither moral requirement overrides the other." He argues compellingly that we can be more responsible and tolerant if we "admit the inexactness of moral requirements and the possibility of moral dilemmas."<sup>44</sup> In a thor-

oughgoing naturalistic empiricism, discovering an integrative value is an ideal for which to strive, though success is uncertain. The mediation of intelligence will not always discover a channel for contending values, no matter how critically reflective and socially responsible these values may be. Real incompatibles emerge, and this is the source of tragic situations. We may be torn between moral requirements: do not kill yet be loyal to country and bring "evildoers" to justice, be kind to other species yet support medical science, be ecologically responsible yet travel afar to be with family. These are incompatible values in which no duty clearly overrides another (cf. 1932 E, LW 7:164–165). Choices like these are not the exclusive domain of high Greek drama: Should Antigone betray the State by burying her brother? Should Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to keep his promises and responsibilities? Incompatible values are the norm, and the demand for moral artistry increases proportionally. Art, approached along the lines of the Greek *techné*, is after all "the sole alternative to luck" (EN, LW 1:279).

There are also occasions, equally tragic, when legitimate aspirations compete and cannot be simultaneously fulfilled. Sometimes no action under the sun will allay the slings and arrows of fortune from falling more heavily on some roofs than on others. The theme of unrequited love in poetry and literature serves as a reminder of this. In his own poetry Dewey lamented "the woes of fresh made hells" that arose when he had to be satisfied not with romantic fulfillment, but with bittersweet memories. A mutually traversable path must be discovered, but it may not be a happy one, and no two moral artists would necessarily choose alike.

We need to respond to tragedy in a way that neither embitters us nor leaves us with an impotent, mono-focused moral schema. What is needed is twofold: (1) to wrest the complete meaning from situations so that we are better prepared for future events, and (2) to transform crippling conditions that may yield to reconstruction so that the future might not merely repeat the past.<sup>45</sup> In imagination, we see beyond confused and dizzying conditions so that we may eventually construct more desirable circumstances.

Approaching moral conduct from the standpoint of art and aesthetic experience may still strike some as, at best, incoherent. Worse, it may appear to be an opening for "anything goes" relativism. This prejudice is conditioned by our Enlightenment heritage, which teaches that artistic-aesthetic and moral experiences are discontinuous. The contrast with the ancient Greek moral-aesthetic ideal of *kalokagathia*—grace and harmony in comportment, entwined with virtues such as wisdom, courage, and self-mastery—is palpable. Kant can be held up as a model of Enlightenment thinking: 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."<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, he argues in *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, in a moral judgment "moral concepts have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in reason [*Vernunft*]."<sup>47</sup> 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."<sup>48</sup>

The assumptions surrounding Kant's conception of a morality based on transcendental rationality were, as has been discussed, powerfully criticized by the classical pragmatists. Despite growing disrepute and incompatibility with empirical findings, assumptions about reason dominant in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe still set the context for moral inquiries, for both the person on the street and the moral philosopher. Consequently, any attempt to decompartmentalize 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 is mistakenly taken to radically subjectivize moral reflection.<sup>49</sup>

Compartmentalization leads us to suppose there is something contrived about seeing moral conduct as an art. Art, *because* it is imaginative, is widely thought to be a radically spontaneous overflow of feeling untarnished by everyday habits. But Dewey treats aesthetic experience as paradigmatic of *all* experience. This is why Dewey exclaims: "There is no test that so surely reveals the one-sidedness of a philosophy as its treatment of art and esthetic experience. . . . All the elements of our being that are displayed in special emphases and partial realizations in other experiences are merged in esthetic experience" (AE, LW 10:278).

Moral and artistic-aesthetic experiences follow the same story-structured pattern from beginning to middle to consummatory end, but they are guided by different ends, emphasize different materials, and are furthered by different activities and considerations of relevance. Moral experience is suffused with emotion but has a distinctively practical bearing, while artistic thinking and aesthetic appreciation are more distinctively emotional (distinguished from raw feeling, in Dewey's terminology), yet still at least indirectly practical (AE, LW 10:44).<sup>50</sup> Reflection has moral import—as potentially all conduct does—to the degree in which alternatives arise that may impact the lifeworld and so must be appraised as better or worse, thereby giving cause for evaluating character. Reflection on this impact is dyed with emotion, but its dominant quality is not aesthetic.

An experience *as lived* is "neither emotional, practical, nor intellectual." But reflection may find that "one property rather than another was sufficiently dominant so that it characterizes the experience as a whole" (AE, LW 10:44). This property gives the experience its qualitative distinctiveness. Enrico Fermi's experiment on fission was intellectual, and he may have experienced the qualitative spread of the event with less immediacy than would an artist, but in its "actual occurrence" it was "emotional as well" (AE, LW 10:44; LW 10:80). Distinguishing the moral from the aesthetic in this reconstructed way helps to reframe what was of value in the traditional split: the mere fact that an experience has a primary aesthetic phase is inadequate as a test for whether conclusions will be seaworthy when set in motion.

Far from being a lofty, elite, or contrived ideal, what is cultivated in moral artistry already goes on incessantly: "the dynamic interpenetration of aesthetic discernment and artistic execution."<sup>51</sup> Dewey distinguishes the "artistic," which "refers primarily to the act of production," from the "esthetic," which refers to acts of "perception and enjoyment" (AE, LW 10:53). Moral experience includes both simultaneously. This operational distinction helps to illuminate limiting factors in conduct. With acts that destroy, divide, or dull there is usually production (the *potentially* artistic) with a minimum of perception (the aesthetic phase), or vice versa. When there is no mean proportional between activity and receptivity, experiences are distorted by lust for action or fanciful sentimentality (AE, LW 10:51). Experiences are cut short in their development so that inclusive and enduring ends escape notice. "Unbalance on either side blurs the perception of relations and leaves the experience partial and distorted, with scant or false meaning" (AE, LW 10:51).

Moreover, the stilted perception of anesthetic experience is a sure route to miserable behavior because as imagination shrinks, foresight and critical appraisal are abandoned to the inertia of mechanical habit. The aesthetic quality may also be funded so narrowly that receptiveness to the encompassing whole is eclipsed by obsessive focus (see HNC, MW 14:138). We rightly call such experiences (im)moral rather than (an)aesthetic in order to emphasize their practical rather than immediately felt effects, but these effects are palpable.

The aesthetic is not merely subjective. Both as a natural phase of everyday experiences and as developed in the arts, it involves (a) a felt opening of awareness of a situation's objective potentialities in which (b) something of the world is revealed. Its unitary quality "is attained only when, by some means, terms are made with the environment" (AE, LW 10:23). And it emerges from ordinary life rather than being the exclusive domain of formalized art. In one commentator's helpful phrasing, "aesthetic experience is a critical, adaptive felt response, revealing value in the world."<sup>52</sup>

In *Art as Experience* Dewey shows how an ordinary job interview 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 properly labeled an aesthetic experience, it has an inescapable and indispensable aesthetic character. To understand the unifying quality of an interview experience we turn not to a treatise on management psychology but to drama or fiction (AE, LW 10:49). The same holds for moral experiences: their nature is best expressed not by an account ledger or by the "Nash equilibrium," but by art. Dewey summarizes his position: "I have tried to show . . . that the esthetic is no intruder in experience from without, . . . but that it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience" (AE, LW 10:52-53). It is as much a feature of a decision of reproductive choice as of writing a poem.

This emphasis on artistic-aesthetic experience helps to make moral theory more relevant to bewildering circumstances. Far from collapsing into extreme subjectivism, decompartmentalization revitalizes moral theory and opens the door to a more responsible ethic.

This can be further illuminated in light of Dewey's theory of experience. For deliberation of any sort to be brought to a resolution, it must develop so as to have a form that expresses coherently the conflicts that originally set the problem for inquiry. When experience becomes sufficiently demarcated to be called *an* experience (as when we say "Now that was an experience!"), a coherent story may be told, from commencement to culmination, about a problematic situation.

In focusing on this pattern of artful development Dewey is simply clarifying the colloquial way of talking about an experience in the singular. Each experience has a story to tell: "For life is no uniform uninterrupted march or flow. It is a thing of histories, each with its own plot, its own inception and movement toward its close, each having its own particular rhythmic movement; each with its own unrepeated quality pervading it throughout" (AE, LW 10:42-43; cf. MW 10:321-324). There is a drive to complete these stories, though interruptions and lethargy often bring us up

short. This is why we generally remember things that are unfinished or that do not have closure, as when an unfinished job nags at us.<sup>53</sup> Dewey clarifies:

We have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through; a situation, whether that of eating a meal, playing a game of chess, carrying on a conversation, writing a book, or taking part in a political campaign, is so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience. (AE, LW 10:42)

Consummatory experiences are exemplified by the deliberate productions and perceptions of art, useful or fine (a distinction Dewey disdained [EN; LW 1:271–272]). Art celebrates the consummatory (AE, LW 10:18). The failure of experience to be artfully developed is for Dewey “the human tragedy, for it signifies that most experience is unconsummated in its meaning.”<sup>54</sup> Whether we focus ecstatically on a future end or plod along in a lethargic daze, imagination may become so contracted that we do not attend to the world’s potentialities. Dewey observes that in such experiences “one thing replaces another, but does not absorb it and carry it on. There is experience, but so slack and discursive that it is not *an* experience” (AE, LW 10:47).

On Dewey’s (questionable)<sup>55</sup> view, all experiences share the same generic pattern, whether they involve “genuine initiations and conclusions” or anesthetic beginnings and cessations (AE, LW 10:46–47). The concern at hand is to consider moral experience in this light. If “rival claimants for liking” (EN, LW 1:320) are ignored, the moral experience will be incomplete and underdeveloped. Moral deliberation can be artfully developed only through a socially responsive imagination that skillfully perceives paths of mutual growth. Essentially, Joseph Kupfer explains, “we judge whether our imaginative projection of alternative futures proceeds in an *aesthetically complete way*.”<sup>56</sup>

Any decision that resolves a state of doubt, whether for good or for ill, has some aesthetic quality. This is the reason we are often taken in by our own poor, unartful judgments. Dostoyevsky’s Raskolnikov asks why a worthless pawnbroker should go on living when her murder would eliminate her future pettiness. Raskolnikov rehearses what to do, and his choice to commit murder is surely accompanied by the aesthetic stamp. But his experience is incomplete and underdeveloped. It lacks depth and breadth, fails to grasp inherent connections and relationships, is “partial and distorted, with scant or false meaning” (AE, LW 10:51). It is not *art*. “An artist, in

comparison with his fellows, is one who is not only especially gifted in powers of execution but in unusual sensitivity to the qualities of things. This sensitivity also directs his doings and makings. . . . What is done and what is undergone are thus reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other” (AE, LW 10:56–57).

Not all consummations are “devoutly to be wished.” Buddhism points out that much of the drive toward consummation is spent assuaging child-like cravings of desperate, confused lives, outwardly purposeful yet destitute of growth. Dewey contends: “There is interest in completing an experience. The experience may be one that is harmful to the world and its consummation undesirable. But it has esthetic quality” (AE, LW 10:46). The dramatic rehearsals of Napoleon or Caesar, Dewey observes, had aesthetic quality while stifling the interests of all but the state. They failed in artistry.

In his *Commentaries* on the Gallic Wars, Julius Caesar records the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Gauls. Caesar dealt effectually with the situation by eradicating those who experienced the world differently. As a result, two hundred years of relative peace were forced upon Gaul, and the Roman borders were secured. To be sure, Caesar was aware of the threat to his inflexible ends of Roman border extension, acquisition of fertile land, and personal glory if he did not deal with the warlike and nomadic Gauls. But he wove his tapestry of exclusively Roman and Caesarian strands. Even if one argues that this reinforcement of Roman militarism was an improvement, its effectiveness was one-sided. It was “pragmatic” only in the vulgar sense. The experience had aesthetic quality, but it fell short of art. Modern Caesars should reevaluate their ideals accordingly.

The best moral decisions deal sensitively yet critically with others’ valuing. Their consummations are not individualistic and fleeting. Inclusive consummation is not a mere drug-like mental state, but a transformed situation in which the individual contrives an organic equilibrium with her social and natural surroundings. Gouinlock notes, “It is hence *situations* that become an organic whole; our powers as human beings are effectively engaged with the environment and fulfilled therein.”<sup>57</sup> In aesthetically complete ethical reflection, existential factors are woven into a tapestry most likely to persist and grow.<sup>58</sup>

Conceiving the aesthetic as a phase of everyday experiences aids the development of moral ideals consonant with the central role of imagination. Intelligent dramatic rehearsals are directed toward the ultimate art of bringing about democratic consummations in experience. This is not a mechanical measure or a necessary and sufficient condition of moral value of the “X is good, Y is bad” variety. It is an ideal to strive for to consummate and revivify meaning and value.

It has been urged that, in addition to investigating metaphors that guide deliberations and structure shared moral concepts, we must explore *alternative metaphors for morality*. *Morality as art emphasizes the aesthetic dimension of morally significant behavior ignored by the moral accounting metaphor*. It is not possible to magically will away habits of cold-blooded accounting and cost-benefit calculating. But drawing from artistic production, experience, and evaluation does reveal imaginative dimensions of ethical reflection hitherto left to chance development. Conceiving moral conduct as art highlights, for instance, 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 against yours*. Responding to this, most moral philosophers share a sense of urgency about the need to fortify moral intelligence. But their carefully argued diagnoses and prescriptions typically ignore imagination. This is a sure route to obtuseness. A revitalized ethics requires a central focus on imaginative inquiry.

In imagination not only do we forecast consequences for ourselves, but also, as Mead points out, we dramatically take the attitude of others whose lives interlace with our own.<sup>59</sup> Especially through colloquy, we place ourselves in the emerging dramas of others' lives to discover actions that may *meaningfully continue their life-stories alongside our own*.<sup>60</sup> Lacking this, we may weave an aesthetically incomplete tapestry, or, equally likely, leave initially tangled circumstances in unmanageable knots. Such moral failure is largely remediable and is due to maldeveloped imagination and botched artistry. To be sensitive and perceptive, aided by critically examined principles and rules, is a realizable ideal in a social milieu that cultivates and sustains moral imagination.

The moral of the arts is that everyday moral decisions can be as richly consummated as artistic productions. The distance is narrowed between *this ideal and actual deliberations to the degree that a culture focuses beyond sedimented moral criteria to education of aesthetic virtues of sensitivity, perceptiveness, discernment, creativity, expressiveness, courage, foresight, communicativeness, and experimental intelligence*. "One great defect in what passes as morality," Dewey observes, "is its anesthetic quality. Instead of exemplifying wholehearted action, it takes the form of grudging piecemeal concessions to the demands of duty" (AE, LW 10:46).

In much mainstream ethical theory, particulars must be scrutinized only when anomalies make subordination to a governing principle troublesome. Faced with irregularities, the normative theorist adjusts lists of precepts and proposes new ways to apply them. But it is increasingly recognized that, on its own, this leaves imagination coarse and monochromatic.

In *John Dewey's Pragmatic Technology*, Larry Hickman cites Edwin A. Burt's suggestion that "if he had to pick a single word to typify Dewey's philosophical work, it would be 'responsibility.'"<sup>61</sup> Calculation and disengaged judgment are not *responsible enough*. What Dewey dubbed "the bleakness and harshness often associated with morals" is gradually dissipating as moral philosophers become resensitized to aesthetic values of "grace, rhythm, and harmony as dominant traits of good conduct" (1932 E, LW 7:271).