

a work of fine art. It may belong to useful and mechanical art, or even to science, as a product following definite rules which are capable of being learned and which must be closely followed. But the pleasing form imparted to the work is only the vehicle of communication and a mode, as it were, of execution, in respect of which one remains to a certain extent free, notwithstanding being otherwise tied down to a definite end. So we demand that tableware, or even a moral dissertation, and, indeed, a sermon, must bear this form of fine art, yet without its appearing *studied*. But one would not call them on this account works of fine art. A poem, a musical composition, a picture-gallery, and so forth, would, however, be placed under this head; and so in a would-be work of fine art we may frequently recognize genius without taste, and in another taste without genius.

## § 49

*The faculties of the mind which constitute genius*

OF certain products which are expected, partly at least, to stand on the footing of fine art, we say they are devoid of *spirit*; and this, although we find nothing to censure in them as far as taste goes. A poem may be very pretty and elegant, but is devoid of spirit. A narrative has precision and method, but is devoid of spirit. A speech on some festive occasion may be good in substance and ornate withal, but may be devoid of spirit. Conversation frequently is not devoid of entertainment, but yet devoid of spirit. Even of a woman we may well say, she is pretty, affable, and refined, but devoid of spirit. Now what do we mean here by 'spirit'?

'*Spirit*' in an aesthetic sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind. But that whereby this principle animates the soul—the material which it employs for that purpose—is that which sets the mental powers into a swing that is purposive, i.e. into a play which is self-maintaining and which strengthens those powers for such activity.

Now my proposition is that this principle is nothing else than the 314 faculty of presenting *aesthetic ideas*. But, by an aesthetic idea I mean that representation of the imagination which evokes much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. *concept*, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never quite fully capture or render completely intelligible.—It is

easily seen, that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which, conversely, is a concept, to which no *intuition* (representation of the imagination) can be adequate.

The imagination (as a productive faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. It affords us entertainment where experience proves too commonplace; and we even use it to refashion experience, always following, no doubt, laws that are based on analogy, but still also following principles which have a higher seat in reason (and which are every whit as natural to us as those followed by the understanding in laying hold of empirical nature). By this means we come to feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of the imagination), with the result that the material can be borrowed by us from nature in accordance with that law, but be worked up by us into something else—namely, what surpasses nature.

Such representations of the imagination may be termed *ideas*. This is partly because they at least strain after something lying out beyond the confines of experience, and so seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts (i.e. intellectual ideas), thus giving to these concepts the semblance of an objective reality. But, on the other hand, there is this most important reason, that no concept can be wholly adequate to them as internal intuitions. The poet essays the task of giving sensible form to the rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, and so forth. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all vices, as also love, fame, and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of an imagination, which in reaching for a maximum emulates the precedent of reason, to present them for the senses with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel; and it is in fact precisely in the poetic art that the faculty of aesthetic ideas can show itself to full advantage. This faculty, however, regarded solely on its own account, is properly no more than a talent (of the imagination).

If, now, we attach to a concept a representation of the imagination 315 belonging to its presentation, but evoking solely on its own account such a wealth of thought as would never admit of comprehension in a definite concept, and, as a consequence, giving aesthetically an unbounded expansion to the concept itself, then the imagination here