The poet speaks more of the universal, while the historian speaks of particulars.

-Aristotle (Poetics)

1 Introduction

- Next Week’s Class: 30-min Debates
  1. Divide into teams of 8-10 people
  2. Next class each team will be assigned
     (i) One of Kant’s Criteria, and
     (ii) a side to argue: i.e., Affirmative or Negative
  3. 15 minutes for each team to prepare
  4. 3 speakers for each side (Opener, Rebuttal, Conclusion)
  5. 5 minutes for each speaker

- Today’s Focus: How AESTHETICS interacts with other branches of philosophy
  (in particular, ETHICS and LOGIC)

1.1 Review: Subfields of Philosophy

- Recall: Aesthetics is a subfield of PHILOSOPHY
  - METAPHYSICS: What is? Or what is REAL?
    What things exist? How do they relate?
    → the study of EXISTENCE
  - LOGIC: What is TRUE?
    How do I know what is TRUE?
    → The study of VALID REASONING

- EPISTEMOLOGY: How do we know anything?
  How do I know what I know?
  → the study of KNOWLEDGE
- ETHICS: What is GOOD/MORAL for an individual?
  How do I know how which ACTIONS to take?
  → the study of MORALITY/CONDUCT
- POLITICS: What is GOOD/MORAL for society?
  How should we be behave as a society?
  How should we be governed?
  → the study of GOVERNMENT/POLICY

- AESTHETICS: What is SUBLIME/BEAUTIFUL?
  How do I know what is SUBLIME?
  How do I know what is BEAUTIFUL?

Question: Who cares about beauty/sublimity compared to issues of

- TRUTH
- EXISTENCE
- KNOWLEDGE
- MORALITY and
- GOVERNMENT?

- IDEA: Maybe aesthetics and its subject matter can give us insight into these other branches of philosophy
  1 Aesthetics and TRUTH (logic, metaphysics)
  2 Aesthetics and MORALITY and POLITICS

- We’ll look at PLATO and ARISTOTLE’s views on how aesthetics gives (or doesn’t give) us insight into these issues
2 Aesthetics and TRUTH

- **Q:** Can ART/AESTHETICS provide insight into what exists and what’s true?

**Plato’s Theory of Forms:** Reality consists of two realms:

(i) The material world that we perceive through our senses:
   - Objects are transient, defective

(ii) A perfect realm that contains true, eternal and perfect FORMS
   - These forms possess the highest level of truth

- The objects we perceive are imitations/ shadows of the “true forms”

- **Art, as an imitation of imitations, is even further removed from truth**

- I.e., Plato’s answer to the question: ‘No.’

- Aristotle also believed in a division between the material world and true forms...

- ...but he believed that elements in the material world all contain some essence of the true form.

**So what did he think about art?**

...poetry is more philosophical and more momentous than history. *The poet speaks more of the universal, while the historian speaks of particulars.* It is universal that when certain things turn out a certain way someone will in all likelihood or of necessity act or speak in a certain way—which is what the poet, though attaching particular names to the situation, strives for. (Poet. 1451a38–1451b10)

- Poetry (as a type of art) is not an “imitation of imitations” to Aristotle
- It expresses **universal truths and themes** about human nature
- We can interpret all art in this way - i.e., as expressing universal truths and themes
- Aristotle’s answer to the question is yes!
- Art provide an abstraction from the particulars of real life that allows us to glimpse true underlying forms
- In this way, the aesthetic experience (as triggered by art) teaches us important things about ourselves

*Plato’s "Allegory of the Cave", drawing by Markus Maurer*
Q: Can BEAUTY provide insight into what exists and what’s true?

- Plato had a different opinion regarding BEAUTY (Greek kalon)

- In Phaedrus (250d–256b) and Symposium, Plato observes that beautiful things trigger reflection on the part of the observer

- As reflection is a key in the philosophical pursuit of discovering truth, beauty is good

Q: Is this compatible with Kant’s view of the AESTHETIC judgement?

1. is subjective (a felt judgement, not an intellectual calculation)
2. is universal (not in the eye of the beholder)
3. is DISINTERESTED (value independent of usefulness/benefit to perceiver)
4. Engages imagination and intellect (in addition to the senses)

Question: Is Plato’s view of beauty as a trigger for philosophical reflection incompatible with Kant’s view of the aesthetic judgement as crucially disinterested?

- Plato: Beauty triggers philosophical reflection and therefore is good
- Kant: Beauty judgements must be disinterested, i.e., something is beautiful if we judge it so independent of any purpose/usefulness

Kant is making a claim about what makes something beautiful
Plato is making a claim about whether beauty is GOOD/BAD

3 Aesthetics and MORALITY and POLITICS

Q: Can ART/AESTHETICS provide guidance towards how an individual should behave?

- Plato: Art (in the form of poetic narrative) strongly influences youths

  - Appreciation for beauty will make young people prefer noble deeds over "ugly, vulgar" deeds
  - ...but artistic depictions of dishonesty, greed, and viciousness might foster these sorts of strong emotions and bad behaviour in young people

- Plato also considered “the beauty of poetic lines” to be deceptive
  i.e., the beauty of poetic language can mask the truth/moral value of the underlying content

- Because of these possible negative influences...

  ... Plato considered it better to ban the performances of Greek tragedies in his ideal republic
Q: Can ART/AESTHETICS provide guidance towards how an individual should behave?

• Aristotle, in contrast, believed that dramatic depictions of dishonesty, greed and violence were a good thing

• By expressing these emotions to the audience, dramas allow these sort of negative emotions to be purged without acting upon them

( Greek katharsis)

HW: Instagram Assignment:

1. Find an example of something beautiful that you think either
   (i) expresses a universal truth
   (ii) motivates noble/moral behaviour

2. Post it to the class Instagram, and explain in a comment

3. Remember to identify with your student code in the comment!

4 Debate and Argumentation

• Why should I believe something?
  What persuaded me to believe this?

• Aristotle’s Modes of Persuasion
  1 Pathos - An appeal to emotion (e.g., envy, fear, hatred, pity, pride)
  2 Ethos - An appeal to authority (e.g., president, majority, doctors)
  3 Logos - An appeal to reason

• We can appeal to reason by providing a Logical Argument

• A logical argument consists of
  1 Premises (premise 1, premise 2, ..., premise n)
  2 A Conclusion

• Two Kinds of Arguments:
  1 Deductive Argument:
     The premises entail the conclusion (i.e., provide conclusive proof)
  2 Inductive Argument:
     The premises are evidence, but not conclusive proof

• A Deductive Argument can be a:
  1 Valid Argument:
     The premises entail the conclusion
  2 Sound Argument:
     The premises entail the conclusion, and the premises are true.

• We can present the argument by presenting the premises first, and then presenting the conclusion (a bottom-up approach)
  – Advantage: You can avoid your audience’s preconceptions re: the truth of the conclusion
  – Disadvantage: You might lose your audience before you get to the conclusion!
• Or you could take a top-down approach 
eg. the A-R-E Method

• **Assertion:** Assertion/conclusion

• **Reasoning:** Premises and deduction
  → establish the **validity** of your argument

• **Evidence:** Justification of premises
  → establish the **soundness** of your argument

### 4.1 An A-R-E Style Argument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controversial Claim:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safe-Injection Sites are good for society.</strong></td>
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- **Assertion:** Safe-Injection Sites are good for society.

- **Reasoning:**
  1. Safe-Injection Sites reduce the harm to drug-users
  2. Safe-Injection Sites facilitate useful research on drug use
  3. Safe-Injection Sites do not increase drug-use
  4. Safe-Injection Sites are cost-effective for society

- **Evidence for Reason 1:** (Marshall et al. 2011)
  1. The provision of clean needles prevents transmission of dangerous diseases like HIV, Hep-C
  2. Fatal overdoses nearby Vancouver’s Insite reduced by 35%, compared to 9% in other areas of Vancouver

- **Evidence for Reason 2:** (Wood et al. 2006)
  1. Studies on correlation of Insite and (i) public injection drug use, (ii) publicly discarded syringes, (iii) HIV and Hep-C transmission, (iv) drug-related crime, (v) use of drug treatment services
  2. Studies on correlations between types of drug-users and consistent Insite users (eg., demographics)

- **Evidence for Reason 3:** (Wood et al. 2006)
  1. Rate of relapse into injection drug use did not significantly increase/decrease
  2. Only 1/1066 people reported their first injection at Insite

- **Evidence for Reason 4:** (Andersen & Boyd 2010)
  1. Per year, ≈ 35 new HIV cases; 3 deaths, avoided due to Insite
  2. Medical care for a new HIV infection: $50 000-200 000
  3. Deaths cost the government/tax-payers in terms of lost productivity and medical costs (∼ $1.37 million/ person)

### References


