

PHILOSOPHY IN LITERATURE

The question of what is philosophy, leads, it would seem, inevitably to diverse and conflicting, if not at times contradictory, answers. It is not only a matter of different philosophic perspectives, but also of fundamentally opposed conceptions of philosophy. Varying philosophic intentions and aims underlie what is taken to be the nature of philosophy and disagreement abounds. Philosophies then tend to differ not so much in terms of what they disagree about but what they consider philosophically sound and important. Phenomenology may share some concerns about basic philosophic problems, like intentionality, with ordinary language philosophy. But they diverge again sharply about the question of what philosophy should accomplish for, and what difference it makes to, human knowledge and understanding. The one sees intentionality as *the* pervasive structure of human consciousness and reality, and the other sees it as simply part of the various ways in which the uses of language can explain, and thus do away with, philosophical questions on perplexity. This difference about what philosophy should accomplish, its purpose, is not resolvable. It is what on each approach must be considered the very nature of philosophy and its primary task.

A philosophic difference of another sort can be found in philosophy as it appears in literature. In literature philosophy takes

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on an independent character and sets itself apart from traditional philosophy as developed by creative and professional philosophers and various philosophical movements. Literature, of course, is not directly and primarily philosophy but art. And it is as art that we should first of all consider it. But even as art many works of literature are bound up with the philosophy or philosophies they disclose. In contrast philosophy is not directly and primarily art, though as a form of literature it may be judged artistically as in the dialogues of Plato or the works of Nietzsche. Instead, philosophy is basically a critical and reflective inquiry, the intention and aim of which is to arrive at a reasonable and intelligible account and understanding of whatever questions and problems it judges important and significant. At the same time, however, philosophies disagree about what should be considered reasonable and intelligible as well as philosophically important and significant.

Philosophy, however literary in the artistic sense, as with Plato, Nietzsche or Kierkegaard, say, makes use of generalization, abstraction, reason, method, logic, analysis, argument, critical scrutiny and judgment to ground its explanation and understanding of the human condition and the various questions that the world presents for reflective inquiry. It relies primarily on the intellectual and reflective capacities and abilities of individuals who, like Socrates, for example, argue that life should be examined, leaving open what might be discovered or decided. Philosophers seek through philosophy to clarify what is or might be uncritically taken for granted or unreflectively experienced but not necessarily adequately or properly understood. Disagreement among philosophers and philosophies aside, philosophy is reflexive, a turning back of consciousness upon its understanding of self and the world. It is open to any individual who is willing to engage in critical reflection and a rational examination of what is and is not and what should and should not be.

Literature as art, in contrast, offers a view of individuals as they experience and live through conflicts with nature and society. It shows what philosophies, despite the experiences of individuals, attempt to explain discursively. Philosophy, or philosophies, in literature, are there in what the literary work depicts, implicated in whatever characters and situations it presents. The ways in which it is gradually disclosed through what individuals personally

think and feel about their experience invite further reflection. However, philosophy in literature is there, unlike philosophy, first as a rendering of individuals in nature and society, of what might and can be and is experienced. Philosophy in literature presents the experiences and events that enter into what philosophy intentionally sets out to examine reflectively and analytically.

TWO APPROACHES: SOPHOCLES, PLATO

The *Crito* and the *Antigone* are examples of the difference between philosophy and philosophy in literature. The *Crito*, for example, attempts to answer through its philosophic approach the question of the moral obligation of the citizen to obey the law, whether it is just or unjust. The *Antigone*, however, presents the philosophic questions of the moral obligation to obey the law, whether it is just or unjust, as they may actually be encountered as morally troubling questions for citizens as particular individuals as well as a citizenry. Neither fully or exhaustively answers the philosophic questions that the difficulty leads to. Each, instead, in its own philosophic manner, opens up the questions and explores them in a philosophically distinctive but perhaps not totally unrelated way. The solution of the *Crito* rests on Socrates' explicitly rational approach. His arguments are based on and derived from the critical and analytic sorting out of the implications and consequences of various alternatives. The moral significance and ramifications of the basis upon which the individual's decision should be reflectively and reasonably arrived at is philosophically most important. The *Antigone* shows what happens when an individual decides on the basis of what she pre-reflectively knows is philosophically important, what must be decided. And this decision must be made, despite, if not because of, the implications and consequences of no reasonable alternatives. The moral significance and ramifications are there regardless of its basis in any explicitly critical and analytic considerations.

The arguments of Socrates and his philosophic examination of the moral obligation to obey a just and an unjust law as part of the principle of keeping agreements are dramatically and artistically *portrayed* and rendered. But within the dramatic and artistic

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context of Plato's dialogue the issue is: on what reasonable basis should a citizen obey the law, whether just or unjust? The *Antigone* is dramatic literature involved with philosophic differences as actually enacted and in conflict. The question is: what does this question mean to a person who must decide to disobey a law, whether it is just or unjust? Antigone experiences directly the questions of personal philosophic disagreement with others in the lived-through world of particular individuals in a historically specific social order. The *Antigone* shows the conflict developing philosophically. Decisions are being made in concrete and changing situations. The particular standpoints and perspectives that have to be taken create, unknowingly and unforeseeably, undesirable and undesired consequences.

The *Crito* dramatizes a dialogue in which the main concern is the arguments for one view as more reasonable than another. The *Antigone* as drama portrays human beings involved in a conflict of views during which they experience and work out the arguments for what is reasonable or unreasonable. Socrates has to attempt to find out if he can know whether or not one view or another is correct on a formally explicit reasonable basis. Antigone has to act on the acceptance of what pre-reflectively she knows to be morally right, whether or not the basis for her action can be made formally or explicitly reasonable. The *Crito* as literature is about philosophy and what any individual, though only a few will agree, as a citizen vis-a-vis the law, whether just or unjust, should do and why, i.e., on what grounds, for what reasons and for what purpose or purposes. The *Antigone* as literature is philosophy in the immediate experiences of the personal and public lives of individuals with the question of the moral obligation to obey the law that Socrates' own personal experience with the same question brings him to examine rationally. Both are philosophic and both are dramatic. Yet each embodies a distinctive mode of presenting and understanding through philosophy a question that individuals may and do experience, and decide about in different ways.

The *Crito* is philosophy as formally critical, intentionally analytic and rationally reflective according to, *in principle*, shareable and discussable standards of thinking and reasoning. The *Antigone* is philosophy in value, meaning and purpose as experienced and lived, *Lebensphilosophie* or a *Weltanschauung*, if

you will, whether rational or irrational. The *Crito* takes me outside of myself and my own personal experience to what that experience is and how it should be understood on the basis of a formal philosophic analysis and understanding. It takes me outside of myself to what should be considered as relevant and irrelevant and then back to myself. The *Antigone* shows that this “outside” is already there *in* me, as my world in the conscious and unconscious living of my pre-reflective philosophic views and convictions. I may agree or disagree with the arguments of the *Crito*. In one or another way, either partly or completely, it either convinces me or it does not. Whatever my response, it invites rational reflection and assessment. It asks me, too, to philosophize and to question critically the basis not only of my disagreement, not just where I personally stand, but where the matter impersonally stands in relation to me.

To agree or disagree with the *Antigone* is not the primary consideration. It calls for imaginatively seeing and vicariously experiencing the various ways of understanding the particular complexities of the individual human situations it discloses. It does not, or at least in the same explicitly coherent and formally rational manner of the *Crito*, attempt to convince me of one view or another. It renders rather than tells, or renders first of all for the sake of any telling it may lead to or imply. Rational reflection and assessment, though not perhaps completely irrelevant, are, at best, part of the question about the moral obligation to obey the law. For the *Antigone* dramatically reveals the unforeseeable ramifications of this question upon each person and the society. It shows what philosophy means in conflicts of values among particular individuals directly experiencing the questions that morality, society and nature directly and concretely pose and impose.

The philosophy, or philosophies, in *Antigone* are there to be heard and experienced but reflectively interpreted and reconstructed only after their disclosure through the specific characters and events that have taken place. This philosophy, or these philosophies, in *Antigone*, embrace that of Creon, Ismene, Haemon, Tiresias, Jocasta and the chorus as well as and not just those of Creon and Antigone alone. The views and ideas of Antigone and Creon are of course ostensibly prominent. However,

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they represent only the core of the philosophic complexities that are embedded in and emerge from their struggle. The philosophy of the *Crito*, in contrast, singles out as most relevant the philosophic soundness of Socrates' view as right. But it is not just right as Socrates' view, for it also shows, no matter who holds them, the philosophic weaknesses of Crito's and alternative views. The *Antigone* presents us with Antigone, Creon, Tiresias, Haemon, Ismene and the chorus as their expressions, whether correct or incorrect, of differing philosophic responses and evaluations.

FROM "I"...

Each work is philosophic as well as literary but each presents a different view of and approach to what philosophy is about and means. The *Crito* portrays philosophy as an integral part of Socrates' life, his personal experience with the question of the moral obligation to obey the law. His experience of philosophy is intimately involved in the decision he reaches, on the basis of reasons, about this question. But the philosophic approach to this question as part of an individual's life and experience, for example Socrates', is presented as primarily objective. Despite the harmful, destructive consequences that these sorts of questions may bring to the lives and experiences of individuals, they are treated in this approach to philosophy—properly so it should be stressed—as general and abstract issues.

They can then be "answered" according to critical and reflective standards that transcend the personal lives of individuals with their particular and presumably philosophically limited feelings and experiences. In this approach to philosophy these questions touch on matters that bear on the meaning and purpose of human existence as far as science, law, history, religion, morality, justice and philosophy itself are concerned. They are questions about abstract knowledge, explanation and understanding. The "I," so to speak, of my particular, personal experience with the question of the moral obligation to obey the law, whether just or unjust, is transformed into the universal "I," the "I" of humanity or any abstract individual as human.

The *Antigone* presents philosophy as it appears in what

individuals are and do as particular persons whose personal character and history are not just part of the, but their, question. On this approach philosophy is what particular, lived "I's," so to speak, whether for good or bad reasons, are and do. It focuses on what they choose or must come to choose, as the meaning and purpose of their personal existence and individual values, when they confront in and through their immediate experience the philosophic questions of science, law, history, religion, morality and justice. It reveals how and why philosophy and its consequences enter into an individual's life and those of others at a particular place in a particular time in a particular way. In the *Antigone* philosophy is presented as experienced and lived through rather than as in the *Crito* worked out and understood.

TO THE CITY

However, it might and should be asked: are the differences sketched above so sharp and distinct? Does not philosophy as it is presented in literature also depend on generalization, abstraction, analysis, argument, reason, clarity and the like? Does not Sophocles set forth his own philosophic view or views in the *Antigone* as much as Plato does those of Socrates in the *Crito*? Clearly, the *Antigone* through its characters expresses critical, analytic and reasoned views of what is and is not and what should and should not be. Correspondingly, is not the *Crito* literature in the artistic sense that it presents the personal history and experience of Socrates' philosophic approach and how and why these philosophic questions affect him so deeply? Is not the *Crito* imaginative? The "Laws of Athens," for example, question Socrates' right, in a Socratic manner, to leave prison without "official discharge." In Socrates' approach there is the experience of why objectively valid or invalid arguments, adequate or inadequate analyses, are needed before we interpret and re-construct them in accordance with our own philosophic rational and reflective standards. Even in philosophy we must experience and see for ourselves and reflectively decide about what is proposed to us. The personal experiences in philosophy, or of philosophers like Plato and Kant, are not totally irrelevant to their

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objective and rational analyses and explanations. Something they experienced and felt seriously must have led them to see and choose to transcend their experiences and feelings in this arguably impartial philosophic manner. Lastly, why call the conflicts of ideas and values due to different perspectives as they are presented and disclosed in the *Antigone*, which is a work of art as literature, philosophy at all?

TOLSTOI, WORDSWORTH, POPE, GOETHE

Surely, Tolstoi in *War and Peace*, and especially in *Resurrection*, presents his own philosophy as does Wordsworth in his *Ode to Duty*, not to mention Pope's *Essay on Man* or Goethe's *Faust*. In these as in so many other works of literature philosophy is also presented through generalization, abstraction, analysis, argument, reasoning, critical judgment and formal evaluation. It is philosophy in literature but essentially of the same character as in philosophy. Further, the literary artists mentioned above and others, like philosophers, also present their own philosophic views and theories in their works.

These objections, it seems to me, are correct, but only to an extent. There may still be some relevant differences here. Tolstoi, Wordsworth, Pope, Goethe and other literary artists do generalize and reason in a critical and reflective way about the characters and events in their works. They also present certain ideas and views more favorably or more approvingly as well as cogently than they do other ideas and views. Moreover, they offer implicit or latent or indirect arguments and analyses which critical interpretation and evaluation can and often does make evident in attempts to understand the philosophy and philosophies in literary works of art. In these ways it can be seen that they present philosophy in the same manner as philosophers do despite the more directly abstract concern of philosophy and its lesser but also different emphasis in the literary or artistic expression of its ideas and views.

However, the ideas and views presented as philosophy in literature are also much more regional and arise from and through

a response to the concrete situations in particular works of art. The abstract, rational, generalized, critical and analytic foundation, whether implicit or explicit, remains secondary to the embodiment of philosophy in the direct and immediate experience(s) of particular persons and events. Further, the philosophy and philosophies that express and reflect the characters and events in their works do not exclude other equally plausible and tenable philosophic ideas and views. Refutation, argument and justification is less the intention and aim of philosophy in literature than seeing and understanding the world as philosophically meaningful yet endlessly variable.

In literature artists can and do, without concern for the law of non-contradiction or other logical standards, present as equally valuable and true ideas and views that are not their own. They allow for and recognize other, even opposed, philosophies that different individuals as particular persons, given their divergent experiences and encounters with others and their worlds, believe and act upon. The literary work of art as philosophy then can acknowledge the validity of conflicting, even contradictory, philosophies. In this way philosophy in literature may and often does celebrate the varieties and diversities of human experience and understanding. And these philosophies, whether correctly understood or not in some univocally rational or abstractly reasonable sense, express the ideas and views of the individual characters and singular events in the literary work.

Antigone rejects Creon's ideas about law and authority as false and arbitrary as well as irreligious and disrespectful of the dead. But Sophocles acknowledges, whether or not he agrees and approves of them or accepts them as true and justified, the views of Creon also. Nor does or can he ignore or discount what Ismene, Haemon, Tiresias and others have to say about law and authority in its philosophic impact upon each individual and society. Disagreement and opposed conceptions of philosophy are not bothersome in literature as they are in philosophy. Literature does not judge a philosophy as necessarily in need of defense, that it present only one correct point of view and reject all other views as mistaken, unacceptable, or inadequate.

Nonetheless, the views of Socrates in the *Crito* and other dialogues of Plato are also presented artistically as literature. And

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these literary, or aesthetic, qualities in the presentation of the philosophy are integral to an understanding of the philosophic questions to be examined. The approach of Socrates to philosophy is not simply a method like the outline of a course or a study guide or a textbook. Like all philosophy, it is not conceived apart from any particular context or experience of wonder or conflict as a way of coming to understand philosophic questions and ideas. Nor for that matter is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* a purely abstract and rational academic exercise totally divorced from anything specific and concrete. It reflects his own personal reflective experience with and wonder about questions of science and knowledge. Even more important for Kant, the answer to these questions makes it possible to understand morality as practical reason. The standard or more orthodox approaches to Kant's and other philosophic works do not exclude or invalidate personal reflective experience and individual involvement in their philosophic accomplishment. However, here, too, there are some relevant philosophic differences and this argument, though correct, may be misleading.

The intention and aim of the *Crito*, and in its rather different but no less philosophically valid way, of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is rational and objective examination and understanding. As philosophic works they aim at explanation on the grounds of abstraction, analysis, argument, reason, clarification and logic. The foundation and grounds for philosophic truth and validity are intended to be independent of any particular individual or any individual at all. This approach to philosophy requires an equally thoughtful but impartial critical and analytic response. It demands the same rigorous intellectual examination and effort to think through the basis for Socrates', Kant's or any other philosopher's arguments for the ideas and views in question. Hence, the difficulties that many philosophers find with the more "literary" and metaphorical philosophical approaches or artistic philosophies of Plato, Pascal, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and others. Or in a different manner the difficulties that speculative metaphysics leads to in Western philosophy.

The controversy and disagreement about various and diverse approaches to and conceptions of philosophy shows that within philosophy there are many ways to see and to understand the world and the individual. Fundamentally it reflects at the same time that

it raises the question of: what is philosophy? How and why philosophy should be done? What should philosophy be and accomplish? Looked at in this way philosophy also expresses personal dispositions, individual responses and temperaments, possibly even a philosopher's "taste". It is not simply or wholly an objectively reflective form of impartial inquiry that depends primarily on reasoning, analysis, evidence, argument and justification. For these, too, are part of its controversial diversity and the spectrum of philosophy in human history. Nor is this approach simply "marginal" in contrast to "strict" philosophy, philosophy on the side, so to speak.

ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The philosophy or philosophies presented in literature, however, are of even another sort. Literature portrays philosophy as individual expression and discovery, its truth and validity rests on insight, possibility, or personal experience and conviction. With Sophocles, Wordsworth, Tolstoi, Goethe and other literary artists the intention and aim of philosophy emerges from and remains rooted in the experiences of persons with knowledge. Meaning and values make for both certainty and uncertainty in being and becoming human. Philosophy happens, so to speak, as persons live with and through what they see and try to find meaning and purpose in all their, not just cognitive, experience. *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, for example, shows Ivan and others involved in the "everydayness" or "averageness" of Heidegger's *Das Man* from *Being and Time*. It discloses the specific ways of everydayness that overcome and direct all that Ivan and his milieu live for. Ivan's and their lives as everydayness renders the abstract explication and characterization of Heidegger's *Das Man* as a mode of *Existenz* recognizable as a lived, however bleak and muddled, philosophy. Ivan wallows in everydayness and is almost completely indifferent to any standards of reason or principles of value and meaningfulness other than his self-interest, the personal advantage for his social position and public image. Although he comes to understand the shallowness of his ways as he approaches death and becomes more critically reflective, Socratic in a way, about himself and his

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superficial view of human existence, he does so through the experience of seeing through everydayness, his philosophy of life as social position and public success. Ivan does not, however, like Socrates in the *Crito*, follow the arguments wherever they lead so much as he responds, because of an accident, to the philosophic possibility of self-discovery as this physical self-disintegration disposes him toward self-knowledge.

But if the above characterization of philosophy in literature in contrast with philosophy were correct, why even consider the broad and general views about human values, meaning and existence in literature, to be philosophy? Why not see literature as simply unavoidably involved with vague and uncritical ideas and views that can certainly only very loosely be considered philosophy? The ideas and views presented in literature are peripheral and tangential to the more sustained and substantial intentions and aims of strict philosophy as it appears in the *Crito*, *The Critique of Pure Reason* and other works. Literature is primarily art and any philosophy or philosophies it may or may not present are secondarily important. Similarly any literary, artistic or aesthetic qualities and values philosophies may or may not display do not determine their truth. Each remains something distinct and autonomous as far as philosophy being literature and literature being philosophy is concerned. Why should two modes of understanding be confounded? Arguments in support of the view that philosophy in literature is distinct and autonomous at best serve to distort the nature of literature as well as philosophy.

The objection is cogent and deserves serious consideration. There is, for example, no reasonable and intelligible way to argue with and seek a justification for any philosophy or philosophies in the novels of D.H. Lawrence. His philosophy of "instincts" or "sex" reflects at most his personal quirks and idiosyncracies. The novels, with possibly a few significant exceptions, subject to the conflict of interpretations, merely project his irrational approach to the nature of things and the human condition. They are more expressions of his ideology or preconceived *Weltanschauung* than philosophy in a strict or even a marginal sense. The same might be said about any number of literary artists and their works. Hence, no distinction is necessary. And in this way philosophy is kept free of the vagaries and meanderings of literature that some would like

to have considered philosophy in some tenuous sense of that word.

And yet some questions would remain. In the way that literature is more than art and touches on and speaks to the meaning and purpose of values in human existence, philosophy, too, is more than a distinctive and autonomous form of rational and critically reflective inquiry. It may appear and be presented in various forms and modes. The philosophies presented in and for political platforms, economic theories, finance and investment programs, labor movements, corporate management, theories of history, educational reforms, neo-feminism as well as personal ideas and views are philosophy in some sense. That these presentations of philosophy lack the intellectual stature and the cultural and historical status and significance of traditional philosophy or the official recognition and acknowledgement of academic and professional philosophy as teaching and research at universities does not, however, make them any less philosophy. They may only be considered, if not completely dismissed as, programmatic, hortatory, inspirational, tendentious, inchoate or rudimentary philosophy. Like *Lebens-philosophien* or *Weltanschauungen* or speculative metaphysics these explicitly programmatic philosophies are not usually worked out in any formal analytic manner. Nor are they explained systematically and justified through argumentation. They arise from and are designed to serve other intentions and aims than traditional or academic philosophy. However, they can and should be considered philosophy. These presentations of philosophy must be seen on their own or Lawrence's terms and distinguished perhaps in style and manner but definitely not in substance as philosophy in their own right. They express ways of seeing and understanding the individual and the world that are, though not necessarily, implicitly based on reason and argument and could be critically supported and defended. Upon demand, it can be said, these philosophies, the question of agreement aside, can be rendered intelligible and plausible as well as significant philosophy. Nevertheless, their distinctive philosophic character does not depend on any formal justification.

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EURIPIDES, SHAKESPEARE, IBSEN, YEATS, BRECHT

Unlike traditional and academic philosophy as something set apart, a field of academic study and specialization, a cultural institution and historical accomplishment, philosophy in literature may be considered primarily expressive in its approach. Philosophy in literature encompasses all sorts of ideas, insights, feelings, speculations and reveries about the nature of things. The human condition can be, whether intelligible or unintelligible, envisioned in all its erratic and truthful splendor. The continual conflict of values rather than its questionable resolutions makes philosophy what it is yet also always becoming. Euripides, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Yeats, Brecht and other dramatists, novelists and poets do not present philosophy as reason in explanation and justification. They show philosophy through indirection, by way of imaginative leaps and intuitions, its disturbingly contemplative and conflictual responses and experiences. Like Socrates and some modern and contemporary philosophers such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Unamuno, Marcel, Heidegger, even Wittgenstein, they put in question philosophy as merely and solely critical and analytic reflection. Like these philosophers they leave open the wonder and puzzlement in the process of not just human existence but also of philosophy. Philosophy in literature goes even further, however, for it places, before us, being in any and all modes and forms.

PHILOSOPHY AND LITERARY EXPERIENCE

Philosophy in literature then discloses the more ambiguous and ambivalent world and the searching individual. It discloses another approach to a philosophic understanding of and response to human experience. Philosophy then means the personal significance in knowledge, meaning and values. Its concrete disclosures and renderings of individuals enact philosophically a social and historical process, and the conflict and tension in the clash of the conceptually determinate with the actually indeterminable shows uncertainty and unclarity as well as their opposites to be part of philosophy and human existence. As expressive and imaginative,

philosophy in literature takes on a conceptually flexible and quixotic character. It reveals modalities of being that are, if not absent, at least not present to the same degree and to the same extent in strict or marginal philosophy. In literature the consciousness of philosophy exists in and comes about through being in, rather than thinking about, the world. The philosophic vision of the literary artist and his work is more perceived rather than conceived. Philosophy is realized through discovery and insight as individuals and events interact in the work and create and construct philosophy in and through their thoughts and actions. It is not systematic, rational inquiry and conclusion-making according to definite, and too often preconceived, models of intelligibility. It is a quest for and a struggle with what strict philosophy assumes is attainable.

Manifestations of philosophy in literature, whether in Hesiod, Euripides, Lucretius, Dante, Goethe, Baudelaire and others, are phenomenologically philosophic. They open up and disclose what Merleau-Ponty characterizes as “that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*”, but which knowledge can never grasp because it must always, like strict philosophy, remain abstract and derivative.* Philosophy in literature is, in contrast to knowledge and strict philosophy, the world “that I live through”. Even when that world is apparently unreal or fantasy or nightmare as in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* or Kafka’s *The Penal Colony*, it impinges upon consciousness in a direct and immediate form and shape. Hamlet’s philosophic reflections and implicit arguments in his soliloquy, “To Be Or Not To Be”, are generally related to but specifically unlike the more sober and calmly rational reflections and explicit arguments of Socrates in the *Phaedo*. Similarly the literary works of Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre do not simply reflect in an artistic form their philosophic ideas and views. The discursive, intelligible and formally analytic character of their philosophic work gives way to the imaginative and inexplicable in the world of experience that the artistic presentation of philosophic ideas and views reveals and demands.

* M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. Colin Smith, New York, Humanities Press, 1962. Preface, p. IX.

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The differences between philosophy and philosophy in literature, though non absolute and radical, may be, arguably, slight, but they are not trivial. Their significance lies in coming to know and to understand philosophy as also a process of thought that is experienced and lived through and with persons and things. They serve to distinguish critical and lived reflection in and with experience, the quest for truth and knowledge, from critical and analytic reflection on and about experience; the conquest of truth and knowledge.

Literary works of art then, not all but many, are open to the experience and lived-through quality of the self or the person engaged in and by philosophy as already there in the person and the world. Antigone is transformed through her awakened consciousness of what her philosophic conflict of values requires of her. The same, however, might be said of Socrates in the *Crito*. But Socrates thinks through an apparent conflict which Crito presents to him and arrives at a rationally consistent and principled account of his basic agreement with the State and its laws. Antigone acts upon the experiences that her thoughts make her see. Socrates follows the argument wherever his philosophy leads. The arguments follow Antigone to find out where they should go and where they philosophically belong.

Philosophy in the *Antigone* reveals, so to speak, in the questions of humanly overlapping but inevitably antagonistic worlds of meaning and values within which individuals, whether reasonably or unreasonably, take up their own perspectives and see them through. Philosophy, as in the *Crito*, examines the experiences in the lives of individuals that call for transcendence by being thought through and based on universalizable and abstract foundations and principles, leaving behind at the same time their concrete and experiential origins and motives. The primary intentions and aims of philosophy are directed to finding out what all these diverse human experiences, despite and because of their lived-through qualities—which may be deceptive, misunderstood, misleading, conceptually confused, mere appearance rather than reality—are actually about and “really” consist in. They become questions as “problems”—frequently “problosophy” rather than philosophy—which call for and require rational and critical analysis for their “solutions”. Philosophy in literature looks to all these human

experiences and their lived-through qualities as the stuff of the pre-reflective worlds of individuals in which philosophy acts and exists, without analytic reflection and justification, and not observed from above or judged according to criteria. It directs itself to what is believed and thought but also what might never be or has been or ever will be believed and thought. Philosophy in literature very often juxtaposes appearance and reality, for the distinction is not always so clear and definite.

A DOUBLE RAPPORT OF ENCROACHMENT

Both approaches to philosophy are related, sometimes so intimately as to be perhaps indistinguishable. In Plato's *Symposium*, Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*, the *Essays* of Montaigne, Pascal's *Pensées*, Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Borges' *A New Refutation of Time*, and other works there appears to be a "crossover" between philosophy and literature. Each then may and can overlap and fuse with the other as philosophical literature or artistic philosophy. Yet they are not the same as identical or equivalent, the one purely literature as art and the other purely philosophy as reason. Philosophy in literature presents philosophy distinctively as experienced and lived-through because philosophy can not take on significance and meaning apart from its origin and its motives. It arises out of what human beings do and think in and through immediacy to which it returns no matter how far it goes from this immediacy. Antigone discovers who she is and what, despite sentence of death, she values and in living for is also willing to die for, and does. Socrates accepts the rationally inevitable consequences of what he knew, his irony aside, if he continued to live according to *the* correct principles. The one acts and in acting thinks and reflects; the other thinks and reflects and then sees why he acted and must act again in a manner consistent with what his thoughts and principles do and must, despite any and all experience, always require. In these ways the two approaches diverge. For the one seeks to find philosophy in the meaning of experience and action and the other in the reasonableness of

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experience and action. At this juncture philosophy in literature sets itself apart as distinctive and philosophy in its own right.

The distinctiveness of philosophy in literature also makes it possible, unlike strict philosophy, for it not to have to presuppose or propose any answer or solution to philosophic questions or problems. It shows that philosophy poses questions and includes problems that are neither necessarily nor desirably answerable or solvable. Instead, philosophy can be seen in its endlessly various ways of responding to the complexity and diversity of human experience, whether correct or incorrect, logical or illogical. Philosophy then does not have to be about something, accomplish anything or go anywhere in particular, for it inquires into questions that human beings must and can live with and through. Philosophy in literature can be incomplete, inconsequential, even quixotic and incoherent, or sensible and plausible. It can leave questions of value, meaning and purpose, whether in nature or culture, to the visions or vagaries of individuals. Their experience of philosophic wonderment and perplexity, or bewilderment and befuddlement, makes philosophy as philosophies all that they are rather than what they, on any one of the many and various models continually proposed, attempt to be and seek to become. Marginal philosophy puts in question the uncritical assumption and unexamined presupposition that the model of what philosophy is, can and should only be found in strict philosophy. For it shows that there is always the further question of what way of doing philosophy is or could ever be the measure and the standard of what philosophy has been, is or yet will be. If philosophy be, as Montaigne remarks, “sophisticated poetry”, may not literature be “sophisticated philosophy”?

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