

The Beautiful in Fine Art

MICHAEL H. MITIAS

Abstract: The thesis I explain and defend in this essay is that an artifact is a fine work of art inasmuch as it is beautiful, and it is beautiful inasmuch as it is aesthetically true. The truth the artwork expresses is commensurate with the human depth of the aesthetic world that unfolds in the process of aesthetic perception. The greater the depth, the greater the beauty of the artwork. In my endeavor to establish the validity of this thesis, I first discuss two important presuppositions that are requisite for an adequate analysis of human values in general and aesthetic value in particular: the origin of human values and the ontological status of human values. Second, I explain in some detail the concept of “the Aesthetic” in its mode of (1) artistic creation and (2) aesthetic experience. The point I elaborate is that human values are the object of reflection in these two modes of the aesthetic. Third, values exist in human experience as realized meaning. The artwork comes to life as an aesthetic object in the aesthetic experience as a world of human meaning. Fourth, an artwork is fine inasmuch as the truth of the meaning it communicates is a profound human depth, or depth of human meaning. The fabric of this depth is realized meaning. I illustrate this thread of analysis by examining two artworks: Goya’s “Proud Monster!” and Da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa”.

Keywords: Beauty, Human Essence, Human Values, Artistic Creation, Aesthetic Experience, Aesthetic Qualities

Introduction: Presuppositions

Directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, thoughtfully or thoughtlessly, the values of truth, beauty, goodness, religiosity, and freedom either directly or indirectly inspire the way we think, feel, and act. They are existential grounds on which we stand in designing and realizing the different types of activities we perform in the course of our theoretical and practical lives individually and communally; they are, moreover, (1) the fountain of what we think, feel, and do and (2) the conceptual underpinning of the human and natural sciences. For example, the scientist seeks to explore the nature of physical and biological reality, and the value she aims at is the truth; the philosopher seeks to understand the meaning of existence in general and the meaning of human existence in particular conceptually, and the values she aims at are goodness and freedom; the artist, like the philosopher, aims at the meaning of natural and human existence, and the value she aims at depictive is beauty; the theologian seeks to understand the nature of the revealed truth or word, and the value she aim at is religiosity. The quest for these values originates from the powers, drives, and dynamics of the essential structure of the human essence, or the human dimension, of human beings.

This fact is revealed by the kind of objects that comprise the realm of human civilization from its inception in the fifth millennium B.C. to the present. If we inquire into the nature of this realm, we discover that it is composed of the deeds and achievements of human beings in their growth, development, and progress in the continual advance of human history. These deeds and achievements are human artifacts or creations. Historians are in the habit of classifying them. The artifacts are technological, artistic, religious, scientific, cultural, and philosophical, and their deeds are social, personal, cultural, political, military, aesthetic, and individual. These deeds and achievements are *human*

embodiments: they reflect human needs, desires, or aspirations. They express a sense of importance. The structural elements of this sense are the values of truth, goodness, beauty, religiosity, and freedom, and their derivatives. For example, values such as justice, courage, compassion, or friendship are derived from the value of goodness; values such as elegance, grandeur, loveliness, or wickedness are derived from the value of beauty; values such as piety, faith, humility, or mercy are derived from the value of religiosity; and values such as success, prosperity, progress, or individuality are derived from the value of freedom. These different values act as guideposts and principles of action in personal, social, political, aesthetic, religious, moral, and personal experience. They are not only the ground but also the foundation of human thinking, feeling, and acting. Moreover, they are the building blocks of the fabric of individual and social existence in all its dimensions and manifestations. Their realization is the ultimate source of human satisfaction. Unlike animals and plants, which exist and thrive in nature directly, human beings exist in a built, or human, environment. Moreover, these values are the building blocks of individual and social existence. The elements that make up the structure of this environment are realized human values. Although it is essentially human, the built environment is anchored in nature directly because the human essence, or that which makes people human realities, exists as a potentiality in the formal organization of the human body. It is immanent in the human body. The realization of the human essence in concrete experience transforms the body, a material object, into a human reality. The process of this transformation, which begins with the emergence of self-consciousness at the peak of adolescence, takes place in the medium of the built environment, viz., the institutions and organizations which constitute the structure of civil society, regardless of whether it exists in the form of family, clan, tribe, manor, deme, or a democratic state. For example, cast an investigative look at the pattern of the life of a human being. Where does this human being exist or thrive? Her life is lived in the home, school, neighborhood, temple, marketplace, library, park, art center, government office, car, workplace, in short, in places built by human beings. These places are human in character because they are created according to human purpose and values. Every element of the human environment is a human embodiment.

What are these values? What is their stuff? What is their ontological status? Under what conditions can they be realized? How do they function as the basis of thinking, feeling, and acting? An analysis of these questions has been the primary aim of philosophers, scientists, artists, theologians, and social reformers during the past four millennia. In this paper, I shall focus on the value of beauty in fine art: painting, music, literature, sculpture, architecture, dance, film, photography, and theater. In this context, I should hasten to remark that “fine art” is not necessarily exclusive of the generally recognized art forms, because the artistic mind and the spiritual conditions of human life are constantly changing and developing. As I shall elaborate, the differentiae of “fine” in “fine art” is the capacity of the artwork to express the greatest possible depth of truth implicit in the human essence and articulated in the values that express its urges, desires, or cravings, in short, in its peremptory needs. The possibilities of artistic creation in the different material and conceptual media are limitless; their range expands with the expansion of the domains of science and technology. Broadly, beauty exists in natural objects, human artifacts, and human beings. However, the question I aim to answer in this paper is, what is the nature of beauty that the artist seeks to reveal in her work? I shall begin my discussion by briefly analyzing two concepts: the ontological status of human values and (2) their organicity, or dynamical interrelatedness. A clarification of these concepts is crucial for an adequate analysis of the quality of beauty in fine art.

Ontological Status of Human Values

Values originate as an existential response to peremptory needs—urges, desires, or demands—inherent in the essential structure of the human essence (mind, spirit, or human nature). These needs are inherently telic, that is, they are aim-oriented. Accordingly, they are appetitive, in the sense that the human being desires them and derives a reasonable measure of satisfaction from their fulfillment.

This assertion is supported by the fact that need implies lack. However, as an appetite, a need exists in the human essence as a power or as a drive that creates a feeling of desire. A human being desires what she needs, and the object of her desire is deemed important because its fulfillment produces a feeling of satisfaction.

When I say that values originate as an existential response to peremptory needs inherent in the human essence, I mean that these needs exist in the mode of demands and that these demands are cravings—urges. This feature of human need and its fulfillment is the ontic locus of the sense of importance. The object the need aims at is important because its attainment is an activity of *completion*, or fulfillment. Do we not feel whole —i.e., complete—when we complete a project, perform an act of duty, or undergo a significant experience? What is the source of this feeling but the fact that we treat the object, act, or experience, and its realization as significant?

Now, what are the peremptory needs that inhere in the human essence? Let me first point out that the human essence does not exist as a physical or metaphysical entity but as a potentiality inherent in the formal organization of the human body. This potentiality emerges as a unique reality with the emergence of the human body from the cosmic process. However, although it exists in the body and emerges from it in the mode of realization, its nature is essentially different from the nature of the body in which it inheres. It emerges from a physical reality, but it is not a physical reality. What is the nature of this reality? Let me at once state that it emerges from the formal organization of the human body as a dynamic reality, i.e., as a drop of complex power, which is irreducible to a physical or metaphysical entity. A potentiality does not exist as a particular kind of reality that one can identify with psychological or physical categories, but as a possibility for realization as a particular physical, psychological, or metaphysical reality. Every one of the constituents of human potentiality is a capacity, and every capacity is a quantum, or drop, of power. Thus, what emerges is a possibility that can be realized as a particular object. This assertion is supported by the premise that its emergence as a potentiality is an emergence of a power primarily because it comes into being from the dynamic interrelatedness of the way the various parts of the human body are organized, or formed, which is uniquely different from the organization of any other type of animal body. For example, the formal organization of the organs of the lion's body or that of the horse is incapable of creating the physiological conditions necessary for the emergence of a potentiality such as the human essence. It took a long period of development for the human body to acquire the possibility of the emergence of the human essence.

The capacities that make up the essential structure of the human essence are intellect, affection, and volition. Every activity of the human being, physical and mental, derives its being from the joint, cooperative activities of these three capacities. Each one comes into being as a drive, urge, or desire. As I explained in the preceding section, the first capacity is a faculty of knowledge and aims at the truth, the second is a faculty of feeling and aims at goodness, beauty, and freedom, and the third is a faculty of volition and aims at sound judgment. These values are not facts of nature. They are human creations. For example, we do not encounter beauty, goodness, love, freedom, or religiosity in nature or the marketplace the way we encounter rocks, lions, or trees. Yet, they are real, and I think more real than the reality of physical or technological objects. Nonetheless, they exist in the world as qualities of artifacts, human actions, and human beings as human creations, and in some cases, in nature under certain perceptual conditions, for example, the perception of a natural scene as beautiful or the destructiveness of an earthquake as evil. However, regardless of whether it is present in a human being, an action, or an artifact, this quality comes into being within the medium of human experience, and outside of this experience, it exists as a potentiality in the human being, action, or artifact. For example, the beauty, sublimity, or sadness of the artwork comes to life in the process of experiencing the work aesthetically; the moral quality of the moral action comes to life in the experience of the observer the moral agent; and the humanity of the human being comes to life in a human encounter or the activity of self-consciousness. In all its manifestations, humanity comes into being in the medium of human experience.

Ontologically, the creation of human values is a concrete expression of the impulse to human life, that is, to the kind of life that originates from the human essence. They emerge from the bosom of the endeavor to meet the primary needs inherent in the human essence. Realizing them is the most appropriate means of meeting these needs. How? What is the logic or structure of the manner of meeting these needs? The means of fulfilling the peremptory needs is not instinctive; they are not given as ready made ways of being human, the way the means of natural survival of animals in the wild are given. They emanate as schemas, or as patterns of action, from the capacity of the intellect in a state of self-consciousness, that is, from a rationally conceived plan, vision, or design, according to which the peremptory needs are met. The emergence of these schemas marks the emergence of human values. They function as principles of action, as guideposts in the attempt of human beings to live according to the inner demands of the human essence. Their emergence is universal. It is not peculiar to any particular part of the human species, but, in principle, exists uniformly in all human beings regardless of their cultural, geographical location, or political differences.

Although the values—truth, goodness, beauty, religiosity, and freedom—that emanate from the human essence are distinct and possess different identities, especially for the sake of analysis in the attempt to understand the nature of human experience, they are interconnected; indeed, they imply each other, in the sense that the possibility of realizing a value-based action is intimately connected with and entails the relevance to the other values, not only because any activity one performs issues from the human mind (or essence) as the unity of its capacities, but also because its integrity and possibility for realization depends on the other values. I should emphasize in this context that the capacities which constitute the essential structure of the human mind are dynamically interrelated mainly because they are concretizations of the human essence as a potentiality in the formal organization of the human body. Although this potentiality exists as an undifferentiated reality in the human body, it undergoes a process of self-differentiation into the capacities of intellect, affection, and volition. This differentiation is made possible by the inherent needs for survival. Thus, although they perform different functions, they remain expressions of the same essence. We may view this essence as a kind of soil that nourishes the powers that grow in it and from it. This mode of interconnectedness between the capacities justifies the assertion that they are rational. Their rationality derives from the rationality of the essence of the mind. Accordingly, any activity the human being performs is rational, whether proper, foolish, prudent, or self-destructive. The ways in which the rational emerges and thrives in the world are limitless. Is it an accident that every activity we perform is essentially human? What is the source of this attribution to the human essence?

Any serious value activity necessarily involves the relevance, if not the inclusion, of the other values. For example, can I make a sound moral judgment in a particular moral situation if I do not consider seriously the values of truth, religiosity, social and political norms, or the well-being of the people who will be affected by my action? Can I act as an autonomous human being if I do not know what it means for a human being to be free, mindful of the dignity and well-being of my friends or family? Moreover, an act of human self-realization, whether aesthetic, religious, social, professional, or personal, is one in which the human being performs her action as the organic unity of its capacities. Can I be a well-rounded personality if I am successful in my profession but unfulfilled religiously, intellectually, aesthetically, and politically? Every action we perform originates from the unity of the self that performs the action.

We may treat the preceding concept of the generation of human values and their dynamic inter-relatedness as a presupposition for a reasonable analysis of the value of beauty. How can we conduct a meaningful discussion of the nature of this value if we do not proceed from an adequate understanding of its genesis and its role in human life? Moreover, as it is assumed in scientific and philosophical discourse, knowledge of the cause of any effect is essential, and sometimes indispensable, for understanding the effect, because knowledge of an effect is frequently practical, if not decisive, for a van understanding of its cause. I assume that every natural or human object is an effect, in the sense

that it is created under certain conditions. Do we not know relatively much about a human being from the way she acts or behaves in society? Do we not know much about a past culture from its remains, or effects? On the other hand, do we not know how to cure a disease by knowing its causes? By the same token, do we not think, at least assume, that we can know much about the value of beauty by understanding its fabric, its significance, or function in life? Recognition of this feature is critical not only because the artist aims to create a special kind of beauty but, more fundamentally, because beauty is a quintessential quality of the built environment in which we thrive as human beings.

Beauty in Fine Art: Thesis

Now we can, more directly, ask, what is the nature of beauty in fine art? In response to this question, I submit the thesis that an artifact is a “fine” work of art inasmuch as it is beautiful, and it is beautiful inasmuch as it is aesthetically true. Beauty is the only value we can attribute to the artwork. However, it does not exist in the work as a perceptual element of its representation or as a psychological ingredient of the aesthetic experience but emerges as a novel reality from the realization of the sensual, artistic, and metaphysical qualities which inhere as potentialities in the formal organization of the representation the artists creates and culminates in the construction of the aesthetic object in the process of aesthetic perception. It does not emerge as a particular perceptual quality that stands on par with the multitude of qualities that make up the artistic dimension of the artwork, such as the sensuous qualities of the lines, colors, sounds, actions, , stone, and space that constitute the structure of the representation; the affectional qualities that result from the realization of elements of the artistic structure of the work, such as sadness, grace, or elegance; and the metaphysical qualities that emerge from the qualities of the sensual and artistic qualities, such the great, the magnanimous, or the tragic. I identify these qualities as distinct features or aspects for the sake of philosophical or critical analysis, but they come into being in the activity of aesthetic perception simultaneously or as organically interrelated components of the aesthetic experience, mainly because (1) they co-exist in the artwork and (2) their interactive co-existence is a necessary condition for the possibility of the aesthetic experience. The emergence of any ingredient of the aesthetic experience comes about as a joint interaction of the various elements that constitute the artistic dimension of the artwork.

However, although beauty does not exist in the artwork as a particular kind of quality, it belongs to the work; it is rooted in and immanent in its very being. It emerges in a state of reflective, intuitive, and synoptic comprehension of the aesthetic world that unfolds in the aesthetic experience. This kind of comprehension is not an isolated or discrete activity. It takes place in the background of the sense of importance of the aesthetic perceiver, the role of art in human life, and the comprehension of the truth implicit in it. The thesis that an artwork is beautiful inasmuch as it is true can be extended: the truth the artwork embodies, or expresses, is commensurate with the human depth of the aesthetic world that unfolds in the process of aesthetic perception. The greater the depth, the greater the beauty of the work.

In my attempt to elucidate and defend this thesis, I shall analyze two central concepts: (1) the aesthetic and (2) aesthetic truth. What does “aesthetic” signify? What kind of truth does the artwork embody or express?

The Aesthetic

What does the word “aesthetic” signify? What is the nature of the reality it signifies? An answer to these questions should, I think, begin with a statement of the lexical connotation of “aesthetic”. This word comes from the Greek *aesthetanesthai*, “to perceive”, which comes from *aisthetikos*, “sensitive”. Again, “sensitive” denotes the activity of the five senses, viz., seeing, hearing, touching, and the activity of feeling or intuiting mental states, viz., ideas, emotions, images, and the diversity of states that make up the structure of the human mind. Broadly, the artwork is an object of sensuous or conceptual perception, such as a painting, a sculpture, a piece of music, a novel, or a poem. However,

in the present context, the activity of perception does not aim merely at the sensual or conceptual objects, but at the qualities that make up the artistic dimension of the artwork. The first kind of qualities is given to the senses, the second is not directly given to the senses or the intellect but exists as potentialities in the formal organization of the work, for example, the exuberance of colors, the elegance or luminosity of an image, the tragedy of a play or character. As I indicated in the preceding sections, these qualities are not directly perceived by the senses or the intellect. They are human creations. Accordingly, the “aesthetic” denotes the perception of the qualities of the artistic dimension of the artwork. What does the artist create? What is the mode of existence of the aesthetic qualities that make the artistic dimension of the artwork? What is the mode of existence of these qualities? How do they come into being? An analysis of these questions should shed ample light on the meaning and validity of the proposition that beauty is the sole value we can ascribe to the artwork and that the basis of this ascription is the extent to which the work communicates human depth.

What does the artist create? Is the artwork an object of entertainment, a means of escape, an experience of loneliness or boredom, an evasion of an oppressive hardship, or a means of killing time? Is it a pedagogic, propagandist, or marketing instrumentality? Although an artwork can serve these and other practical functions, it aims at the truth. Like the scientist and the philosopher, the artist is a seeker of knowledge and understanding. This assertion may strike my reader as strange, if not outrageous, because, so far as we know, knowledge of nature and human nature is the task of the scientist; accordingly, what kind of knowledge does the artist seek to discover, or what kind of reality does she seek to explore or understand? Indeed, at the turn of the last century, it became clear that knowledge of the scheme of nature is the job of the empirical scientist, that is, the facts that constitute this scheme, namely, matter, life, and consciousness, a job that traditional philosophers did. However, the relegation of the knowledge nature to the scientist was brought about by the success of the empirical method of inquiry in knowledge or exploring the nature of the facts of nature, which was used in conjunction with the analytical and speculative method of the philosopher. This relegation did not devalue the significance or diminish the role of the philosopher in the endeavor to understand the world in all its manifestations. *It only shifted the attention of the philosopher from the facts that make up the factual structure of nature to the meaning of existence in general and the meaning of human existence in particular.* Accordingly, while the scientist seeks to know the meaning of the facts that make up the structure of the world, the philosopher seeks to know the nature of these facts. However, the meaning of these facts is also the object of inquiry and understanding in fine art. Like the philosopher, the artist contemplates the nature of the facts of human experience and tries to comprehend their meaning, but with a difference. The philosopher articulates her understanding of the facts of nature *conceptually*, the artist articulates her understanding *depictively*. The philosopher thinks discursively, the artist thinks eidetically, that is, imagistically or representationally by means of lines and colors, sound, bronze, stone, metaphor, allegory, anecdote, action, or certain types of portrayal. For example, scientists and metaphysicians assert that reality in all its manifestations is essentially a process. Every fact comes into being at a certain point in time and passes out of being at a later point in time. Its existence consists of process: change. It follows from this assertion that human beings are finite in two basic ways: first, in the sense that their existence is temporal, in fact, transient, and second, in the sense that they are creatures. The human species, consequently, every human being, is a passing ripple in the infinity of the cosmic process. Moreover, the scientist seeks to comprehend the essential nature of the structure that makes up its stuff and fabric. The philosopher and the artist, on the other hand, assert: What does it mean for the human being to be finite and temporal? What are the implications of the truth implied by this assertion to the activity of human living, not only in the way people design their life-projects and implement the design, but also in the way they organize themselves communally? Again, temporality implies death. What is the meaning or significance of death in their lives? Living on the assumption that they are immortal is one thing, and living on the assumption that they are mortal is something else. More-

over, what are the implications of finitude and temporality to social existence? Is the human being a self-sufficient being? What makes her life human in contrast to her body?

Now, cast a contemplative yet analytical and critical look at the existence of the universe as a cosmic process. We should acknowledge that it exists! We do not know (1) its cause and (2) the purpose of its existence, and we do not know, not perfectly, the nature of its macroscopic and microscopic structure. The scientist, ordinary person, and the philosopher acknowledge its existence, but what is the meaning of this amazing, overwhelming, and mind-boggling existence? How can we ascertain the nature of this meaning, if we can ascertain it? More importantly, what is the impact of the truth or falsity of this knowledge upon human life? Are human beings part of the design that underlies its purpose or direction? The question of the “why” of human existence is logically and ontologically intertwined with the question of the why or purpose of the cosmic process. Would it not make a critical difference for me to know whether a caring, efficient power is continuously creating and re-creating the universe? Leading a life of “throw-ness”—of feeling or knowing that my existence and the existence of humanity are accidental—in the infinity of what seems to be an indifferent nature, is quite different from leading a life in which I know that my life and the way I live it reflect the will or intention of the power that created me and the universe. For example, are we, as individuals or as a society, responsible for the principles and values according to which we should live? It would be a grave mistake to think that the question of the meaning of existence in general is not logically and ontologically tied to the question of the way we should live as human beings.

The realm of human values is the realm of human meaning (1) insofar as they are lived or instantiated in the lives and achievements of human beings since the dawn of human civilization and (2) insofar as they function as principles of thinking, feeling, and acting. Human meaning is realized value, and the realization of human meaning is the realm of human values. The building blocks of human character, regardless of whether it is the character of the primitive or cultivated human being, the simpleton or the genius, or the noble or ignoble person, are realized human values. They exist in the mind as categorical ways of thinking and acting. This is a primary reason why people can thrive in a built environment whose structure is composed of realized human values, whether in a megacity or a small settlement on the edge of a desert. The structure of this kind of environment is the institutions and organizations within which people conduct their lives. Values are the foundation of any social formation. If I am to express this point succinctly, I can say that, in all their manifestations, that is, in their schematic and realized modes of being, human values are the stuff of human existence. Erase these values from the face of the earth and you *impose facto* erase any trace of human existence.

The sphere of “the aesthetic” is twofold: (1) the activity of artistic creation and (2) the activity of aesthetic perception, or aesthetic experience. The first is primary, and the second is derivative. The first is the source of the artwork’s artistic dimension, and the second is the source of the work’s aesthetic experience. Perception is the medium in which the artwork (1) comes into being as a potentiality immanent in the formal organization of the work and (2) comes to life as a concrete, living reality in the experience of the aesthetic perceiver. Let me explain these two types of perceptual activity.

Artistic Creation

How does the artwork come into being? What does the artist create? The reality the artist creates is novel; it comes into being *ex nihilo*. First, the artist does not create a physical reality, i.e., her medium; she forms it or organizes it in a certain way. The form, or the mode of organization of the medium, is her only contribution to the activity of artistic creation, that is, the given representation: sonata, song, painting, drama, sculpture, or architectural work. Accordingly, the ontic structure of the work the artist creates inheres in the way she fashions her medium. The “way-ness” of the form, or the way it is organized, inheres in the representation as a kind of eidetic language, which is

constructed according to general rules, conventions, idioms, vocabulary, and practices generally recognized by the art form in which the work is created. An aesthetic perceiver is typically skilled in interpreting the aesthetic language of the artwork as a representation. The vocabulary of this language encompasses the various qualities that the artist creates and the perceiver experiences. The nature of this vocabulary varies from one artistic medium to another, e.g., marble, sound, line, color, action, or metaphor. For example, the way words are organized is different from the way marble, sounds, or images are organized. It is eidetic in character. The sculptor thinks in terms of marble or bronze; the painter thinks in terms of lines and colors; the literary artist thinks in terms of words; the playwright thinks in terms of action; the filmmaker thinks in terms of images; and the dance artist thinks in terms of motion. The stuff of an eidetic language is quality, and quality appeals to the affectional faculty of the mind. It is not ideational or conceptual, although the medium may be ideas or concepts, as in literature. We think an idea or a concept, but we feel a quality. The quality comes to life in the aesthetic experience as a drop of meaning in the medium of feeling. The scientist and the philosopher think discursively; the artists think eidetically. The creation of a quality is the primary aim of the artist, and the perception of quality is the primary aim of the aesthetic perceiver.

Second, what is the object of contemplation in the process of artistic creation? What is the objective of the artist in this process? Like the scientist who seeks the truth of the facts that make up the scheme of nature, and the philosopher who seeks the truth of the meaning of existence in general and the meaning of human existence in particular and express it *conceptually*, the artist seeks the truth of the meaning of natural and human existence and express it *eidetically*. Contrary to a generally, yet silently, held belief, the artist is an inquirer into the truth of the meaning of human life. Yes, the artist of fine art stands on par with the scientist and the philosopher. The first datum that indirectly engages the attention of the artist in the heat of the creative act is her worldview or understanding of the world insofar as it is revealed in her experience. This experience is the first fountain of the vision, or design, that acts as the sun illuminating the logic and direction of the artistic process. She cannot, no matter how she tries, transcend or marginalize it. It is the source of the fundamental insight that nourishes the artistic process. The second datum that directly engages her attention in this process is the dimension of realized values that underlie the question, problem, situation, or aspect of human experience or the world around her. However, she does not stop at the level of realized values in her life or the environment in which she lives; she probes deeper into these values as schemas. Her task is not merely to describe, for this is the task of the scientist, but to reveal the depth of the possibilities of realization innate to them. As schemas, human values are limitless possibilities for realization in different ways and forms. The extent or measure of human depth lies in the womb of their existence as potentialities. The greater the degree of realizing their depth, the greater the human depth the creative act expresses or communicates. We should never forget that human personality, whose building blocks are realized values, comes to life in the diversity of human experiences as flames of meaning; outside this experience, that which is human, exists as a potentiality. As indicated a moment ago, human depth is the measure of the artwork's "fineness" and "greatness." Broadly, the artwork derives its human depth from the depth of the artist's vision, or design that provides the logic and direction of the creative process. This derivation is made possible, first by the fact that the value the artist contemplates as schemas are possibilities for infinite realizations, and second, by the fact that the realm of realized values is a source of inspiration, penetration into these possibilities, and understanding.

The artwork comes into being in this two-fold perceptual act in which the creative act takes place. Not only the artist's life experience, but also her contemplation of the significance of the values involved in the living artistic process, are the sources of the form, or formal organization, of the artwork. This form is not conceived *ab extra*, nor is it vaguely or implicitly borrowed; it emerges from the intuitive apprehension of the wealth of meaning implicit in the world of values that develop in her imagination in this process. The creation of the form is an active response to the logic,

wealth, and kind of meaning the artist is trying to communicate. It dictates the structure of the form; put differently, the form bursts out of the bosom of this meaning. However, it emerges, or bursts out, in accordance with the affectional, intellectual, and volitional temper of her mind as a particular individual. This type of temper is the basis of the artist's style. It is her spiritual disposition, as reflected in the way she sees, understands, and expresses her feelings, emotions, experiences, and inner self. It is the language she uses in expressing herself about herself and the world. Style is the image of the artist's soul. Do we not recognize the author of a painting, sculpture, or novel by its style? Her style is a mirror of her mind. The more we penetrate the elements that make up the unity of the representation of one of her works, the more we apprehend the depth of her mind. Is it an accident that the aesthetic experience is dialogical in character, not only in the sense that it is a means of communication, but also in the sense that it is a conversation between the aesthetic perceiver and the artist?

Aesthetic Experience

The second sphere of the aesthetic is the aesthetic experience. The medium in which his kind of experience takes place is aesthetic perception. The artwork comes to life as an aesthetic object in the process of experiencing it aesthetically. This object unfolds in the experience as a world of human meaning because the artistic dimension the artist creates is essentially a realization of human values. Every one of the qualities that make up its structure is a concrete instantiation of a human value. What is prettiness, nobility, gracefulness, tragedy, magnanimity, or grandeur but realized human values? Ontologically, the aesthetic object exists as an aesthetic flare in the aesthetic experience, and outside the aesthetic experience, it exists as a potentiality. For example, Davinci's *Mona Lisa* hangs on the wall of a room in the Louvre. The destruction of this painting is, in effect, a destruction of the human world that inheres in it as a potentiality. That which is a potential does not exist as a sensuously perceivable element of the representation I see when I cast a contemplative look at the painting; it inheres in the formal organization of the representation. But, as a potentiality, the artist creates a kind of written script, and aesthetic perception is a kind of reading it. Both the script and the reading are eidetic in character. Otherwise, how can the art critic extrapolate the values or meanings implicit in the artwork conceptually?

However, whether it is in the mode of written script or reading it, the artwork does not merely exist as an object to the senses or the intellect, but to the mind. It is a noetic object. Neither of these two faculties constructs the aesthetic object. The senses or the intellect are the means, agents, or medium through which the aesthetic object comes into being as a world of human meaning. The aesthetic qualities that comprise the artistic dimension of the artwork reside in its formal organization as a potentiality; they are not elements of the representation. Perceiving them is an activity of reading the formal organization eidetically under certain perceptual conditions. This kind of reading is an activity of penetrating the physical or intellectual dimension of the representation into the qualities that inhere within the dynamic interrelatedness of the elements that compose it as a unity. In this activity, the physical or conceptual elements undergo a change of identity; they get spiritualized by virtue of the aesthetic qualities that inhere in them. I do not perceive a color, a sound, or an image in terms of the qualities it embodies. As I indicated in the first part of this essay, the physical medium of the artwork expresses sensuous aesthetic qualities. The dynamic relations that connect the elements that make up the structure of the medium are the ontic locus of the artistic and meta-physical qualities. The point which merits special emphasis here is that the aesthetic, that is, the sensual or intellectual medium, is transformed into a spiritual reality and emerges in the aesthetic experience as an aesthetic object that unfolds in the experience as a world of human meaning. This world may be small or large, grand or mediocre, dull or exuberant, pretty or wicked. Nevertheless, it is a human world because its building blocks are realized human values. The process of aesthetic perception is a process in which the aesthetic perceiver leaves the sensual or intellectual world and

moves into a world of human meaning. That which is aesthetic comes to life as human meaning. Let me illustrate this whole train of thought by a brief analysis of Plate 81, *Proud Monster (Fiero Monstruo)* in Goya's *Disasters of War*, a collection of 80 plates drawn and etched by the artist. This work antedates Picasso's *Guernica*.

When I approach this work with the intention of perceiving it aesthetically, my eyes see an amalgam of lines and colors composed in a rather jumbled, confused, and almost fitful manner. They cannot identify what they see. However, the eyes that see this drawing are human eyes. They are agents of communicating particular types of sensations to my mind, which interprets the amalgam of lines and colors according to its capacities and functions. As agents, they merely see, in the sense of report, the representation of an animal devouring a human being. Only a cultivated mind, one that can read representations or depictions eidetically, can see this composition of lines and colors as a huge animal gulping a human being mainly because it knows what it means to "devour" or "gulp" means and what "human being" and "animal" means, which implies knowledge of the implications of devouring by a huge animal. Accordingly, the judgment or interpretation of this scene is based on analogy. The analogy serves as the basis for judgment or interpretation. However, it is not a conceptual judgment or interpretation.

But, is that all my eyes see when I contemplate *Proud Monsters*? No. The sensual qualities of the lines and the way they are organized into a particular representation are dark, rough, and confused; they evoke a feeling of restlessness and uneasiness. The scene is set against a barren space punctuated by scattered, wavy, disparate lines, suggesting desolation and a sensation of awry-ness, as if the ground on which the animal is devouring the human being is gooey and shifty. A close examination of the way this animal is situated and gorging its prey greedily will reveal that this animal, which may be a mule, a hippopotamus, or a bear, is formidable and irresistible. Yet, the is not conceptual or discursive but eidetic.

If we consider these and related qualities and the social and cultural context in which this work is created, and if we try to grasp its significance or the point of creating it, we can, by dint of the distinctness of the qualities that come to life in our imagination, penetrate them into a more profound meaning: *monstrosity of war*. This assertion is based on the assumption I have just explicated, that the artistic dimension implicit in the formal organization of the artwork is an eidetic language and that the aesthetic perceiver is skilled in reading the script it embodies. We can read the entire representation eidetically as an allegory, one that expresses "The Monstrous." Accordingly, if we contemplate it as an allegory, we can see, or read, the monstrous animal as war, its prey as human beings, and the desolation that enfolds them as the poverty of human existence caused by the war. This interpretation of the allegory is consistent with that of Plate 69, where Goya writes on the body of the human being, "nada", meaning "nothing." This word does not denote the philosophical movement of nihilism, which some members of the 19th-century intelligentsia championed, but the destructiveness of war and the wasteland it creates. We can, moreover, focus on the figure of the monstrous animal and view it as a metaphor that represents the irrationality that lurks in the minds and hearts of the selfish politicians and greedy leaders in their endeavor to amass wealth and power.

In this drawing, Goya does not discuss, analyze, or argue about the atrocities and ugliness of war, nor does he lament man's inhumanity to man; oh, no, he presents, depicts, and shows us the true nature of war and especially what it can do. These and similar aesthetic qualities are not given to the faculty of sensual perception; they inhere as a potentiality in the formal organization of the drawing.

Aesthetic Truth

By "aesthetic truth," I mean the truth revealed in the aesthetic experience. I assume that concept, which serves as the vehicle of expression and communication in science and philosophy, is not the only means of conveying the various types of truth we seek and experience, perceptually, intuitively, or speculatively. Neither scientific nor philosophical truth is paradigmatic. They are fundamental

kinds of human truth. The mystery of human existence resists human understanding. Is it an accident that a philosopher such as Pascal would say that “the heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of” and a little later, “we know the truth not only by reason, but by the heart”? It is more appropriate to argue that the various sciences, philosophies, and arts jointly and cooperatively communicate the different dimensions of the truth of human experience of the world. How can it be otherwise if the human being experiences nature and human nature in amazingly different ways, or if reality in all its manifestations and modes of being requires different methods of probing its structure?

Like the philosopher, the artist seeks the meaning of existence in general and the meaning of human existence in particular: why does the universe exist rather than not? Why do I exist rather than? Does the cosmic process have a purpose? Is it eternal or created at a moment in time? Does time pre-exist its creation? But, alas, how should I live and die as a human being? Is there a better or worse way of leading a human way of life? What are the powers of the mind? Why is there evil in the world? I could extend this list of complex and frequently perplexing questions, but I think I have made my point sufficiently. The artist is the kind of inquirer who sees, interprets, and communicates her understanding of the meaning of the various dimensions of experience eidetically, depictively; she perceives reality as it is—as a possibility and as an actuality—and tries to present it eidetically in pictorial, acoustic, plastic, active, or literary forms of representation. The cognitive mechanism of seeing and apprehending the truth is not merely intellectual, although it may involve concepts and reasoning. It is not a logical movement from a primary proposition to derivative propositions, and then to a conclusion. It is a function of the imagination as the unity of all the powers of the mind. It is an intuitive, or pre-reflective, faculty. It perceives a mental content or an aspect of experience in the fullness of its being and its relatedness to the whole of which it is a part; put differently, it intuits the parts as elements of the whole and the whole in the unity of the parts. This is an essential feature of eidetic thinking. The values the artist contemplates in their schematic and realized modes of being exist in her mind in the mode of potentiality. However, as I argued in the first part of my discussion, the domain of this potentiality is a possibility for infinite realization in different ways and forms. The human depth the artwork embodies derives its extent or measure from this infinity. The more the artist penetrates this depth and articulates it in a certain form, the greater the human depth the artwork embodies.

The depth that unfolds in my experience when I undergo an aesthetic experience of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, or Goethe's *Faust* surpasses in magnitude the depth of artworks such as Trollope's *The Warden*, Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or a Beetle's song. The world that unfolds in my experience of Goethe's *Faust*, for example, is a stage on which the meaning of existence in general and the meaning of human existence in particular in its nobility, tragedy, divinity, joy, sorrow, wickedness, profanity, mediocrity, and sublimity opens up as a living presence. I exist in this world during the experience. In contrast, the scientific or philosophical work exists in my mind; I do not exist in it. Regardless of whether I experience Goethe's dramatic work in a movie, on stage, or in a reading, it is an activity of revealing, disclosing, or displaying the truth of the meaning of existence. I may think, at least to some extent, this truth, but I especially see it, feel it, and comprehend it with my mind and heart. This kind of comprehension is achieved from the standpoint of Goethe's worldview. The artwork does not convey the truth in the same way a philosopher or scientist does, and it does not communicate it in the same manner; instead, it displays it.

The capacity of the artwork to display the truth of a dimension of human existence, which enables the aesthetic perceiver not merely to reflect on it intellectually as an object of curiosity but to see it as a living spectacle that engage all the faculties of her mind, is what endows the artwork with the power of transformation—of making an existential difference in the way we think, feel, and act. Can I remain silent, apathetic, or indifferent after I penetrate the aesthetic world of works such as Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, Davinci's *Mona Lisa*, Picasso's *Guernica*, Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, or Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*?

Why is the experience of truth, and more specifically, participating in its realization or creation in the aesthetic experience, and comprehending its significance, validity, and essential relevance to leading a human way of life, transformative in character? First, the desire, impulse, or craving for the truth is innate to human nature. Even though neither philosophers nor scientists can establish reliable criteria for ascertaining the truth of human experience and nature, the craving for truth remains a fundamental need in human nature. Do we not do our best to make sure that our friend is honest, affectionate, and loyal; our spouse-to-be is loving and understanding; our political leaders are competent and honest; our children are happy and prosperous; our religious leaders are truly faithful and competent servants of the congregation; our army can protect the country, and most of all, our life-projects express the inner demands of our humanity?

Second, the activity of seeing, feeling, and comprehending the truth of any aspect of the meaning of human life is not merely discursive but existential. The truth I comprehend when I undergo an aesthetic experience of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, or Munch's *The Scream* does not sit in a drawer of my mind, which I can examine on demand, because my mind is not a kind of box or an enclosure, but fuses, i.e., blends with, and gets incorporated into the essential structure of my mind. This kind of blending or incorporation is additive, accumulative, and expansive in character because the truth that is apprehended by the mind necessarily, inherently, changes the way I think, feel, or desire. Can I think the same about a family member, friend, or neighbor after I discover that they are liars, dishonest, or opportunists? Can I, as an executive of a corporation, pursue a marketing or managerial policy that fails? Can I, as a medical scientist, manufacture a medicine if I discover that it is, in some cases, ineffective or harmful? In any area of human experience, the discovery and especially comprehension of the truth is transformative, and the extent or measure of the transformation is commensurate with the apprehension of the depth of the truth discovered or comprehended.

The fundamental idea that underlies the assertion that the quest for truth is a craving of human nature and that it is a transformative power is supported by Aristotle's dictum that man, *Anthropos*, by nature desires to know. This dictum should not be taken lightly; it is profound for two reasons. First, the desire to know reflects the deepest underpinnings of the impulse to human life. Indeed, knowledge is not only a necessary condition to thrive as a human being, but also defines the primary nature of the human essence. Knowledge is power, Francis Bacon said. However, the central question that stares people in the face is not merely biological life, but human life—that is, living in the world according to the values that emanate from human essence. However, as I emphasized earlier, this essence is not given as a ready-made reality, but rather as a reality to be created. How can it be realized? How can it be created? How can the human being exist as a human individual, or as an autonomous human being? Knowledge as power is the source of the vision and the means of realizing the human essence concretely in the world. Second, the wrong kind of knowledge undermines the possibility of human growth and development at the individual and communal levels. Accordingly, the desire for knowledge is in effect a desire for the truth. Indeed, the desire for the truth is implicit in the desire for knowledge. The point which calls for special attention here is that the craving for truth is *sine qua non* for any human activity we perform in the course of our daily lives, theoretically and practically because (1) the desire and (2) quest for knowledge is directly or indirectly implied in thinking about or embarking on any meaningful course of action in science, philosophy, technology, political, and personal life.

Now, dear reader, spread the scope of your active and analytical inquiry on the scheme of nature in the broadest possible range of human vision or thinking, then shift the range of your inquiry to the domain of biological and spiritual being, and finally shift it to the realm of human civilization in its exceptional richness, regardless of whether these achievements are good, bad, or ugly. Yes, let your synoptic vision linger on this unusually complex realm of reality and try to comprehend its nature, foundation, and purpose, especially its meaning. It does not matter whether the mind of any human

being can embrace, much less grasp, the meaning and being of these details individually or as a whole. What matters is that you can stand on the fringe of existence in its extent and contemplate it in its boundlessness. Is the passion that flames in your mind and heart to know the meaning of this boundlessness *irresistible*?

The Beautiful in Fine Art

The time is ripe to elucidate the thesis that the artwork is beautiful inasmuch as it is true, and that it is true inasmuch as it expresses or communicates human depth. Implicit in this thesis is the assumption that the truth expressed or communicated by the work is aesthetic in character. Now, in what sense is an artwork beautiful? This question asks for the kinds of features that define beauty in the fine arts. It, moreover, implies that the artwork would be beautiful even if the truth it expresses or communicates is ugly or reveals the dark, destructive, or wicked side of human nature.

Let me at once posit that the beauty of the artwork is not one of its given constitutive qualities, for example, prettiness, sadness, grace, magnanimity, or irony. These and similar qualities exist as potentialities in the formal organization of the artwork; they constitute its artistic dimension. Beauty is a value; it is the only value we can ascribe to or assert of the artwork. Moreover, beauty does not exist as a physical, psychological, metaphysical, anthropological, or universal essence. Value can exist as a universal, but the beauty of an artwork does not, and it is not an instantiation of the universal because it does not exist in the world as a concrete reality; accordingly, it cannot be an object of reflection or conception in the artistic process or the aesthetic experience. What is more striking is that the artist does not, in the act of artistic creation, aim at beauty or at creating a beautiful work, although the work she aspires to create may be exceptionally beautiful or a luminous presence of beauty. Put differently, beauty is not the object of creation. We do not encounter something called “beauty” in museums, libraries, art centers, books, or nature; we encounter beautiful objects. Different types of objects can be created, but not beauty. The type of object the artist aims at is essentially cognitive. It is not intended for practical use, such as entertainment, propaganda, killing time, education, or escape from loneliness or boredom, even though it may serve these and similar purposes. The primary aim, indeed preoccupation, of the artist is the articulation of the meaning of an aspect or dimension of existence in general and human existence in particular, and expressing her knowledge or understanding pictorially, acoustically, literally, plastically, or actively. The point is to understand this aspect or dimension, capture its depth, and ex-press, i.e. press out, the most appropriate eidetic form in which it can inhere as a potentiality. The truth the form expresses is not scientific or philosophical; it is the truth the artist knows or envisages as an artist. It is the kind of truth that can be read and experienced eidetically. It comes to life in the experience of the aesthetic perceiver as an illumination, as a revelation, as a living flame of human meaning.

Truth is beautiful! An artwork is beautiful inasmuch as the truth that it represents is a significant abundance of human depth. The greater the depth, the greater its beauty. What is “human depth”? This concept represents the highest possible dimension of the values that emanate from human essence, and whose realization in a concrete human experience is a moment of growth and development. The more erudite, extensive, exuberant, and abundant the scope of this realization, the deeper and more profound is the work, the deeper the truth the artwork expresses. This assertion is based on the assumption I discussed in the first part of this essay, namely, that as a schema, a value is an inexhaustible possibility for realization in various ways and forms. Accordingly, the possibilities for human growth and development are limitless. What is the development and progress of the human being and human civilization but a process of realizing the values of truth, beauty, goodness, freedom, and religiosity in human life? What are the ingredients of this process? The basis of the claim is that the more the artwork reveals the truth of human existence, the more it is beautiful. Let me illustrate the implications of this fundamental assumption with an example.

When I stand, or rather sit, before Davinci's *Mona Lisa* and contemplate it aesthetically in the totality of its details—forehead, eyes, eyebrows, nose, lips, hands, posture against a natural scene, in short, every element that contributes to the aesthetic dimension of the painting before which I sit (I say sit because it takes long time to pay a serious aesthetic visit to this great work)—penetrate all these details into the aesthetic world they embody, I find myself, first, in the presence of a look, not an ordinary look, but a human look that speaks, a look that is in a conversation with an indefinite space, with a space that extends beyond the present moment of space into an infinity of space and time. I find myself in the middle of this presence; I find myself spying on the kind of dialogue that is going on between Mona and this infinity, not only because I am merely curious, but especially because the content of the dialogue is intriguing. Alas, a dialogue with infinity? How daring! How adventurous! How courageous! What does this dialogue signify? What kind of mental posture does my mind assume in this contemplative moment? In this look, Mona has summoned into my mind not merely the question of the meaning of existence in general, but also the meaning of my existence. She has summoned the significance and implications of the “why” of all “whys” of existence. How can the finite stand, much less think, the infinite?

Second, the look that lures me into this posture of mind is not alone in this dialogue with infinity because my aesthetic gaze gradually yet necessarily moves toward the mouth, and more concisely toward the lips. Broadly, lips speak, but in the present conversation, they have a dialogue with the look that flows from the eyes. They respond to the bewilderment of the look, to the fact that by its very nature it is overwhelming. The response comes in the form of a smile that embodies the quintessence of cynicism. But, the cynicism it expresses is neither philosophical nor psychological, but metaphysical: *Enigma*. It expresses human helplessness in the face of an existence that is distinguished by mystery, but it also expresses the readiness of the human being to confront this mystery, this riddle, this recalcitrant and indescribable enigma. Is it an accident that the mythical greedy king of Corinth, Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a heavy stone forever back up a hill, only to roll it up again after it falls to the ground? This was his destiny. He could have committed suicide, but he did not. Why? Is it because human life is more valuable than death, being infinitely more valuable than non-being, regardless of the crushing suffering, pain, or hardships people usually face in the course of their lives? But the question remains: why does the universe exist rather than not? Why do I exist rather than not? Why should I struggle to build the mansion of only life, which is dearest to my heart, if I know that the monster of non-being shall swallow me up? These and many subsidiary questions throng the mind of a self-conscious and thoughtful human being. Many artists, such as Sophocles, Dante, Milton, Michelangelo, Melville, Mann, Beethoven, Tolstoy, and Goethe, to name just a few distinguished artists, have sought to convey the meaning of human existence through a profound portrayal of the drama of human existence from various worldviews.

The measure, or criteria, of beauty as a value of the artwork is commensurate with the depth of the human values that come to life as a world of meaning in the aesthetic experience. The stuff of this world is realized values. The more extensive the domain of aesthetic qualities—sensual, artistic, and metaphysical—the greater the beauty of the artwork. We ascribe to or assert the beauty of the work after aesthetic experience is completed. It is ordinarily formed in moment of reflection and evaluation of the magnitude of the human depth implicit in it. The ascription or judgment of beauty is relative, in the sense that it is based on our understanding of human nature and the extent to which the human depth the artwork reveals is richer, poorer, or greater than the beauty of other artworks. However, the beauty we ascribe to the work is not merely psychologically subjective, personally idiosyncratic, or culturally conditioned, although it may reflect some of these three influences; on the contrary, it is objective. When I say *Mona Lisa* is beautiful, the beauty I assert of it is *in the work*, not merely in mind. I experience it in my mind, because the judgment is based on my experience of the human depth the work embodies. It is more appropriate to say that my judgment, “*Mona Lisa* is beautiful,” is based on my apprehension of the truth of the human depth that unfolds in my aesthetic experience.

Concluding Remark

"Truth beautifies! You have argued in the first part of your study," a critic who has been following my thread of analysis, "that the three faculties which constitute the essential structure of the human mind, intellect, affection, and volition, function as a unity; accordingly, the existence and function of every one of them implies constructive interaction with the other faculties. In any action people perform in their theoretical and practical life, the human being acts as a unity of the powers of their mind. It follows from this presupposition, as you characterized it, that the five values that you distinguished as the foundation of individual and communal life, viz., truth, beauty, goodness, religiosity, and freedom, necessarily imply each other. They are directly or indirectly involved in all the actions human beings perform. The "I" that acts in every human situation acts as a single, self-conscious being, that is, as a subject that presides over the design and implementation of the action.

"However, in your analysis of the meaning and ontological status of beauty, you argued that aesthetic beauty is the only value we can attribute to the artwork. The question that puzzles me as a reader of your essay is, what is the relation of beauty to the other values? Are the other values in any way interrelated? What is the distinctive feature of beauty in fine art?" First, these two questions ask for an explanation of the relation between the beauty of an artwork and other values. Can the artwork express, in addition to the value of beauty, one or more values? Second, what kind of experience is the aesthetic experience?"

First, the only value we can attribute to the artwork is beauty, primarily because the aim of the artist in the process of artistic creation is to reveal the truth of the meaning of an aspect of human existence and communicate it eidetically, or representationally. The kind of truth revealed in this experience is different in its mode of expression or articulation and its mode of experience from the mode of expression and experience of truth in science, philosophy, religion, politics, or practical life in general. Thus, the ascription of beauty to the artwork is not based on a direct quality or element in the work but a judgment formed after the aesthetic experience is consummated. This kind of judgment is based on the extent to which (1) the artwork expresses a profound human depth, and (2) is skillfully conceived and articulated. Moreover, the assertion that the artwork is beautiful does not necessarily imply that the other values are not expressed in it; on the contrary, their presence is what makes the work beautiful. Indeed, the more they are present, the greater the human depth, the more beautiful the work is. However, they do not exist as values, but as constitutive qualities of the artistic dimension of the work. This line of reasoning also applies to the other values. For example, in a moral situation, the only value we can ascribe to the moral action is the moral value itself, such as justice, courage, or honesty, primarily because the aim of the action is the realization of the value of justice, courage, or honesty. We judge the action as just, courageous, or honest after the action is consummated, that is, when we ascertain that the action was performed on the basis of a concept or standard of justice, courage, or honesty. The other values, such as truth, religiosity, or freedom, are represented in the action as realized values and exist in the action as moral qualities. Can action be courageous if it is not true or if it violates the religious sentiment and freedom of the people involved in the situation?

Second, the experience of beauty in fine art is elevating, enlightening, fulfilling, and ennobling! The basis of these and related features is the profundity of the human depth that unfolds as a world of meaning in the aesthetic experience, in which the aesthetic perceiver stands inside this world and before it, that is, in which she does not act merely as an observer but also as a participant in its construction. I become one with the work in this experience. We cannot un-experience what we have experienced, and we cannot unknow what we know. The truth of the human depth I experience not only makes me free or to desire the good, the holy, or the noble, but it also empowers me to grow and develop as a human being. Beauty illuminates individual and communal existence. Do we not feel elevated, fulfilled, and exhilarated when we complete a significant project, perform a good deed to another human being, or contemplate the mystery and grandeur of the universe, and do we

not feel the presence of the power that underlies this whole cosmos? Do we not feel enlightened when we delve deep into the world of meaning expressed in works such as Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, Michaelangelo's *Moses*, or St. Paul's Cathedral in London? I assume, in raising these rhetorical questions, that the human as such is the highest reality on our planet, that it is intrinsically good, and that it is a flame of life. Is there a more worthwhile goal to pursue than to be a spark of this flame?

Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi, USA

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