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The relevance of the beautiful

Art as play, symbol, and festival

I think it is most significant that the question of how art can be justified is not simply a modern problem, but one that has been with us from the very earliest times. My first efforts as a scholar were dedicated to this question when in 1934 I published an essay entitled "Plato and the Poets."¹ In fact, as far as we know, it was in the context of the new philosophical outlook and the new claim to knowledge raised by Socratic thought that art was required to justify itself for the first time in the history of the West. Here, for the first time, it ceased to be self-evident that the diffuse reception and interpretation of traditional subject matter handed down in pictorial or narrative form did possess the right to truth that it had claimed. Indeed, this ancient and serious problem always arises when a new claim to truth sets itself up against the tradition that continues to express itself through poetic invention or in the language of art. We have only to consider the culture of late antiquity and its often lamented hostility to pictorial representation. At a time when walls were covered with incrustation, mosaics, and decoration, the artists of the age bemoaned the passing of *their* time. A similar situation arose with the restriction and final extinction of freedom of speech and poetic expression imposed by the Roman Empire over the world of late antiquity, and which Tacitus lamented in his famous dialogue on the decline of rhetoric, the *Dialogue on Oratory*. But above all, and here we approach our own time more closely than we might at first realize, we should consider the position that Christianity adopted toward the artistic tradition in which it found itself. The rejection of iconoclasm, a movement that had arisen in the Christian Church during the sixth and seventh centuries, was a decision of incalculable significance. For the Church then gave a new meaning to the visual language of art and later to the forms of poetry

and narrative. This provided art with a new form of legitimation. The decision was justified because only the new content of the Christian message was able to legitimate once again the traditional language of art. One of the crucial factors in the justification of art in the West was the *Biblia Pauperum*, a pictorial narration of the Bible designed for the poor, who could not read or knew no Latin and who consequently were unable to receive the Christian message with complete understanding.

The great history of Western art is the consequence of this decision which still largely determines our own cultural consciousness. A common language for the common content of our self-understanding has been developed through the Christian art of the Middle Ages and the humanistic revival of Greek and Roman art and literature, right up until the close of the eighteenth century and the great social transformations and political and religious changes with which the nineteenth century began.

In Austria and Southern Germany, for example, it is hardly necessary to describe the synthesis of classical and Christian subjects that overwhelms us with such vitality in the great surging waves of Baroque art. Certainly this age of Christian art and the whole Christian-classical, Christian-humanist tradition did not go unchallenged and underwent major changes, not least under the influence of the Reformation. It in turn brought a new kind of art into prominence, a kind of music based on the participation of the congregation, as in the work of Heinrich Schutz and Johann Sebastian Bach, for example. This new style revitalized the language of music through the text, thereby continuing in a quite new way the great unbroken tradition of Christian music that had begun with the chorale, which was itself the unity of Latin hymns and Gregorian melody bequeathed by Pope Gregory the Great.

It is against this background that the question of the justification of art first acquires a specific direction. We can seek help here from those who have already considered this question. This is not to deny that the new artistic situation experienced in our own century really does signify a break in a tradition still unified until its last great representatives in the nineteenth century. When Hegel, the great teacher of speculative idealism, gave his lectures on aesthetics first in Heidelberg and later in Berlin, one of his opening themes was the doctrine that art was for us "a thing of the past."² If we reconstruct Hegel's approach to the question and think it through afresh, we

shall be amazed to discover how much it anticipates the question that we ourselves address to art. I should like to show this briefly by way of introduction so that we understand why it is necessary in the further course of our investigation to go beyond the self-evident character of the dominant concept of art and lay bare the anthropological foundation upon which the phenomenon of art rests and from the perspective of which we must work out a new legitimation for art.

Hegel's remark about art as "a thing of the past" represents a radical and extreme formulation of philosophy's claim to make the process through which we come to know the truth an object of our knowledge and to know this knowledge of the truth in its own right. In Hegel's eyes, this task and this claim, which philosophy has always made, are only fulfilled when philosophy comprehends and gathers up into itself the totality of truth as it has been unfolded in its historical development. Consequently Hegelian philosophy also claimed above all to have comprehended the truth of the Christian message in conceptual form. This included even the deepest mystery of Christian doctrine, the mystery of the trinity. I personally believe that this doctrine has constantly stimulated the course of thought in the West as a challenge and invitation to try and think that which continually transcends the limits of human understanding.

In fact Hegel made the bold claim to have incorporated into his philosophy this most profound mystery – which had developed, sharpened, refined, and deepened the thinking of theologians and philosophers for centuries – and to have gathered the full truth of this Christian doctrine into conceptual form. I do not want to expound here this dialectical synthesis whereby the trinity is understood philosophically, in the Hegelian manner, as a constant resurrection of the spirit. Nevertheless, I must mention it so that we are in a position to understand Hegel's attitude to art and his statement that it is for us a thing of the past. Hegel is not primarily referring to the end of the Christian tradition of pictorial imagery in the West, which, as we believe today, was actually reached then. He did not have the feeling of being plunged into a challenging world of alienation in his time, as we do today when confronted by the production of abstract and nonobjective art. Hegel's own reaction would certainly have been quite different from that of any visitor to the Louvre today who, as soon he enters this marvelous collection of the great fruits of Western painting, is overwhelmed by the

revolutionary subjects and coronation scenes depicted by the revolutionary art of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Hegel certainly did not mean – how could he? – that with the Baroque and its later development in the Rococo, the last Western artistic style had made its appearance on the stage of human history. He did not know, as we know in retrospect, that the century of historicism had begun. Nor could he suspect that in the twentieth century a daring liberation from the historical shackles of the nineteenth century would succeed in making all previous art appear as something belonging to the past in a different and more radical sense. When Hegel spoke of art as a thing of the past he meant that art was no longer understood as a presentation of the divine in the self-evident and unproblematical way in which it had been understood in the Greek world. There the divine was manifest in the temple, which in the southern light stood out against the natural background, open to the eternal powers of nature, and was visibly represented in great sculpture, in human forms shaped by human hands. Hegel's real thesis was that while for the Greeks the god or the divine was principally and properly revealed in their own artistic forms of expression, this became impossible with the arrival of Christianity. The truth of Christianity with its new and more profound insight into the transcendence of God could no longer be adequately expressed within the visual language of art or the imagery of poetic language. For us the work of art is no longer the presence of the divine that we revere. The claim that art is a thing of the past implies that with the close of antiquity, art inevitably appeared to require justification. I have already suggested that what we call the Christian art of the West represents the impressive way in which this legitimation was accomplished over the centuries by the Church and fused with the classical tradition by the humanists.

So long as art occupied a legitimate place in the world, it was clearly able to effect an integration between community, society, and the Church on the one hand and the self-understanding of the creative artist on the other. Our problem, however, is precisely the fact that this self-evident integration, and the universally shared understanding of the artist's role that accompanies it, no longer exists – and indeed no longer existed in the nineteenth century. It is this fact that finds expression in Hegel's thesis. Even then, great artists were beginning to find themselves to a greater or lesser

degree displaced in an increasingly industrialized and commercialized society, so that the modern artist found the old reputation of the itinerant artist of former days confirmed by his own bohemian fate. In the nineteenth century, every artist lived with the knowledge that he could no longer presuppose the former unproblematical communication between himself and those among whom he lived and for whom he created. The nineteenth-century artist does not live within a community, but creates for himself a community as is appropriate to his pluralistic situation. Openly admitted competition combined with the claim that his own particular form of creative expression and his own particular artistic message is the only true one, necessarily gives rise to heightened expectations. This is in fact the messianic consciousness of the nineteenth-century artist, who feels himself to be a "new savior" (Immermann) with a claim on mankind.³ He proclaims a new message of reconciliation and as a social outsider pays the price for this claim, since with all his artistry he is only an artist for the sake of art.

But what is all this compared to the alienation and shock with which the more recent forms of artistic expression in our century tax our self-understanding as a public?

I should like to maintain a tactful silence about the extreme difficulty faced by performing artists when they bring modern music to the concert hall. It can usually only be performed as the middle item in a program – otherwise the listeners will arrive later or leave early. This fact is symptomatic of a situation that could not have existed previously and its significance requires consideration. It expresses the conflict between art as a "religion of culture" on the one hand and art as a provocation by the modern artist on the other. It is an easy matter to trace the beginnings of this conflict and its gradual radicalization in the history of nineteenth-century painting. The new provocation was heralded in the second half of the nineteenth century by the breakdown of the status of linear perspective, which was one of the fundamental presuppositions of the self-understanding of the visual arts as practised in recent centuries.⁴

This can be observed for the first time in the pictures of Hans von Marées. It was later developed by the great revolutionary movement that achieved worldwide recognition through the genius of Paul Cézanne. Certainly linear perspective is not a self-evident fact of artistic vision and expression, since it did not exist at all during the Christian Middle Ages. It was during the Renaissance, a time of a

vigorous upsurge of enthusiasm for all scientific and mathematical construction, that linear perspective became the norm for painting as one of the great wonders of artistic and scientific progress. It is only as we have gradually ceased to expect linear perspective and stopped taking it for granted that our eyes have been opened to the great art of the High Middle Ages. At that time paintings did not recede like views from a window with the immediate foreground passing into the distant horizon. They were clearly to be read like a text written in pictorial symbols, thus combining spiritual instruction with spiritual elevation.

Thus linear perspective simply represented a historical and temporary form of artistic expression. Yet its rejection anticipated more far-reaching developments in modern art, which would take us even further from the previous tradition of artistic form. Here I would draw attention to the destruction of traditional form by Cubism around 1910, a movement in which almost all the great painters of the time participated, at least for some time; and to the further transformation of the Cubist break with tradition, which led to the total elimination of any reference to an external object of the process of artistic creation. It remains an open question whether or not this denial of our realistic expectations is ever really total. But one thing is quite certain: the naive assumption that the picture is a view – like that which we have daily in our experience of nature or of nature shaped by man – has clearly been fundamentally destroyed. We can no longer see a Cubist picture or a nonobjective painting at a glance, with a merely passive gaze. We must make an active contribution of our own and make an effort to synthesize the outlines of the various planes as they appear on the canvas. Only then, perhaps, can we be seized and uplifted by the profound harmony and rightness of a work, in the same way as readily happened in earlier times on the basis of a pictorial content common to all. We shall have to ask what that means for our investigation. Or, again, let me mention modern music and the completely new vocabulary of harmony and dissonance that it employs, or the peculiar complexity it has achieved by breaking the older rules of composition and the principles of musical construction that were characteristic of the classical period. We can no more avoid this than we can avoid the fact that when we visit a museum and enter the rooms devoted to the most recent artistic developments, we really do leave something behind us. If we have been open to the new, we cannot help noticing a

peculiar weakening of our receptiveness when we return to the old. This reaction is clearly only a question of contrast, rather than a lasting experience of a permanent loss, but it brings out the acute difference between these new forms of art and the old.

I would also mention hermetic poetry, which has always been of particular interest to philosophers. For, where no one else can understand, it seems that the philosopher is called for. In fact, the poetry of our time has reached the limits of intelligible meaning and perhaps the greatest achievements of the greatest writers are themselves marked by tragic speechlessness in the face of the unsayable.⁵ Then there is modern drama, which treats the Classical doctrine of the unity of time and action as a relic of the past and consciously and emphatically denies the unity of dramatic character, even making this denial into a formal principle of drama, as in Bertolt Brecht, for example. Then there is the case of modern architecture: what a liberation – or temptation, perhaps – it has been to defy the traditional principles of structural engineering with the help of modern materials and to create something totally new that has no resemblance to the traditional methods of erecting buildings brick upon brick. These buildings seem to teeter upon their slender delicate columns, while the walls, the whole protective outer structure, are replaced by tentlike coverings and canopies. This cursory overview is only intended to bring out what has actually happened and why art today poses a new question. Why does the understanding of what art is today present a task for thinking?

I would like to develop this on various levels. I shall proceed initially from the basic principle that our thinking in this matter must be able to cover the great traditional art of the past, as well as the art of modern times. For although modern art is opposed to traditional art, it is also true that it has been stimulated and nourished by it. We must first presuppose that both are really forms of art and that they do belong together. It is not simply that no contemporary artist could have possibly developed his own daring innovations without being familiar with the traditional language of art. Nor is it simply a matter of saying that we who experience art constantly face the coexistence of past and present. This is not simply the situation in which we find ourselves when we pass from one room to another in a museum or when we are confronted, perhaps reluctantly, with modern music on a concert program or with modern plays in the theater or even with modern reproductions of

Classical art. We are always in this position. In our daily life we proceed constantly through the coexistence of past and future. The essence of what is called spirit lies in the ability to move within the horizon of an open future and an unrepeatable past. Mnemosyne, the muse of memory and recollective appropriation, rules here as the muse of spiritual freedom. The same activity of spirit finds expression in memory and recollection, which incorporates the art of the past along with our own artistic tradition, as well as in recent daring experiments with their unprecedented deformation of form. We shall have to ask ourselves what follows from this unity of what is past and what is present.

But this unity is not only a question of our aesthetic understanding. Our task is not only to recognize the profound continuity that connects the formal language of the past with the contemporary revolution of artistic form. A new social force is at work in the claim of the modern artist. The confrontation with the bourgeois religion of culture and its ritualistic enjoyment of art leads the contemporary artist to try and involve us actively in this claim in various ways. For example, the viewer of a Cubist or a nonobjective painting has to construct it for himself by synthesizing the facets of the different aspects step by step. The claim of the artist is that the new attitude to art that inspires him establishes at the same time a new form of solidarity or universal communication. By this I do not simply mean that the great creative achievements of art are absorbed, or rather diffused, in countless ways into the practical world or the world of decorative design all around us, and so come to produce a certain stylistic unity in the world of human labor. This has always been the case and there is no doubt that the constructivist tendency that we observe in contemporary art and architecture exerts a profound influence on the design of all the appliances we encounter daily in the kitchen, the home, in transport, and in public life. It is no accident that the artist comes to terms with a tension in his work between the expectations harbored by custom and the introduction of new ways of doing things. Our situation of extreme modernity, as exhibited by this kind of conflict and tension, is so striking that it poses a problem for thought.

Two things seem to meet here: our historical consciousness and the self-conscious reflection of modern man and the artist. We should not think of historical awareness in terms of rather scholarly ideas or in terms of world-views. We should simply think of what

we take for granted when confronted with any artistic work of the past. We are not even aware that we approach such things with historical consciousness. We recognize the dress of a bygone age as historical, we accept traditional pictorial subjects presented in various kinds of costume, and we are not surprised when Altdorfer as a matter of course depicts medieval soldiers marching in "modern" troop formations in his painting "The Battle of Issus" —as if Alexander the Great had actually defeated the Persians dressed as we see him there.⁶ This is self-evident to us because our sensibility is historically attuned. I would even go so far as to say that without this historical sensibility we would probably be unable to perceive the precise compositional mastery displayed by earlier art. Perhaps only a person completely ignorant of history, a very rare thing today, would allow himself to be really disturbed by things that are strange in this way. Such a person would be unable to experience in an immediate way that unity of form and content that clearly belongs to the essence of all true artistic creation.

Historical consciousness, then, is not a particularly scholarly method of approach, nor one that is determined by a particular world-view. It is simply the fact that our senses are spiritually organized in such a way as to determine in advance our perception and experience of art. Clearly connected with this is the fact — and this too is a form of self-conscious reflection — that we do not require a naive recognition in which our own world is merely reproduced for us in a timelessly valid form. On the contrary, we are self-consciously aware of both our own great historical tradition as a whole and, in their otherness, even the traditions and forms of quite different cultural worlds that have not fundamentally affected Western history. And we can thereby appropriate them for ourselves. This high level of self-conscious reflection which we all bring with us helps the contemporary artist in his creative activity. Clearly it is the task of the philosopher to investigate the revolutionary manner in which this has come about and to ask why historical consciousness and the new self-conscious reflection arising from it combine with a claim that we cannot renounce: namely, the fact that everything we see stands there before us and addresses us directly as if it showed us ourselves. Consequently I regard the development of the appropriate concepts for the question as the first step in our investigation. First, I shall introduce in relation to philosophical aesthetics the conceptual apparatus with which we intend to tackle the subject in ques-

tion. Then I shall show how the three concepts announced in the title will play a leading role in what follows: the appeal to play, the explication of the concept of the symbol (that is, of the possibility of self-recognition), and finally, the festival as the inclusive concept for regaining the idea of universal communication.

It is the task of philosophy to discover what is common even in what is different. According to Plato, the task of the philosophical dialectician is "to learn to see things together in respect of the one."⁷ What means does the philosophical tradition offer us to solve this problem or to bring it to a clearer understanding of itself? The problem that we have posed is that of bridging the enormous gap between the traditional form and content of Western art and the ideals of contemporary artists. The word *art* itself gives us a first orientation. We should never underestimate what a word can tell us, for language represents the previous accomplishment of thought. Thus we should take the word *art* as our point of departure. Anyone with the slightest historical knowledge is aware that this word has had the exclusive and characteristic meaning that we ascribe to it today for less than two hundred years. In the eighteenth century it was still natural to say "the fine arts" where we today would say "art." For alongside the fine arts were the mechanical arts, and the art in the technical sense of handicrafts and industrial production, which constituted by far the larger part of human skills. Therefore we shall not find our concept of art in the philosophical tradition. But what we can learn from the Greeks, the fathers of Western thought, is precisely the fact that art belongs in the realm of what Aristotle called *poietike episteme*, the knowledge and facility appropriate to production.⁸ What is common to the craftsman's producing and the artist's creating, and what distinguishes such knowing from theory or from practical knowing and deciding is that a work becomes separated from the activity. This is the essence of production and must be borne in mind if we wish to understand and evaluate the limits of the modern critique of the concept of the work, which has been directed against traditional art and the bourgeois cultivation of enjoyment associated with it. The common feature here is clearly the emergence of the work as the intended goal of regulated effort. The work is set free as such and released from the process of production because it is by definition destined for use. Plato always emphasized that the knowledge and skill of the producer are subordinate to considerations of use and depend upon the knowledge of the user of the

product.⁹ In the familiar Platonic example, it is the ship's master who determines what the shipbuilder is to build.¹⁰ Thus the concept of the work points toward the sphere of common use and common understanding as the realm of intelligible communication. But the real question now is how to distinguish "art" from the mechanical arts within this general concept of productive knowledge. The answer supplied by antiquity, which we shall have to consider further, is that here we are concerned with imitative activity. Imitation is thereby brought into relation with the total horizon of *phusis* or nature. Art is only "possible" because the formative activity of nature leaves an open domain which can be filled by the productions of the human spirit. What we call art compared with the formative activity of production in general is mysterious in several respects, inasmuch as the work is not real in the same way as what it represents. On the contrary, the work functions as an imitation and thus raises a host of extremely subtle philosophical problems, including above all the problem of the ontological status of appearance. What is the significance of the fact that nothing "real" is produced here? The work has no real "use" as such, but finds its characteristic fulfillment when our gaze dwells upon the appearance itself. We shall have more to say about this later. But it was clear from the first that we cannot expect any direct help from the Greeks, if they understood what we call art as at best a kind of imitation of nature. Of course, such imitation has nothing to do with the naturalistic or realistic misconceptions of modern art theory. As Aristotle's famous remark in the *Poetics* confirms, "Poetry is more philosophical than history."¹¹ For history only relates how things actually happened, whereas poetry tells us how things may happen and teaches us to recognize the universal in all human action and suffering. Since the universal is obviously the topic of philosophy, art is more philosophical than history precisely because it too intends the universal. This is the first pointer that the tradition of antiquity provides.

A second, more far-reaching point in our considerations of the word *art* leads us beyond the limits of contemporary aesthetics. "Fine art" is in German *die schöne Kunst*, literally "beautiful art." But what is the beautiful?

Even today we can encounter the *concept of the beautiful* in various expressions that still preserve something of the old, original Greek meaning of the word *kalon*. Under certain circumstances, we too connect the concept of the beautiful with the fact that, by es-

tablished custom, there is open recognition that some things are worth seeing or are made to be seen. The expression *die schöne Sittlichkeit* – literally “beautiful ethical life” – still preserves the memory of the Greek ethico-political world which German idealism contrasted with the soulless mechanism of the modern state (Schiller, Hegel). This phrase does not mean that their ethical customs were full of beauty in the sense of being filled with pomp and ostentatious splendor. It means that the ethical life of the people found expression in all forms of communal life, giving shape to the whole and so allowing men to recognize themselves in their own world. Even for us the beautiful is convincingly defined as something that enjoys universal recognition and assent. Thus it belongs to our natural sense of the beautiful that we cannot ask why it pleases us. We cannot expect any advantage from the beautiful since it serves no purpose. The beautiful fulfills itself in a kind of self-determination and enjoys its own self-representation. So much for the word.

Where do we encounter the most convincing self-fulfillment of the essence of the beautiful? In order to understand the effective background of the problem of the beautiful, and perhaps of art as well, we must remember that for the Greeks it was the heavenly order of the cosmos that presented the true vision of the beautiful. This was a Pythagorean element in the Greek idea of the beautiful. We possess in the regular movements of the heavens one of the greatest intuitions of order to be found anywhere. The periodic cycle of the year and of the months, the alternation of day and night, provide the most reliable constants for the experience of order and stand in marked contrast with the ambiguity and instability of human affairs.

From this perspective, the concept of the beautiful, particularly in Plato's thought, sheds a great deal of light on the problem with which we are concerned. In the *Phaedrus* Plato offers us a great mythological description of man's destiny, his limitations compared with the divine, and his attachment to the earthly burden of the sensuous life of the body.¹² Then he describes the marvelous procession of souls that reflects the heavenly movement of the stars by night. There is a chariot race to the vault of the heavens led by the Olympian gods. The human souls also drive their chariots and follow the daily processions of the gods. At the vault of the heavens, the true world is revealed to view. There, in place of the disorder and

inconstancy that characterize our so-called experience of the world down here on earth, we perceive the true constants and unchanging patterns of being. But while the gods surrender themselves totally to the vision of the true world in this encounter, our human souls are distracted because of their unruly natures. They can only cast a momentary and passing glance at the eternal orders, since their vision is clouded by sensuous desire. Then they plunge back toward the earth and leave the truth behind them, retaining only the vaguest remembrance of it. Then we come to the point that I wish to emphasize. These souls who, so to speak, have lost their wings, are weighed down by earthly cares, unable to scale the heights of the truth. There is one experience that causes their wings to grow once again and that allows them to ascend once more. This is the experience of love and the beautiful, the love of the beautiful. Plato describes this experience of growing love in a wonderful and elaborate fashion and relates it to the spiritual perception of the beautiful and the true orders of the world. It is by virtue of the beautiful that we are able to acquire a lasting remembrance of the true world. This is the way of philosophy. Plato describes the beautiful as that which shines forth most clearly and draws us to itself, as the very visibility of the ideal.¹³ In the beautiful presented in nature and art, we experience this convincing illumination of truth and harmony, which compels the admission: “This is true.”

The important message that this story has to teach is that the essence of the beautiful does not lie in some realm simply opposed to reality. On the contrary, we learn that however unexpected our encounter with beauty may be, it gives us an assurance that the truth does not lie far off and inaccessible to us, but can be encountered in the disorder of reality with all its imperfections, evils, errors, extremes, and fateful confusions. The ontological function of the beautiful is to bridge the chasm between the ideal and the real. Thus the qualification of art as “beautiful” or “fine” provides a second essential clue for our consideration.

A third step leads us directly to *aesthetics* as it is called in the history of philosophy. As a late development aesthetics coincided, significantly enough, with the process by which art proper was detached from the sphere of technical facility; and with this emancipation it came to acquire the quasi-religious function that it possesses for us now, both in theory and practice.

As a philosophical discipline, aesthetics only emerged during the

age of rationalism in the eighteenth century. It was obviously stimulated by modern rationalism itself, which was based upon the development of the constructive sciences of nature in the seventeenth century, sciences which, by their breathtakingly rapid transformation into technology, have in turn come to shape the face of our world.

What led philosophy to turn its attention to the beautiful? The experience of art and beauty seems to be a realm of utterly subjective caprice compared with the rationalist's exclusive orientation toward the mathematical regularities of nature and its significance for the control of natural forces. For this was the great breakthrough of the seventeenth century. What claims can the phenomenon of the beautiful have in this context? Our recourse to ancient thought helps us to see that in art and the beautiful we encounter a significance that transcends all conceptual thought. How do we grasp this truth? Alexander Baumgarten, the founder of philosophical aesthetics, spoke of a *cognitio sensitiva* or "sensuous knowledge."¹⁴ This idea is a paradoxical one for the traditional conception of knowledge as it has been developed since the Greeks. We can only speak of knowledge proper when we have ceased to be determined by the subjective and the sensible and have come to grasp the universal, the regularity in things. Then the sensible in all its particularity only enters the scene as a particular case of a universal law. Now clearly in our experience of the beautiful, in nature and in art, we neither verify our expectations, nor record what we encounter as a particular case of the universal. An enchanting sunset does not represent a case of sunsets in general. It is rather a unique sunset displaying the "tragedy of the heavens." And in the realm of art above all, it is self-evident that the work of art is not experienced in its own right if it is only acknowledged as a link in a chain that leads elsewhere. The "truth" that it possesses for us does not consist in some universal regularity that merely presents itself through the work. Rather, *cognitio sensitiva* means that in the apparent particularity of sensuous experience, which we always attempt to relate to the universal, there is something in our experience of the beautiful that arrests us and compels us to dwell upon the individual appearance itself.

What is the relevance of this fact? What do we learn from this? What is the importance and significance of this particular experience which claims truth for itself, thereby denying that the universal expressed by the mathematical formulation of the laws of nature is

the only kind of truth? It is the task of philosophical aesthetics to supply an answer to this question.¹⁵ And it is useful to ask which of the arts is likely to provide the best answer. We recognize the great variety and range of artistic activities that stretches from the transitory arts of music and spoken language to the static arts like painting and sculpture and architecture. The different media in which human art finds expression allow its products to appear in a different light, but we can suggest an answer to this question if it is approached from a historical point of view. Baumgarten once defined aesthetics as the *ars pulchre cogitandi* or the "art of thinking beautifully."¹⁶ Anyone with a sensitive ear will immediately notice that this expression has been formed on analogy with the definition of rhetoric as the *ars bene dicendi* or the "art of speaking well." This relationship is not accidental, for rhetoric and poetics have belonged together since antiquity, and in a sense, rhetoric took precedence over poetics. Rhetoric is the universal form of human communication, which even today determines our social life in an incomparably more profound fashion than does science. The classic definition of rhetoric as the "art of speaking well" carries immediate conviction. Baumgarten clearly based his definition of aesthetics as the "art of thinking beautifully" on this definition. There is an important suggestion here that the arts of language may well play a special part in solving the problems that we have set ourselves. This is all the more important since the leading concepts that govern our aesthetic considerations usually start from the opposite direction. Our reflection is almost always oriented toward the visual arts, and it is in that realm that our aesthetic concepts are most readily applied. There are good reasons for this. It is not simply on account of the visible presence of static art, in contrast to the transitory nature of drama, music, or poetry, which present themselves only fleetingly. It is surely because the Platonic heritage permeates all our reflections upon the beautiful. Plato conceived true being as the original image, and the world of appearance as the reflected image, of this exemplary original.¹⁷ There is something convincing about this as far as art is concerned, as long as we do not trivialize it. In order to understand our experience of art, we are tempted to search the depths of mystical language for daring new words like the German *Anbild* – an expression that captures both the image and the viewing of it.¹⁸ For it is true that we both elicit the image from things and imaginatively project the image into things in one and the same process. Thus

aesthetic reflection is oriented above all toward the power of imagination as the human capacity of image building.

It is here that Kant's great achievement is to be found. He far surpassed Baumgarten, the rationalist pre-Kantian founder of aesthetics, and recognized for the first time the experience of art and beauty as a philosophical question in its own right. He sought an answer to the question of how the experience in which we "find something beautiful" could be binding in such a way that it does not simply express a subjective reaction of taste. Here we find no universality comparable to that of the laws of nature, which serve to explain individual sensuous experience as a particular case. What is this truth that is encountered in the beautiful and can come to be shared? Certainly not the sort of truth or universality to which we apply the conceptual universality of the understanding. Despite this, the kind of truth that we encounter in the experience of the beautiful does unambiguously make a claim to more than merely subjective validity. Otherwise it would have no binding truth for us. When I find something beautiful, I do not simply mean that it pleases me in the same sense that I find a meal to my taste. When I find something beautiful, I think that it "is" beautiful. Or, to adapt a Kantian expression, I "demand everyone's agreement."¹⁹ This presumption that everyone should agree with me does not, however, imply that I could convince them by argument. That is not the way in which good taste may become universal. On the contrary, each individual has to develop his sense for the beautiful in such a way that he comes to discriminate between what is beautiful to a greater or lesser degree. It does not come about by producing good reasons or conclusive proofs for one's taste. The realm of art criticism that tries to develop taste hovers between "scientific" demonstration and the sense of quality that determines judgment without becoming purely scientific. "Criticism" as the discrimination of degrees of beauty is not really a subsequent judgment by means of which we could subsume the "beautiful" scientifically under concepts or produce a comparative assessment of quality. Rather it is the experience of the beautiful itself. It is significant that Kant uses primarily natural beauty rather than the work of art to illustrate the "judgment of taste" in which the perception of beauty is elicited from appearances and demanded of everyone. It is this "nonsignificant beauty" that cautions us against applying concepts to the beautiful in art.²⁰

I shall here simply draw upon the philosophical tradition of

aesthetics to help us with the question that we have posed: how can we find an all-embracing concept to cover both what art is today and what it has been in the past? The problem is that we cannot talk about great art as simply belonging to the past, any more than we can talk about modern art only becoming "pure" art through the rejection of all significant content. This is a remarkable state of affairs. If we reflect for a moment and try to consider what it is that we mean when we talk about art, then we come up against a paradox. As far as so-called classical art is concerned, we are talking about the production of works which in themselves were not primarily understood as art. On the contrary, these forms were encountered within a religious or secular context as an adornment of the life-world and of special moments like worship, the representation of a ruler, and things of that kind. As soon as the concept of art took on those features to which we have become accustomed and the work of art began to stand on its own, divorced from its original context of life, only then did art become simply "art" in the "museum without walls" of Malraux.²¹ The great artistic revolution of modern times, which has finally led to the emancipation of art from all of its traditional subject-matters and to the rejection of intelligible communication itself, began to assert itself when art wished to be art and nothing else. Art has now become doubly problematic: is it still art, and does it even wish to be considered art? What lies behind this paradoxical situation? Is art always art and nothing but art?

Kant's definition of the autonomy of the aesthetic, in relation to practical reason on the one hand and theoretical reason on the other, provided an orientation for further advances in this respect. This is the point of Kant's famous expression according to which the joy we take in the beautiful is a "disinterested delight."²² Naturally, "disinterested delight" means that we are not interested in what appears or in what is "represented" from a practical point of view. Disinterestedness simply signifies that characteristic feature of aesthetic behavior that forbids us to inquire after the purpose served by art. We cannot ask, "What purpose is served by enjoyment?"

It is true that the approach to art through the experience of aesthetic taste is a relatively external one and, as everyone knows, somewhat diminishing. Nevertheless Kant rightly characterizes such taste as *sensus communis* or common sense.²³ Taste is communicative; it represents something that we all possess to a greater or lesser

degree. It is clearly meaningless to talk about a purely individual and subjective taste in the field of aesthetics. To this extent it is to Kant that we owe our initial understanding of the validity of aesthetic claims, even though nothing is subsumed under the concept of a purpose. But what then are the experiences that best fulfill the ideal of "free" and disinterested delight? Kant is thinking of "natural beauty," as in a beautiful drawing of a flower or of something like the decorative design on a tapestry which intensifies our feeling for life by the play of its pattern.²⁴ The function of decorative art is to play this ancillary role. The only things that can simply be called beautiful without qualification are either things of nature, which have not been endowed with meaning by man, or things of human art, which deliberately eschew any imposition of meaning and merely represent a play of form and color. We are not meant to learn or recognize anything here. There is nothing worse than an obtrusive wallpaper that draws attention to its individual motifs as pictorial representations in their own right, as the feverish dreams of childhood can confirm. The point about this description is precisely that the dynamic of aesthetic delight comes into play without a process of conceptualization, that is, without our seeing or understanding something "as something." But this is an accurate description only of an extreme case. It serves to show that when we take aesthetic satisfaction in something, we do not relate it to a meaning which could ultimately be communicated in conceptual terms.

But this is not the question at issue. Our question concerns what art is. And certainly we are not primarily thinking here of the secondary forms of the decorative arts and crafts. Of course, designers can be significant artists, but as designers they perform a service. Now Kant defined beauty proper as "free beauty," which in his language means a beauty free from concept and significant content.²⁵ Naturally he did not mean that the creation of such beauty free from significant content represents the ideal of art. In the case of art, it is true that we always find ourselves held between the pure aspect of visibility presented to the viewer by the "in-sight" (*Anbild*), as we called it, and the meaning that our understanding dimly senses in the work of art. And we recognize this meaning through the import that every encounter has for us. Where does this meaning come from? What is this additional something by virtue of which art clearly becomes what it is for the first time? Kant did not want to define this additional something as a content. And indeed, as

we shall see, there are good reasons why it is actually impossible to do so. Kant's great achievement, however, lay in his advance over the mere formalism of the "pure judgment of taste" and the overcoming of the "standpoint of taste" in favor of the "standpoint of genius."²⁶ It was in terms of genius that the eighteenth century experienced Shakespeare's work and its violation of the accepted rules of taste, which had been established by French classicism. Lessing, for example, opposed the classicist aesthetic of rules derived from French tragedy, although in a very one-sided fashion, and he celebrated Shakespeare as the voice of nature realizing its own creative spirit through genius.²⁷ And in fact, Kant too understood genius as a natural power. He described the genius as a "favorite of nature" who thereby, like nature, creates something that seems as though it were made in accordance with rules, although without conscious attention to them.²⁸ Furthermore, the work seems like something unprecedented, which has been produced according to still unformulated rules. Art is the creation of something exemplary which is not simply produced by following rules. Clearly this definition of art as the creation of genius can never really be divorced from the congeniality of the one who experiences it. A kind of free play is at work in both cases.

Taste was also characterized as a similar play of the imagination and the understanding. It is, with a different emphasis, the same free play as that encountered in the creation of the work of art. Only here the significant content is articulated through the creative activity of the imagination, so that it dawns on the understanding, or, as Kant puts it, allows us "to go on to think much that cannot be said."²⁹ Naturally this does not mean that we simply project concepts onto the artistic representation before us. For then we would be subsuming the perceptually given under the universal as a particular case of it. That is not the nature of aesthetic experience. On the contrary, it is only in the presence of the particular individual work that concepts "come to reverberate,"³⁰ as Kant says. This fine phrase originated in the musical language of the eighteenth century, with particular reference to the favorite instrument of the time, the clavichord, which created a special effect of suspended reverberation as the note continued to vibrate long after being struck. Kant obviously means that the concept functions as a kind of sounding board capable of articulating the free play of the imagination. So far, so good. German idealism in general also recognized the ap-

pearance of meaning or the idea – or whatever else one chooses to call it – without thereby making the concept the real focal point of aesthetic experience. But is this sufficient to solve our problem concerning the unity that binds together the classical artistic tradition and modern art? How can we understand the innovative forms of modern art as they play around with the content so that our expectations are constantly frustrated? How are we to understand what contemporary artists, or certain trends of contemporary art, even describe as “happenings” or anti-art? How are we to understand what Duchamp is doing when he suddenly exhibits some everyday object on its own and thereby produces a sort of aesthetic shock reaction? We cannot simply dismiss this as so much nonsense, for Duchamp actually revealed something about the conditions of aesthetic experience. In view of the experimental practice of art today, how can we expect help from classical aesthetics? Obviously we must have recourse to more fundamental human experiences to help us here. What is the anthropological basis of our experience of art? I should like to develop this question with the help of the concepts of play, symbol, and festival.

I

The concept of play is of particular significance in this regard. The first thing we must make clear to ourselves is that play is so elementary a function of human life that culture is quite inconceivable without this element. Thinkers like Huizinga and Guardini, among others, have stressed for a long time that the element of play is included in man's religious and cultic practices.³¹ It is worth looking more closely at the fundamental givenness of human play and its structures in order to reveal the element of play as free impulse and not simply negatively as freedom from particular ends. When do we speak of play and what is implied when we do? Surely the first thing is the to and fro of constantly repeated movement – we only have to think of certain expressions like “the play of light” and “the play of the waves” where we have such a constant coming and going, back and forth, a movement that is not tied down to any goal. Clearly what characterizes this movement back and forth is that neither pole of the movement represents the goal in which it would come to rest. Furthermore, a certain leeway clearly belongs to such a movement. This gives us a great deal to think about for the question of art. This

freedom of movement is such that it must have the form of self-movement. Expressing the thought of the Greeks in general, Aristotle had already described self-movement as the most fundamental characteristic of living beings.³² Whatever is alive has its source of movement within itself and has the form of self-movement. Now play appears as a self-movement that does not pursue any particular end or purpose so much as movement as movement, exhibiting so to speak a phenomenon of excess, of living self-representation. And in fact that is just what we perceive in nature – the play of gnats, for example, or all the lively dramatic forms of play we observe in the animal world, especially among their young. All this arises from the basic character of excess striving to express itself in the living being. Now the distinctive thing about human play is its ability to involve our reason, that uniquely human capacity which allows us to set ourselves aims and pursue them consciously, and to outplay this capacity for purposive rationality. For the specifically human quality in our play is the self-discipline and order that we impose on our movements when playing, as if particular purposes were involved – just like a child, for example, who counts how often he can bounce the ball on the ground before losing control of it.

In this form of nonpurposive activity, it is reason itself that sets the rules. The child is unhappy if he loses control on the tenth bounce and proud of himself if he can keep it going to the thirtieth. This nonpurposive rationality in human play is a characteristic feature of the phenomenon which will be of further help to us. It is clear here, especially in the phenomenon of repetition itself, that identity or self-sameness is intended. The end pursued is certainly a nonpurposive activity, but this activity is itself intended. It is what the play intends. In this fashion we actually intend something with effort, ambition, and profound commitment. This is one step on the road to human communication; if something is represented here – if only the movement of play itself – it is also true to say that the onlooker “intends” it, just as in the act of play I stand over against myself as an onlooker. The function of the representation of play is ultimately to establish, not just any movement whatsoever, but rather the movement of play determined in a specific way. In the end, play is thus the self-representation of its own movement.

I should add straightaway: such a definition of the movement of play means further that the act of playing always requires a “playing along with.” Even the onlooker watching the child at play cannot

possibly do otherwise. If he really does “go along with it,” that is nothing but a *participatio*, an inner sharing in this repetitive movement. This is often very clear in more developed forms of play: for example, we have only to observe on television the spectators at a tennis match cricking their necks. No one can avoid playing along with the game. Another important aspect of play as a communicative activity, so it seems to me, is that it does not really acknowledge the distance separating the one who plays and the one who watches the play. The spectator is manifestly more than just an observer who sees what is happening in front of him, but rather one who is a part of it insofar as he literally “takes part.” Of course, in these simple forms of play we have not yet arrived at the play of art. But I hope to have shown that it is only a step from ritual dance to ritual observances taking the form of representation. And from there, to the liberation of representation in the theater, for example, which emerged from this ritual context. Or to the visual arts, whose decorative and expressive function arose out of the context of religious life. All the forms merge with one another. This continuity is confirmed by the common element in play as we discussed it earlier: namely, the fact that something is *intended as something*, even if it is not something conceptual, useful, or purposive, but only the pure autonomous regulation of movement.

I think this point is enormously significant for the contemporary discussion of modern art. What ultimately concerns us here is the question of the work. One of the basic impulses of modern art has been the desire to break down the distance separating the audience, the “consumers,” and the public from the work of art. There is no doubt that the most important creative artists of the last fifty years have concentrated all their efforts on breaking down just this distance. We need only to think of the theory of epic theater in Brecht, who specifically fought against our being absorbed in a theatrical dream-world as a feeble substitute for human and social consciousness of solidarity. He deliberately destroyed scenic realism, the normal requirements of characterization, in short, the identity of everything usually expected of a play. But this desire to transform the distance of the onlooker into the involvement of the participant can be discerned in every form of modern experimentation in the arts.

Does this mean that the work itself no longer exists? That is indeed how many contemporary artists see the situation – and so too

the aesthetic theorists who follow them – as if it were a question of renouncing the unity of the work. But if we just think back to our conclusions about human play, we discovered even there a primary experience of rationality in the observance of self-prescribed rules, for example, in the very identity of whatever we try to repeat. Something like a hermeneutic identity was already at play here – something absolutely inviolable in the play of art. It is quite wrong to think that the unity of the work implies that the work is closed off from the person who turns to it or is affected by it. The hermeneutic identity of the work is much more deeply grounded. Even the most fleeting and unique of experiences is intended in its self-identity when it appears or is valued as an aesthetic experience. Let us take the case of an organ improvisation. This unique improvisation will never be heard again. The organist himself hardly knows afterwards just how he played, and no one transcribed it. Nevertheless, everyone says, “That was a brilliant interpretation or improvisation,” or on another occasion, “That was rather dull today.” What do we mean when we say such things? Obviously we are referring back to the improvisation. Something “stands” before us; it is like a work and not just an organist’s finger exercise. Otherwise we should never pass judgment on its quality or lack of it. So it is the hermeneutic identity that establishes the unity of the work. To understand something, I must be able to identify it. For there was something there that I passed judgment upon and understood. I identify something as it was or as it is, and this identity alone constitutes the meaning of the work.

If that is true – and I think everything is in favor of it – there cannot be any kind of artistic production that does not similarly *intend* what it produces to be what it is. This is confirmed by even the most extreme example of an everyday object – like a bottle-rack – when suddenly exhibited as a work of art to such great effect. It has its determinate character in the effect it once produced. In all likelihood, it will not remain a lasting work in the sense of a permanent classic, but it is certainly a “work” in terms of its hermeneutic identity.

The concept of a work is in no way tied to a classical ideal of harmony. Even if the forms in which some positive identification is made are quite different, we still have to ask how it actually comes about that the work addresses us. But there is yet another aspect here. If the identity of the work is as we have said, then the genuine

reception and experience of a work of art can exist only for one who "plays along," that is, one who performs in an active way himself. Now how does that actually happen? Certainly not simply through retention of something in memory. In that case there would still be identification, but without that particular assent by virtue of which the work means something to us. What gives the work its identity as work? What makes this what we call a hermeneutic identity? Obviously, this further formulation means that its identity consists precisely in there being something to "understand," that it asks to be understood in what it "says" or "intends." The work issues a challenge which expects to be met. It requires an answer – an answer that can only be given by someone who accepted the challenge. And that answer must be his own, and given actively. The participant belongs to the play.

We all know from our own experience that visiting a museum, for example, or listening to a concert, sets a task requiring profound intellectual and spiritual activity. What do we do in such situations? Certainly there are differences here: in the one case we are dealing with a reproductive art, and in the other nothing is reproduced – the originals hang on the wall immediately in front of us. And yet after going through a museum, we do not leave it with exactly the same feeling about life that we had when we went in. If we really have had a genuine experience of art, then the world has become both brighter and less burdensome.

This definition of the work as the focal point of recognition and understanding also means that such an identity is bound up with variation and difference. Every work leaves the person who responds to it a certain leeway, a space to be filled in by himself. I can show this even with the most classical theoretical concepts. Kant, for example, has a remarkable doctrine. He defended the view that in painting, form is the vehicle of beauty. Color, on the other hand, is supposed to be simply a stimulus, a matter of sensuous affection that remains subjective and thus has nothing to do with its genuine artistic or aesthetic formation.³³ Anyone who knows anything of neoclassical art – that of Thorvaldsen, for example – will indeed admit that as far as such marmoreally pale neoclassical art is concerned, line, configuration, and form stand in the foreground. Kant's view is obviously historically conditioned. We should never admit that colors affect us merely as stimuli. We know perfectly well

that it is quite possible to construct with colors, and that artistic composition is not necessarily restricted to line and contour as used in drawing. We are not interested here in the one-sidedness of such historically conditioned taste. The interesting thing is what Kant is clearly aiming at. What is it that is so distinctive about form? The answer is that we must trace it out as we see it because we must construct it actively – something required by every composition, graphic or musical, in drama or in reading. There is constant cooperative activity here. And obviously, it is precisely the identity of the work that invites us to this activity. The activity is not arbitrary, but directed, and all possible realizations are drawn into a specific schema.

Let us consider the case of literature. It was the merit of the great Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden to have been the first to explore this.³⁴ What, for example, is the evocative function of a story? I shall take a famous example: *The Brothers Karamazov*.³⁵ I can see the stairs down which Smerdjakov tumbles. Dostoevsky gives us a certain description. As a result, I know exactly what this staircase looks like. I know where it starts, how it gets darker and then turns to the left. All this is clear to me in the most concrete way and yet I also know that no one else "sees" the staircase the way I do. But anyone who is receptive to this masterly narrative will "see" the staircase in a most specific way and be convinced that he sees it as it really is. This is the open space creative language gives us and which we fill out by following what the writer evokes. And similarly in the visual arts. A synthetic act is required in which we must unite and bring together many different aspects. We "read" a picture, as we say, like a text. We start to "decipher" a picture like a text. It was not Cubist painting that first set us this task, though it did so in a drastically radical manner by demanding that we successively superimpose upon one another the various facets or aspects of the same thing, to produce finally on the canvas the thing depicted in all its facets and thus in a new colorful plasticity. It is not only when confronted by Picasso and Braque and all the other Cubists of the period that we have to "read" the picture. It is always like this. Someone who, on admiring a famous Titian or Velazquez depicting some mounted Habsburg ruler or other, thinks, "Oh, yes, that's Charles V," has not really seen anything of the picture at all. Rather, it is a question of constructing it, reading it word for word as it were,

so that after this necessary construction it comes together as a picture resonant with meaning. It portrays a world ruler upon whose empire the sun never sets.

So what I should basically like to say is this: there is always some reflective and intellectual accomplishment involved, whether I am concerned with the traditional forms of art handed down to us or whether I am challenged by modern forms of art. The challenge of the work brings the constructive accomplishment of the intellect into play.

For this reason, it seems a false antithesis to believe that there is an art of the past that can be enjoyed and an art of the present that supposedly forces us to participate in it by the subtle use of artistic technique. The concept of play was introduced precisely to show that everyone involved in play is a participant. It should also be true of the play of art that there is in principle no radical separation between the work of art and the person who experiences it. This is what I meant in claiming emphatically that we must also learn how to read the more familiar classical works of art laden as they are with traditional meaning. However, reading is not just scrutinizing or taking one word after another, but means above all performing a constant hermeneutic movement guided by the anticipation of the whole, and finally fulfilled by the individual in the realization of the total sense. We have only to think what it is like when someone reads aloud a text that he has not understood. No one else can really understand what is being read either.

The identity of the work is not guaranteed by any classical or formalist criteria, but is secured by the way in which we take the construction of the work upon ourselves as a task. If this is the meaning of artistic experience, we might recall Kant's achievement when he demonstrated that there is no question here of bringing or subsuming a work in all its sensuous particularity under a concept. The art historian and aesthetic theorist Richard Hamann expressed this once when he said that it is a question of the "autonomous significance of the perceptual content."³⁶ By this he meant that perception here is no longer simply embedded within the pragmatic contexts of everyday life in which it functions, but expresses and presents itself in its own significance. Naturally we must be clear about what perception means if we are to realize the full and proper meaning of this formulation. Perception must not be understood as if the "sensible skin of things" were all that counted aesthetically – a view still

natural to Hamann in the final period of Impressionism. To perceive something is not to collect together utterly separate sensory impressions, but is rather, as the marvelous German word *wahrnehmen* itself says, "to take something as true." But that means that what is presented to the senses is seen and taken as something. In the belief that we generally employ an inadequate and dogmatic concept of sensory perception as an aesthetic criterion, I have chosen in my own investigations the rather elaborate expression "aesthetic non-differentiation" to bring out the deep structure of perception.³⁷ By that I mean it is a secondary procedure if we abstract from whatever meaningfully addresses us in the work of art and wholly restrict ourselves to a "purely aesthetic" evaluation.

That would be like a critic at the theater who exclusively took issue with the way the production was directed, the quality of the individual performances, and so on. Of course, it is quite right that he should do so – but the work itself and the meaning it acquired for us in the actual performance does not come to light in this way. The artistic experience is constituted precisely by the fact that we do not distinguish between the particular way the work is realized and the identity of the work itself. That is not only true of the performing arts and the mediation or reproduction that they imply. It is always true that the work as such still speaks to us in an individual way as the same work, even in repeated and different encounters with it. Where the performing arts are concerned, of course this identity in variation must be realized in a twofold manner insofar as the reproduction is as much exposed to identity and variation as the original. What I described as aesthetic nondifferentiation clearly constitutes the real meaning of that cooperative play between imagination and understanding which Kant discovered in the "judgment of taste." It is invariably true that when we see something, we must think something in order to see anything. But here it is a *free* play and not directed towards a concept. This cooperative interaction forces us to face the question about what is actually built up in this process of free play between the faculties of imagination and conceptual understanding. What is the nature of this significance whereby something can be experienced meaningfully and is so experienced? It is obvious that any pure theory of imitation or reproduction, any naturalistic copy theory, completely misses the point. The essence of a great work of art has certainly never consisted in the accurate and total imitation or counterfeit of "Nature."

As I showed with reference to Titian's "Charles V," it is doubtless always the case that a specific stylization is accomplished in the construction of a picture.³⁸ The horse has that particular quality that always recalls the rockinghorse of one's childhood; then, too, the resplendent background and the watchful gaze of the military commander and emperor of this great kingdom: we see how it all interacts, how the autonomous significance of perception arises here precisely out of this cooperative play. Obviously anyone who asked, for example, "Is the horse a success?" or even "Has he caught this ruler, Charles V, and his particular physiognomy?" would be overlooking the real work of art. Perhaps this example will show that this problem is extraordinarily complex. What then do we really understand? How does the work speak and what does it tell us? Here we should do well to remember, as a first defense against all theories of imitation, that it is not only in the face of art that we enjoy this aesthetic experience, but in the presence of nature as well. This is the problem of "natural beauty."

Kant, who worked out most clearly the autonomy of aesthetics, was primarily oriented toward natural beauty. It is certainly not without significance that we find nature beautiful, for it is an ethical experience bordering on the miraculous that beauty should manifest itself in all the fecund power of nature as if she displayed her beauties for us.³⁹ In Kant a creationist theology stands behind this unique human capacity to encounter natural beauty, and forms the self-evident basis from which he represents the production of the genius and the artist as an extreme intensification of the power that nature, as divinely created, possesses. But it is obvious that what natural beauty expresses is peculiarly indeterminate. In contrast to the work of art, in which we invariably seek to recognize or to interpret something *as something* – even if perhaps we are compelled to give up the attempt – nature speaks meaningfully to us in a kind of indeterminate feeling of solitude. A deeper analysis of this aesthetic experience of natural beauty teaches us that, in a certain sense, this is an illusion and that in fact we can only see nature with the eyes of men experienced and educated in art. We remember, for example, how the Alps were still described in travel diaries of the eighteenth century as terrifying mountains whose ugly and fearful wildness was experienced as a denial of beauty, humanity, and the familiar security of human existence.⁴⁰ Today, on the other hand, everyone is convinced that our great mountain ranges represent not only the sublimity, but also the exemplary beauty of nature.

It is obvious what has happened here. In the eighteenth century, we saw through the eyes of an imagination educated in the school of rational order. Before the English garden style introduced a new kind of truth to nature or naturalness, the eighteenth-century garden was constructed geometrically as an extension into nature of domestic architectural construction. Thus in fact we see nature, as the example shows, with sight schooled by art. Hegel rightly grasped that natural beauty is a reflection of artistic beauty,⁴¹ so that we learn how to perceive beauty in nature under the guidance of the artist's eye and his works. The question of course remains how that helps us today in the critical situation of modern art. Under the guidance of modern art, it would be extremely difficult to recognize natural beauty in a landscape with any success. In fact, today we must experience natural beauty almost as a corrective against the claims of a perception educated by art. Natural beauty reminds us once again that what we acknowledge in a work of art is not at all that in which the language of art speaks. It is precisely indeterminacy of reference that addresses us in modern art and that compels us to be fully conscious of the significance of the exemplary meaning of what we see before us.⁴² What is the point of this indeterminate reference? I shall describe it in terms of the "symbol," a word whose meaning has been decisively influenced by Goethe, Schiller, and the tradition of German classicism.

II

What does the word "*symbol*" mean? Originally it was a technical term in Greek for a token of remembrance. The host presented his guest with the so-called *tessera hospitalis* by breaking some object in two. He kept one half for himself and gave the other half to his guest. If in thirty or fifty years time, a descendant of the guest should ever enter his house, the two pieces could be fitted together again to form a whole in an act of recognition. In its original technical sense, the symbol represented something like a sort of pass used in the ancient world: something in and through which we recognize someone already known to us.

In Plato's *Symposium* there is a beautiful story which I think gives an even more profound indication of the sort of significance that art has for us. In this dialogue, Aristophanes relates a story about the nature of love that has continued to fascinate up to the present day. He tells us that originally all human beings were spherical creatures.

But later, on account of their misbehavior, the gods cut them in two. Thereafter, each of the halves, which originally belonged to one complete living being, seeks to be made whole once again. Thus every individual is a fragment or a *symbolon tou anthropou*.⁴³ This expectation that there is another half that can complete us and make us whole once more is fulfilled in the experience of love. This profound image for elective affinity and the marriage of minds can be transferred to our experience of the beautiful in art. Clearly it is also the case here that the significance that attaches to the beautiful work of art refers to something that does not simply lie in what we immediately see and understand before us as such. But what sort of reference is this? The proper function of reference is to direct our view toward something else that can be experienced or possessed in an immediate way. If the symbol were referential in this sense, then it would be what has come to be called allegory, at least in the classical use of the term. On this view, "allegory" means that what we actually say is different from what we mean, although we can also say what we mean in an immediate way. As a result of the classicist conception of the symbol, which does not refer to something other than itself in this way, allegory has unfairly come to be regarded as something cold and unartistic. In the case of allegory, the reference must be known in advance. In the case of the symbol, on the other hand, and for our experience of the symbolic in general, the particular represents itself as a fragment of being that promises to complete and make whole whatever corresponds to it. Or, indeed, the symbol is that other fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life. The "meaning" of art in this sense does not seem to me to be tied to special social conditions as was the meaning given to art in the later bourgeois religion of culture. On the contrary, the experience of the beautiful, and particularly the beautiful in art, is the invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things, wherever it may be found.

If we think along these lines for a moment longer, we see that the significant thing is precisely the variety of this experience, which we know as a historical reality as much as a contemporary one. Amidst the variety of art, this same message of the whole addresses us over and over again. Indeed, this seems to provide a more precise answer to our question concerning the significance of art and beauty. This means that in any encounter with art, it is not the particular, but

rather the totality of the experienceable world, man's ontological place in it, and above all his finitude before that which transcends him, that is brought to experience. But it does not mean that the indeterminate anticipation of sense that makes a work significant for us can ever be fulfilled so completely that we could appropriate it for knowledge and understanding in all its meaning. This was what Hegel taught when in a profound statement he defined the beautiful in art as "the sensuous showing of the Idea."⁴⁴ The Idea, which normally can only be glimpsed from afar, presents itself in the sensuous appearance of the beautiful. Nevertheless, this seems to me to be an idealistic temptation that fails to do justice to the fact that the work speaks to us as a work and not as the bearer of a message. To expect that we can recuperate within the concept the meaningful content that addresses us in art is already to have overtaken art in a very dangerous manner. Yet this was exactly Hegel's guiding conviction, which led him to the problem of art as a thing of the past. We have interpreted this as a fundamental Hegelian claim, since everything that addresses us obscurely and non-conceptually in the particular sensuous language of art was to be recuperated by philosophy in the form of the concept.

However, that is an idealistic temptation which is rejected by all artistic experience. Contemporary art in particular explicitly forbids us to expect from the creative art of our own time any meaningful orientation that could be grasped in the form of the concept. In opposition to this, therefore, I propose that the symbolic in general, and especially the symbolic in art, rests upon an intricate interplay of showing and concealing. In its irreplaceability, the work of art is no mere bearer of meaning – as if the meaning could be transferred to another bearer. Rather the meaning of the work of art lies in the fact that it is there. In order therefore to avoid all false connotations, we should replace the word "work" by the word "creation." This means, for example, that the transitory process in which the flow of speech rushes past comes to stand within the poem in a mysterious fashion and becomes a creation.⁴⁵ Above all, this creation is not something that we can imagine being deliberately made by someone (an idea that is still implied in the concept of the work). Someone who has produced a work of art stands before the creation of his hands in just the same way that anyone else does. There is a leap between the planning and the executing on the one hand and the successful achievement on the other. The thing now "stands" and

thereby is "there" once and for all, ready to be encountered by anyone who meets it and to be perceived in its own "quality." This leap distinguishes the work of art in its uniqueness and irreplaceability. Walter Benjamin called it the aura of the work of art.⁴⁶ We are all familiar with this from the sense of outrage that we feel over artistic "sacrilege." The destruction of a work of art always has something of the feeling of religious sacrilege about it.

These considerations should help us to appreciate the far-reaching implications of the fact that art achieves more than the mere manifestation of meaning. We ought rather to say that art is the containment of sense, so that it does not run away or escape from us, but is secured and sheltered in the ordered composure of the creation. We owe the possibility of escaping the idealistic conception of sense to a step taken by Heidegger in our time. He enabled us to perceive the ontological plenitude or the truth that addresses us in art through the twofold movement of revealing, unconcealing, and manifesting, on the one hand, and concealing and sheltering, on the other. He showed that the Greek concept of concealment (*aletheia*), only represented one side of man's fundamental experience of the world.⁴⁷ Alongside and inseparable from this unconcealing, there also stands the shrouding and concealing that belongs to our human finitude. This philosophical insight, which sets limits to any idealism claiming a total recovery of meaning, implies that there is more to the work of art than a meaning that is experienced only in an indeterminate way. It is the fact that a particular thing such as this exists that constitutes the "additional something." As Rilke says, "Such a thing stood among men."⁴⁸ This fact that it exists, its facticity, represents an insurmountable resistance against any superior presumption that we can make sense of it all. The work of art compels us to recognize this fact. "There is no place which fails to see you. You must change your life."⁴⁹ The peculiar nature of our experience of art lies in the impact by which it overwhelms us.⁵⁰

Only when we have recognized this can we proceed to an appropriate conceptual clarification of the question of the proper significance of art. I should like to pursue more deeply the concept of the symbolic as taken up by Schiller and Goethe and develop its own profound truth. The symbolic does not simply point toward a meaning, but rather allows that meaning to present itself. The symbolic represents meaning. In connection with this concept of representing one should think of the concept of representation in

secular and canon law. Here "representation" does not imply that something merely stands in for something else as if it were a replacement or substitute that enjoyed a less authentic, more indirect kind of existence. On the contrary, what is represented is itself present in the only way available to it. Something of this kind of representative existence applies to art, as when a well-known personality with a high public profile is represented in a portrait. The picture that is displayed in the town hall or the ecclesiastical palace or wherever, is supposed to be a part of that presence. In the representative portrait, the person is actually there in his or her representative role. We consider that the picture is itself representative. Of course, this has nothing to do with idolatry or the cult of images. It means that in the case of art, we are not simply concerned with a memorial token of, reference to, or substitute for the real existence of something.

As a Protestant, I have always found especially significant the controversy over the Last Supper, which raged in the Protestant Church, particularly between Luther and Zwingli. I share with Luther the conviction that Jesus' words "This is my body and this is my blood" do not mean that the bread and wine signify his body and blood. I believe that Luther appreciated this quite clearly, and that, in this respect, he clung to the old Roman Catholic tradition, according to which the bread and wine of the sacrament *are* the flesh and blood of Christ. I am simply making use of this problem of dogma to claim that, if we really want to think about the experience of art, we can, indeed must, think along these lines: the work of art does not simply refer to something, because what it refers to is actually there. We could say that the work of art signifies an increase in being. This is what distinguishes it from all man's productive achievements in the realm of technology and manufacture where the various appliances and devices of our socioeconomic life have been developed. For it is obviously a characteristic of such things that each one we produce merely serves as a means or a tool. When we acquire a household appliance, we do not call an article of this kind a work, for such articles can be produced indefinitely. Since they are conceived in terms of a specific function, they are in principle replaceable.

The work of art, on the other hand, is irreplaceable. This remains true even now in the age of reproduction where we can encounter the greatest works of art in reproductions of exceptionally fine quality. For photography and recording are forms of reproduction

rather than of representation. The unique event that characterizes the work of art is not present in the reproduction as such (even if it is a question of a recording of a particular interpretation as a unique event, itself a reproduction). If I find a better reproduction, I shall replace the one I had before, and if I mislay the one I have, I shall obtain a new one. What is this additional something still present in the work of art that distinguishes it from an article that can be indefinitely reproduced at will?

Antiquity gave an answer to this question, and it only needs to be understood once again in its proper meaning. In every work of art we encounter something like mimesis or *imitatio*. Naturally mimesis here has nothing to do with the mere imitation of something that is already familiar to us. Rather, it implies that something is represented in such a way that it is actually present in sensuous abundance. In its original Greek sense, the *mimesis* is derived from the star-dance of the heavens.⁵¹ The stars represent the pure mathematical regularities and proportions that constitute the heavenly order. In this sense I believe the tradition is justified in saying that "art is always mimesis," that is, it represents something. When we say this, however, we must avoid being misunderstood. Whatever comes to speak to us through representation cannot be grasped or even come to be "there" for us in any other way. This is why I consider the debate about objective versus nonobjective painting to be nothing but a spurious and short-sighted dispute within the politics of art. For we must admit that there are very many forms of artistic production in which something is represented in the concentrated form of a particular and unique creation. However different from our everyday experience it may be, this creation presents itself as a pledge of order. The symbolic representation accomplished in art does not have to depend directly on what is already given. On the contrary, it is characteristic of art that what is represented, whether it is rich or poor in connotations or has none whatsoever, calls us to dwell upon it and give our assent in an act of recognition. We shall have to show how this characteristic defines the task that the art of past and present lays upon each of us. And this means learning how to listen to what art has to say. We shall have to acknowledge that learning to listen means rising above the universal leveling process in which we cease to notice anything – a process encouraged by a civilization that dispenses increasingly powerful stimuli.

We have asked what is communicated in the experience of the

beautiful and, in particular, in the experience of art. The decisive and indispensable insight that we gained was that one cannot talk about a simple transference or mediation of meaning there. For this would already be to assimilate the experience of art to the universal anticipation of meaning that is characteristic of theoretical reason. As we have seen, Hegel and the idealists defined the beautiful in art as the sensuous appearance of the Idea, a bold revival of Plato's insight into the unity of the good and the beautiful. However, to go along with this is to presuppose that truth as it appears in art can be transcended by a philosophy that conceives the Idea as the highest and most appropriate form for grasping truth. The weakness of idealist aesthetics lay in its failure to appreciate that we typically encounter art as a unique manifestation of truth whose particularity cannot be surpassed. The significance of the symbol and the symbolic lay in this paradoxical kind of reference that embodies and even vouchsafes its meaning. Art is only encountered in a form that resists pure conceptualization. Great art shakes us because we are always unprepared and defenseless when exposed to the overpowering impact of a compelling work. Thus the essence of the symbolic lies precisely in the fact that it is not related to an ultimate meaning that could be recuperated in intellectual terms. The symbol preserves its meaning within itself.

Thus our exposition of the symbolic character of art returns to our original considerations concerning play. There too we noticed that play is always a kind of self-representation. This fact finds expression in art through the specific nature of *repraesentatio*, that increase in being that something acquires by being represented. If we wish to grasp this aspect of the experience of art in a more appropriate fashion, then I think that idealist aesthetics must be revised accordingly. We have already prepared the ground for the general conclusion to be drawn from this: all art of whatever kind, whether the art of a substantial tradition with which we are familiar or the contemporary art that is unfamiliar because it has no tradition, always demands constructive activity on our part.

I should now like to draw a further conclusion from this which will supply us with a truly comprehensive and universally acceptable structure of art. In the representation that constitutes the work of art, there is no question of the work representing something that it is not, that is, it is not allegory in the sense that it says one thing and gives us to understand something else. On the contrary, what the

work has to say can only be found within itself. This is a universal claim and not simply a necessary condition of what we call modernity. It is an objectivist prejudice of astonishing naiveté for our first question to be, "What does this picture represent?" Of course, that is a part of our understanding of a picture. Insofar as we are able to recognize what is represented, that recognition is a moment of our perception of it. Yet we clearly do not regard this as the real goal of our experience of the work. To convince ourselves of this, we only have to consider so-called absolute music, for that is a form of non-objective art. Here it is quite senseless to expect to find a specific meaning or points of reference, even though the attempt to do so is occasionally made. We need only think of the hybrid, secondary forms of program music, opera, and music drama, which precisely as secondary forms imply the existence of absolute music, that great achievement of musical abstraction in Western culture which reached a peak of development in imperial Austria with the classical Viennese school. Absolute music provides a particularly good illustration of the question that has concerned us all along: What is it about a piece of music that allows us to say that it is rather shallow or, in the case of a late Beethoven quartet, that it is truly great and profound? What is the basis for this? What accounts for the sense of quality here? Not a determinate relation to anything that we could identify in terms of meaning. Nor, as the information theory of aesthetics would have us believe, is it a question of a specific quantity of information. Is it not precisely the difference in quality that is crucial here? How is it possible to transform a dance-song into a chorale in a Passion? Is there some obscure relationship with language at work here? This may well be so, for interpreters of music have often felt the need to discover such points of reference and something like traces of conceptual meaning. It is also the case that when we look at nonobjective art, we can never escape from the fact that in our everyday experience of the world, our vision is oriented toward recognizing objects. We also hear the concentrated expression of music with the same ear with which we otherwise try to understand language. There remains an ineliminable connection between what we like to call the wordless language of music and the verbal language of normal linguistic communication. Perhaps there is also a similar connection between the objective vision with which we orient ourselves in the world, and the claim that art makes upon us both to construct new compositions directly from the elements of

the objective visible world and to participate in the profound tensions that they set up.

These extreme cases help to illuminate how art unites us in its communicative dimension. At the very start I pointed out how the so-called modern age, at least since the beginning of the nineteenth century, had emancipated itself from the shared self-understanding of the humanist – Christian tradition. I also pointed out that the subjects that previously appeared self-evident and binding can now no longer be captured in an artistic form that would allow everyone to recognize them as the familiar language within which new statements are made. This is precisely the new situation as I described it. The artist no longer speaks for the community, but forms his own community insofar as he expresses himself. Nevertheless, he does create a community, and in principle, this truly universal community (*oikumene*) extends to the whole world. In fact, all artistic creation challenges each of us to listen to the language in which the work of art speaks and to make it our own. It remains true in every case that a shared or potentially shared achievement is at issue. This is true irrespective of whether the formation of a work of art is supported in advance by a shared view of the world that can be taken for granted, or whether we must first learn to "read" the script and language of the one who speaks in the creation before us.

III

We have reached the point where I should like to introduce the third element of my title – the festival. If there is one thing that pertains to all festive experiences, then it is surely the fact that they allow no separation between one person and another. A festival is an experience of community and represents community in its most perfect form. A festival is meant for everyone. Therefore, when someone fails to take part, we say that he excludes himself and sets himself apart from the festivities. It is not easy to clarify the characteristic nature of the festival and the structure of temporal experience it entails, and previous research in the area offers us little assistance. Nevertheless, there are some important scholars who have considered the subject, such as the classical philologists Walter F. Otto⁵² and the German-Hungarian Karl Kerényi.⁵³ And of course, the real nature of the festival and of festive time has always been a theological question.

Perhaps I can begin with the following preliminary observation. We say that a festival is celebrated, and describe the day of the festival as a holiday or day of celebration. But what exactly does it mean to say that we “celebrate a festival?” Is celebration conceived simply negatively as a break from work? And if so, why? Surely because work is something that separates and divides us. For all the cooperation necessitated by joint enterprise and the division of labor in our productive activity, we are still divided as individuals as far as our day-to-day purposes are concerned. Festive celebration, on the other hand, is clearly distinguished by the fact that here we are not primarily separated, but rather are gathered together. It is true, of course, that we now find it hard to realize this unique dimension of festive celebration. Celebrating is an art, and one in which earlier and more primitive cultures were far superior to ourselves. If we ask ourselves what the real nature of this art is, then obviously we must reply that it consists in an experience of community that is difficult to define in precise terms. Furthermore, it is a community in which we are gathered together for something, although no one can say exactly for what it is that we have come together. It is no accident that this experience resembles that of art, since celebration has its own specific kinds of representation. Its established and customary forms have all been hallowed by ancient usage, so that we have become accustomed to doing things in a given way. There is also the specific kind of speech proper to festive celebration which we call the festival address. But perhaps it is quiet, even more than the festival address, that belongs to celebration. Such quiet communicates itself as, for example, when someone chanced to encounter a great artistic or religious monument that suddenly strikes him very deeply. I am thinking of the National Museum in Athens, where it seems that every ten years they rescue some miraculous new bronze from the depths of the Aegean and set it up again. On entering the room for the first time, one is overcome by an all-embracing festive quiet and one senses how everyone is gathered together before what they encounter. The celebration of a festival is, in technical terms, an intentional activity. We celebrate inasmuch as we are gathered for something, and this is particularly clear in the case of the experience of art. It is not simply the fact that we are all in the same place, but rather the intention that unites us and prevents us as individuals from falling into private conversations and private, subjective experiences.

Perhaps the question of the temporal structure of the festival will lead us to the festival character of art and the temporal structure of the work of art. Once again, I should like to begin with a linguistic observation. I believe that the only conscientious way to clarify our philosophical ideas is to listen to what is already known by the language that unites us. Let us remember that we speak of “enacting” a celebration. Enacting a celebration is obviously a specific form of behavior. If we wish to think, we must develop an ear for language. The word “enacting” removes all idea of a goal to be attained. To enact is not to set out in order subsequently to arrive somewhere, for when we enact a festival, then the festival is always there from the beginning. The temporal character of the festive celebration that we enact lies in the fact that it does not dissolve into a series of separate moments. Of course, it is quite true that we can organize a program for the celebration, or devise an order of service for a religious festival, perhaps even laying down a timetable of events. But all of this only takes place for the sake of the festival that is being enacted. So although it is perfectly possible to organize the forms of the celebration, the temporal structure of the performance is quite different from the time that simply stands at our disposal.

A certain kind of recurrence belongs to the festival – not in every single case perhaps, although I am inclined to wonder whether in a deeper sense this may not be true. Of course, we distinguish recurrent festivals from unique ones. But the question is whether in fact even the unique festival does not always require repetition as well. We do not describe a festival as a recurring one because we can assign a specific place in time to it, but rather the reverse: the time in which it occurs only arises through the recurrence of the festival itself. The ecclesiastical year is a good example, as are all those cases like Christmas, Easter, or whatever, where we do not calculate time abstractly in terms of weeks and months. Such moments represent the primacy of something that happens in its own time and at the proper time, something that is not subject to the abstract calculation of temporal duration.

Two fundamental ways of experiencing time seem to be in question here.⁵⁴ In the context of our normal, pragmatic experience of time, we say that we “have time for something.” This time is at our disposal; it is divisible; it is the time that we have or do not have, or at least think we do not have. In its temporal structure, such time is empty and needs to be filled. Boredom is an extreme example of this

empty time. When bored, we experience the featureless and repetitive flow of time as an agonizing presence. In contrast to the emptiness of boredom, there is the different emptiness of frantic bustle when we never have enough time for anything and yet constantly have things to do. When we have plans, we experience time as the "right time" for which we have to wait, or as what we need more of in order to get the thing done. These two extremes of bustle and boredom both represent time in the same way: we fill our time with something or we have nothing to do. Either way time is not experienced in its own right, but as something that has to be "spent." There is in addition, however, a totally different experience of time which I think is profoundly related to the kind of time characteristic of both the festival and the work of art. In contrast with the empty time that needs to be filled, I propose to call this "fulfilled" or "autonomous" time. We all know that the festival fulfills every moment of its duration. This fulfillment does not come about because someone has empty time to fill. On the contrary, the time only becomes festive with the arrival of the festival. The manner in which the festival is enacted directly relates to this. We are all familiar with this autonomous time, as we may call it, from our own experience of life: childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and death are all basic forms of such autonomous time. We do not calculate here, nor do we simply add up a gradual sequence of empty moments to arrive at a totality of time. The continuity of the uniform temporal flow that we can observe and measure by the clock tells us nothing about youth or age. The time that allows us to be young or old is not clock time at all, and there is obviously something discontinuous about it. Suddenly we become aware that someone has aged, or that someone is "no longer a child." Here we recognize that everyone has his own time, his autonomous temporality. It is of the nature of the festival that it should proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry. That is what festive celebration means. The calculating way in which we normally manage and dispose of our time is, as it were, brought to a standstill.

It is easy to make a transition from such temporal experiences of life to the work of art. In philosophical thought, art has always appeared in close proximity to life in the fundamental sense of organic structure. Everyone understands when we say that a work of art in some sense maintains an "organic unity." What we mean is readily explained by reference to the fact that every detail or aspect

of the picture, text, or whatever it is, is so united with the whole that it does not strike us as something external that has been merely added on; it does not obtrude as if it were some inert element that has simply been imposed in the process of creation. On the contrary, the work seems to possess a kind of center. Similarly, we understand a living organism as a being that bears its center within itself in such a way that the various parts are not subordinated to any particular external purpose, but simply serve the self-preservation of the organism as a living being. This "purposiveness without purpose," as Kant so well described it, is as characteristic a feature of the organism as it clearly is of the work of art.⁵⁵ One of the oldest definitions of the beautiful in art corresponds with this. Aristotle says that a thing is beautiful "if nothing can be added and nothing can be taken away."⁵⁶ Naturally, this is not to be taken literally, but with a pinch of salt. For we can even put the definition the other way round and say that there is a concentration of the beautiful, which is shown precisely by the fact that we may make a range of possible changes, by altering, replacing, adding, or removing something. Nevertheless, this is only possible on the basis of a central structure which must be left intact if we are not to destroy the living unity of the work. In this respect, the work of art does resemble a living organism with its internally structured unity. In other words, it too displays autonomous temporality.

Obviously this does not mean that it experiences youth, maturity, and old age in the way that a living organism does. But it does mean that the work of art is similarly determined by its own temporal structure rather than by the quantifiable duration of its existence through time. Music may serve as an example. We are all familiar with those vague tempo markings that composers use to describe the individual movements of a piece of music. The instructions are quite indeterminate, but they are not merely technical directions on the composer's part, dependent upon his own decision as to whether a piece is to be taken quickly or slowly. We must find the right time as it is demanded by the work. The tempo markings are only indications that help us to maintain the "correct" tempo or to grasp the work as a whole. The correct tempo can never really be quantified or calculated. One of the major confusions that the technical advances of our age have made possible, and that has even affected artistic practice in certain countries with particularly centralized bureaucracies, is the attempt to regulate performances so that the

authentic version made by the composer or someone authorized by him becomes canonic along with all the particular tempi of that performance. In fact, the realization of such a thing would spell the death of artistic reproduction and its substitution by means of some kind of technical equipment instead. Whenever we try to reproduce a work by simply copying the original and "authentic" reproduction of someone else, then we are falling back into a fundamentally non-creative form of activity which the listener will notice in time – if he still notices anything at all.

Once again it is a question of articulating that space between identity and difference with which we are already familiar. One has to discover the autonomous time proper to a piece of music, the autonomous time proper to a poetic text, and this can only happen in one's "inner ear." Every reproduction, every poetic recitation, every theatrical performance – however great the performers may be – only succeeds in communicating a genuine artistic experience of the work itself if with our inner ear we hear something quite different from what actually takes place in front of us. The constituent elements with which we construct the work are not provided by the reproduction, the presentation, or the theatrical performance as such, but by the work that has been raised to ideality in our inner ear. Anyone who knows a poem particularly well has experienced this. No one, oneself included, can read it aloud in a totally convincing way. Why is this so? Clearly we encounter once again that intellectual effort, that spiritual labor, that is rooted in all our so-called enjoyment of the work. The ideal creation only arises insofar as we ourselves actively transcend all contingent aspects. If we are to hear the poem in the completely receptive manner appropriate to it, then no particular vocal color should characterize the performance or reading, for there is no such thing given in the text. But since everyone has a particular vocal color, there is no voice anywhere that can actually attain the ideality of the poetic text. Each and every reading will inevitably offend us in a certain sense by virtue of its contingent qualities. The process by which we liberate ourselves from such contingency defines the cooperative part we have to play as participants in the play of art.

The autonomous temporality of the work of art is illustrated particularly well by our experience of rhythm. What a remarkable phenomenon rhythm is! Psychological research tells us that rhythm

is a factor in our hearing and understanding.⁵⁷ If we produce a series of sounds or notes repeated at regular intervals, we find that the listener cannot help introducing rhythm into the series. But where precisely is this rhythm? Is it to be found in the objective and physical temporal relations between the sounds, in the wavelengths, frequencies, and so on? Or is it in the mind of the listener? It is clearly inadequate to conceive the matter in terms of such a crude set of alternatives. It is as true to say that we project the rhythm into the series as it is to say that we perceive it there. Of course, our example of the rhythm to be perceived within a monotonous series is not an example drawn from art. Nevertheless, it shows that we can only hear the rhythm that is immanent within a given form if we ourselves introduce the rhythm into it. That means we must really be actively involved ourselves in order to elicit the rhythm at all.

Every work of art imposes its own temporality upon us, not only the transitory arts of language, music, and dance. When considering the static arts, we should remember that we also construct and read pictures, that we also have to enter into and explore the forms of architecture. These too are temporal processes. One picture may not become accessible to us as quickly as another. And this is especially true of architecture. Our contemporary forms of technical reproduction have so deceived us, that when we actually stand before one of the great architectural monuments of human culture for the first time, we are apt to experience a certain disappointment. They do not look as "painterly" as they seem from the photographic reproductions that are so familiar to us. In fact, this feeling of disappointment only shows that we still have to go beyond the purely artistic quality of the building considered as an image and actually approach it as architectural art in its own right. To do that, we have to go up to the building and wander round it, both inside and out. Only in this way can we acquire a sense of what the work holds in store for us and allow it to enhance our feeling for life.

To sum up the results of these brief reflections: in the experience of art we must learn how to dwell upon the work in a specific way. When we dwell upon the work, there is no tedium involved, for the longer we allow ourselves, the more it displays its manifold riches to us. The essence of our temporal experience of art is in learning how to tarry in this way. And perhaps it is the only way that is granted to us finite beings to relate to what we call eternity.

Let us now summarize the course of our reflections, trying as always to clarify the advances we have made so far. The question posed by contemporary art imposes from the outset the task of bringing together what threatens to fall apart into two antagonistic poles: on the one hand, the art that appears historical, and on the other, the art that seems progressive. The appearance of art as something historical can be described as the delusion of a culture that holds that only what is already familiar to us from our cultural tradition is significant. The appearance of art as something progressive, on the other hand, is sustained by the delusion of the critique of ideology. It claims that history should now begin anew, since we are already thoroughly familiar with the tradition in which we stand and can safely leave it behind. But the riddle that the problem of art sets us is precisely that of the contemporaneity of past and present. There is no question here of anticipation or of degeneration. On the contrary, we have to ask ourselves what it is that maintains the continuity of art and in what sense art represents an overcoming of time. We have attempted to do this in three steps. First, we looked for the anthropological foundations of art in the phenomenon of play as an excess. For it is constitutive of our humanity that our instincts are underdetermined and we therefore have to conceive of ourselves as free and live with the dangers that this freedom implies. This unique characteristic determines all human existence in the most profound fashion. And here I am following the insights of philosophical anthropology developed by Scheler, Plessner, and Gehlen under Nietzsche's inspiration. I have tried to show that the peculiarly human quality of our existence arises in that union of past and present that constitutes the contemporaneity of all ages, styles, races, and classes. For all of this is human. As I said earlier, the penetrating gaze of Mnemosyne, the muse who maintains and retains, marks us out. It was one of the basic intentions of my exposition to show that in our relationship with the world and in all our creative labors – forming or cooperating in the play of form as the case may be – our accomplishment lies in retaining what threatens to pass away.

This activity necessarily reveals the human experience of finitude in a unique way and gives spiritual significance to the immanent transcendence of play as an excess that flows over into the realm of freely chosen possibilities. For us, death is the transcendence of our own mortal stay. The ceremonial burial of the dead and the cult associated with them, the lavishness of burial art and ceremonies of

consecration, endow the ephemeral and the transient with a new form of permanence. It seems to me that the advance made now that we have completed our considerations, is that we have seen play's excess to be not only the real ground of our creative production and reception of art, but also the more profound anthropological dimension that bestows permanence. This is the unique character of human play and of the play of art in particular, distinguishing it from all other forms of play in the realm of nature.

That was our first step. We then went on to ask what it is that meaningfully addresses us in the play of form that takes shape and is arrested in the concrete work. I there drew upon the old concept of the symbolic and I should like to take it a step further here. I said that the symbol allows us to recognize something as the host recognised his guest by means of the *tessera hospitalis*. But what is recognition? It is surely not merely a question of seeing something for the second time. Nor does it imply a whole series of encounters. Recognition means knowing something as that with which we are already acquainted. The unique process by which man "makes himself at home in the world," to use a Hegelian phrase, is constituted by the fact that every act of recognition of something has already been liberated from our first contingent apprehension of it and is then raised into ideality. This is something that we are all familiar with. Recognition always implies that we have come to know something more authentically than we were able to do when caught up in our first encounter with it. Recognition elicits the permanent from the transient. It is the proper function of the symbol and of the symbolic content of the language of art in general to accomplish this. Now the question that we are so concerned to answer is precisely this: What is it that we recognize when confronted by an artistic language whose vocabulary, style, and syntax seem so peculiarly empty and alien, or so remote from the great classical traditions of our own culture? Is it not a characteristic of our deeply unsymbolical age that for all our breathless faith in technological, economic, and social progress, we still find recognition impossible to achieve?

I have tried to show that we cannot simply contrast those periods with a rich shared symbolic tradition and those impoverished periods when symbols have lost their meaning. The favorable opportunities of the past and the unfavorable opportunities of the present are not simply facts to be accepted. In fact, recognition of the symbolic is a task that we must take upon ourselves. We have to

actualize the possibilities of recognition in the admittedly vast field that confronts us here. It certainly makes a difference whether on the basis of an historical education and a familiarity with modern cultural life we are able to appropriate historically a vocabulary once self-evident to all (acquiring familiarity with it in such a way that it plays its part in our encounter with art), or whether we have to decipher the new and unfamiliar language in order to read it properly.

What is reading? We know that we are able to read something when we cease to notice the letters as such and allow the sense of what is said to emerge. In every case, it is only the constitution of coherent meaning that lets us claim that we have understood what is said. And this alone brings our encounter with the language of art to fruition. It should be obvious that there is an interaction at work here, and we are deceiving ourselves if we really think that we can have one and reject the other. It can hardly be overemphasized that anyone who believes modern art to be degenerate will not be able to understand the great art of the past properly either. We must realize that every work of art only begins to speak when we have already learned to decipher and read it. The case of modern art supplies an effective warning against the idea that we can appreciate the previous language of art without first learning how to read it.

Of course, we must take it upon ourselves to produce this shared community of meaning, which can be neither simply presupposed nor gratefully accepted. André Malraux's famous museum without walls, where all the historical periods of artistic achievement are simultaneously present to consciousness, represents a reluctant recognition of this task in a rather complicated form. It is this collection, brought together in the imagination, that we have to produce for ourselves. The essential thing is that we never possess this collection already or encounter it in the same way as we do when we visit a museum to see what others have collected. Or, to put it another way, as finite beings, we already find ourselves within certain traditions, irrespective of whether we are aware of them or whether we deceive ourselves into believing that we can start anew. For our attitude does nothing to change the power that tradition exercises over us. But it makes a difference whether we face up to the traditions in which we live along with the possibilities they offer for the future, or whether we manage to convince ourselves that we can turn away from the future into which we are already moving and

program ourselves afresh. For, of course, tradition means transmission rather than conservation. This transmission does not imply that we simply leave things unchanged and merely conserve them. It means learning how to grasp and express the past anew. It is in this sense that we can say that transmission is equivalent to translation.

In fact, the phenomenon of translation provides a model for the real nature of tradition. The ossified language of literature only becomes art when it becomes part of our own language. The same is true of the figurative arts and architecture as well. We should appreciate the magnitude of the task involved in reconciling in a fruitful and appropriate way the great monuments and buildings of the past with our modern forms of transport, the methods of lighting available to us today, and the different conditions under which we see them. Perhaps I may give an example of what I mean. On a journey in the Iberian peninsula I was deeply moved to discover a cathedral in which the authentic language of these ancient Spanish and Portuguese religious buildings had not yet been obscured, so to speak, by the illumination provided by electric lights. Obviously, the narrow apertures that let us glimpse the sky outside, and the open portal that allows the daylight to flood into the interior represent the only proper way to encounter these mighty citadels of religion. Now I am not suggesting that we can simply disregard the conditions under which we customarily see things. It is no more possible to do this than to disregard all the other aspects of modern life. The task involved in bringing together the petrified remnants of yesterday and the life of today provides a vivid illustration of what tradition always means: not just the careful preservation of monuments, but the constant interaction between our aims in the present and the past to which we still belong.

It is a question, therefore, of allowing what is to be. But this "letting be" does not mean the repetition of something we already know. We let the past be for us as we are now, not by repeated experience of it, but through an encounter with it.

Finally, the third point concerning the festival. I do not want to repeat here how the authentic temporality of art is related to that of the festival, but I should just like to emphasize the single point that a festival unites everyone. It is characteristic of festive celebration that it is meaningful only for those actually taking part. As such, it represents a unique kind of presence that must be fully appreciated. If we keep this in mind, we may be able to question our own cultural

life, which experiences the aesthetic pleasure arising from culture as a temporary release from all the pressures of everyday existence. The essence of the beautiful is to have a certain standing in the public eye. This in turn implies a whole form of life that embraces all those artistic forms with which we embellish our environment, including decoration and architecture. If art shares anything with the festival, then it must transcend the limitations of any cultural definition of art, as well as the limitations associated with its privileged cultural status. It must also remain immune to the commercial structures of our social life. In saying this, I do not deny that art can be business too, and that artists may well succumb to the commercialization of their art, but this is not the proper function of art and never has been. Perhaps I may point out certain facts. Let us recall the great works of Greek tragedy, which still present problems for the most perceptive and well-educated of contemporary readers. We can find certain choral hymns in Sophocles or Aeschylus of almost hermetic obscurity on account of their intensity and compression. In spite of this, Attic drama united its audience. The success and enormous popularity that Attic drama enjoyed as an integral part of religious life in the broadest sense, demonstrates that it was not simply there to represent the ruling class, nor to satisfy the festival committee that awarded prizes for the best piece.

The great Western polyphonic tradition that derives from Gregorian church music provides us with an analogy. And indeed, even today we can have an experience like that of the Greeks – and with those same works of ancient tragedy. The first director of the Moscow Art Theater was asked immediately after the Revolution which revolutionary play he would use to open the new revolutionary theater. In fact, *Oedipus Rex* was played with enormous success: ancient tragedy for every society and every period! The elaborate development of Gregorian chant and the Passion music of J.S. Bach provide the Christian equivalent to this. In such cases, we cannot mistake the fact that we are dealing with something quite different from a simple visit to a concert. When we go to a concert, it is obvious that the audience is different from the congregation that gathers in a church for the musical performance of the Passion. We have here a parallel to Greek tragedy. Such works range from the highest claims of artistic, historical, and musical culture to the openness of the simplest and most heartfelt human needs.

I would insist that the *Threepenny Opera*, or the records of modern

songs so popular with the young people of today, are equally legitimate. They too have a capacity to establish communication in a way that reaches people of every class and educational background. I am not referring here to the contagious and intoxicated enthusiasm that is the object of mass psychology, although that certainly exists and has always accompanied the genuine experience of community. In our world of powerful stimuli and the often irresponsible, commercially motivated love of experimentation for its own sake, there is a great deal that does not establish real communication. For intoxication alone cannot insure lasting communication. Yet it is surely significant that the younger generation feel that they express themselves spontaneously in the obsessive rhythms of modern music, or in very barren forms of abstract art.

We should clearly recognize one thing. The generation gap, which we experience in the home in friendly argument over which program to turn on or which record to play, can also be found within our society as a whole, although we should rather speak of the continuity between the generations – since the older generation also learns something in the process. It is a profound mistake to think that our art is simply that of the ruling class. We can only believe that if we forget all our sports centers, motorways, public libraries, and technical schools, which are frequently more lavishly furnished than the fine old grammar schools, which I myself miss, where chalk dust was almost part of our education. Finally, this is also to forget the mass media and the widespread influence that they have on the whole society. We should recognize that all these things can be used in a rational way. Certainly human culture is greatly endangered by the passivity that is produced when the channels of cultural information are all too instantly available. This is especially true of the mass media. Whether we are talking of the older generation that raises and educates or the younger generation that is raised and educated, we are all as human beings faced with the challenge of teaching and learning for ourselves. What is demanded is precisely the active application of our own thirst for knowledge, and of our powers of discrimination, when we are confronted by art or indeed anything that the mass media make generally available. It is only then that we experience art. The inseparability of form and content is fully realized as the nondifferentiation in which we encounter art as something that both expresses us and speaks to us.

We have only to look at the alternatives to see the nature of this

experience. Here I will simply give two extreme examples. First, there is the case when we enjoy something for the sake of some quality or other that is familiar to us. I think that this is the origin of kitsch and all bad art. Here we see only what we already know, not wishing to see anything else. We enjoy the encounter insofar as it simply provides a feeble confirmation of the familiar, instead of changing us. This means that the person who is already prepared for the language of art can sense the intention behind the effect. We notice that such art has designs upon us. All kitsch has something of this forced quality about it. It is often well meant and sincere in intention, but it means the destruction of art. For something can only be called art when it requires that we construe the work by learning to understand the language of form and content so that communication really occurs.

The connoisseur represents the opposite extreme to kitsch. This is particularly common in our attitudes to performing artists. We go to the opera because Callas is singing, rather than because a particular opera is being performed. I recognize this as a fact, but I would claim that such an attitude is incapable of mediating an experience of art in any real sense. When we become aware of an actor or singer or any creative artist as mediator, we exercise a secondary level of reflection. When the complete experience of a work of art is genuine, however, what amazes us is precisely the unobtrusiveness of the performers. They do not display themselves, but succeed in evoking the work and its inner coherence with a kind of unforced self-evidence. Thus we have two extremes here: on the one hand, an artistic intent that manipulates us for a particular purpose and finds expression in kitsch; and on the other, total obliviousness to the real appeal that the work of art addresses to us in favor of a quite secondary level in which we delight in aesthetic taste for its own sake.

The real task seems to lie between these extremes. It consists in accepting and retaining everything that genuine art is capable of communicating to us by virtue of the power in its consummately wrought form. How far it is necessary to bring our culturally mediated historical knowledge to bear upon this task is a secondary question. The art of earlier ages only comes down to us filtered through time and transmitted through a tradition that both preserves it and transforms it in a living way. The nonobjective art of our time – albeit only in its best forms, which we today can hardly distinguish from its imitations – can possess a similar density of composition and

a similar capacity for addressing us directly. The work of art transforms our fleeting experience into the stable and lasting form of an independent and internally coherent creation. It does so in such a way that we go beyond ourselves by penetrating deeper into the work. That “something can be held in our hesitant stay”⁵⁸ – this is what art has always been and still is today.

judgment in "On the Contribution of Poetry to the Search for Truth" that there is no real drama in the Christian period.

12 The first essay in this volume, "The Festive Character of Theater," which predates *Truth and Method* by six years, already shows Gadamer's preoccupation with the theme of continuity in change. But I would suggest that it is in the essays "The Speechless Image" and especially "Art and Imitation" that the historical continuity of art takes over as the central theme.

13 R. Bernasconi, "Bridging the Abyss: Heidegger and Gadamer," *Research in Phenomenology*, XVI (1986). I also try there to break free of seeing the question as simply one of continuity versus discontinuity, which is ultimately too simplistic a way of formulating the problem.

14 Gadamer invariably refers "pure poetry" to Mallarmé. So far as I am aware, the exact phrase appears in Mallarmé only once (*Correspondance 1862-71* [Paris: Gallimard, 1959], p. 105) though he does write also of the "pure work," a phrase Gadamer uses on one occasion to refer to aesthetic differentiation (*TM*, 76). The phrase "pure poetry" can be traced beyond Mallarmé to Poe and Baudelaire, who used the phrase once and four times respectively (D.J. Mossop, *Pure Poetry* [London: Oxford University Press, 1971], p. 82). It was perhaps Valéry who was most effective in popularizing the idea of pure poetry and he did so with constant reference to Mallarmé. Surprisingly, Gadamer does not quote the central passage of *Un coup de des*, where Mallarmé himself insists on continuity: "I shall nevertheless have outlined, rather than the first draft, a 'state' of the attached Poem such as does not totally break with tradition" (*The Poems*, trans. by K. Bosley [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977], p. 257).

15 This suggests the possibility of a challenging comparison with Derrida who offers a reading of Mallarmé's *Mimique* in "The double session," in *Dissemination*, trans. by B. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

PART I

The relevance of the beautiful

1 H.-G. Gadamer, "Plato and the Poets" in *Dialogue and Dialectic*, trans. by P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 39-72.

2 G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, Vol. I, trans. by T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 11. Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, "Hegel and the Heidelberg Romantics," *Hegels Dialektik* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), pp. 80-81, and above all the essay "Art and Philosophy Today" by Dieter Henrich in *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism*, ed. by R.E.

Amacher and V. Lange (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp 107-133. Henrich's essay first appeared in *Immanente Ästhetik - Ästhetische Reflexion*, ed. by W. Iser (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1966) and is discussed by Gadamer in his review of that volume reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. IV (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977), pp. 249-255.

3 See H.-G. Gadamer "Karl Immermanns 'Chiliasische Sonnette'" in *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. IV (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1967), pp. 136-147. - Ed.

4 Cf. Gottfried Boehm, *Studien zur Perspektivität. Philosophie und Kunst in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1969).

5 Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, "Verstummen die Dichter?" in *Zeitwende. Die neue Furche*, V (1970). Reprinted in *Poetica* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1977), pp. 103-118.

6 Cf. Reinhardt Koselleck, "Historia magistra vitae," in *Natur und Geschichte. Karl Löwith zum 70 Geburtstag*, ed. by Hermann Braun and Manfred Riedel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), pp. 196-219. [The painting, sometimes also called "Alexander's Victory" or "The Battle of Arbela," dates from 1529 and may be found in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. - Ed.]

7 Cf. *Phaedrus* 265 d and also *Truth and Method*, trans. by W. Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), p. 331. - Ed.

8 *Metaphysics*, 6.1.1025b 18-21.

9 Plato, *Republic*, 601 d-e.

10 *Cratylus*, 390 b-c. - Ed.

11 *Poetics*, 1451 b 5.

12 *Phaedrus*, 246 seq.. - Ed.

13 *Phaedrus*, 250d. Cf. *Truth and Method*, pp. 437-9 - Ed.

14 A. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Sec. I (Hildesham: Georg Olms, 1961), p. 1. - Ed.

15 Cf. Alfred Baeumler, *Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft, ihre Geschichte und Systematik*, Vol. I, Introduction (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1923).

16 Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Sec. 1, p. 1.

17 For more on the ideas of the image and the original, see H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 119 seq.

18 There is no ready translation for the word *Anbild*, but the word "in-sight" may serve if heard in an original sense. - Ed.

19 I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. by J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), Sec. 22, p. 76.

20 Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 46. - Ed.

21 *Musée imaginaire*. André Malraux used the phrase "Museum Without Walls" as the title for the first part of *The Psychology of Art*, trans. by S. Gilbert (New York: Pantheon, 1949-51). That work appeared later in a revised version as *The Voices of Silence*, trans. by S. Gilbert, (New York: Doubleday, 1953). Yet another version appeared in 1965 and was translated

- two years later by S. Gilbert and F. Price under the title *Museum Without Walls* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967). – Ed.
- 22 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 5, pp. 44–45. – Ed.
- 23 *Ibid.*, Sec. 22, pp 76–77 and Sec. 40., pp. 135–138.
- 24 *Ibid.*, Sec. 51, p. 167. – Ed.
- 25 *Ibid.*, Sec. 9, p. 54. – Ed.
- 26 Cf. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 39ff.
- 27 Cf. Max Kommerell, *Lessing und Aristoteles. Untersuchung über die Theorie der Tragedie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1957), pp. 10–11, 236–238.
- 28 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 49, p. 162. – Ed.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 160 – Ed.
- 30 *Ibid.*, Sec. 48, p. 154 – Ed.
- 31 Johann Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London: Paladin, 1970) and Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. by Ada Lane (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930). – Ed.
- 32 Aristotle, *De Anima* 1.3 and 1.4.405b33–408a 34. – Ed.
- 33 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 14, pp. 59–61.
- 34 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. by George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).
- 35 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. by D. Magarshack (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1958), Volume I, Book Five, Chapter 7, p. 329. – Ed.
- 36 Richard Hamann, *Ästhetik* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1911).
- 37 H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 105ff.
- 38 Titian, “Charles V on Horseback at the Battle of Muhlberg,” 1548, Prado Museum, Madrid. – Ed.
- 39 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Sec. 23, pp. 82–85. – Ed.
- 40 See for example Hegel’s journal of his trip in the Berner Oberland during July and August of 1796. *Frühe Schriften*, Vol. I (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 616–617. – Ed.
- 41 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, pp. 1–2.
- 42 Theodor W. Adorno has fully described this indeterminacy of reference in his *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. by C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).
- 43 *Symposium*, 191d. – Ed.
- 44 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, p. 111. – Ed.
- 45 The Ge- prefix of the word *Gebilde*, here translated as “creation,” indicates a gathering. Gadamer, in a phrase omitted from the translation, illustrates this by referring us to the German word *Gebirg*, which means a mountain range. – Ed.
- 46 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, trans. by H. Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 219–253.

- 47 Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” trans. by A. Hofstadter, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 50–72.
- 48 Rainer Maria Rilke, “Duino Elegies” VII, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. by Stephen Mitchell, (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 189.
- 49 Rilke, “Archaic Torso of Apollo,” *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 50 Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 66.
- 51 Cf. Herman Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike. Nachahmung, Darstellung, Ausdruck* (Bern: Francke, 1954) (Dissertationes Bernenses Series 1, 5).
- 52 Walter F. Otto, *Dionysius. Myth and Culture*, trans. by Robert B. Palmer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965).
- 53 Karl Kerényi, “Vom Wesen des Festes,” *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. VII, *Antike Religion* (Munich: Albert Langen and Georg Müller, 1971).
- 54 H.-G. Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Full-filled Time,” trans. by R. Phillip O’Hara, *Martin Heidegger in Europe and America*, ed. by E.G. Ballard and C.E. Scott (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 77–89.
- 55 Gadamer cites Kant’s discussion in his Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*. The actual phrase does not seem to appear until the main body of the text at pp. 62, 78, and 144. – Ed.
- 56 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b9.
- 57 Cf. Richard Höningwald, “Vom Wesen des Rhythmus,” *Die Grundlagen der Denkpsychologie. Studien und Analysen* (Leipzig and Berlin, B.G. Teubner, 1925).
- 58 An allusion to the second stanza of Hölderlin’s “Bread and Wine.” – Ed.

PART II – ESSAYS

1. The festive character of theater

- 1 Cf. Walter Otto’s important introduction to his book *Dionysos*, trans. by Robert B. Palmer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965).
- 2 “Komodie,” *Prosa*, IV, ed. by Herbert Steiner (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1955), p. 95. The quoted sentence, which opens Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s 1922 essay, derives almost word for word from a letter written to him by Rudolf Borchardt on 23 July 1911, see Hofmannsthal and Borchardt, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Marie Luise Borchardt and Herbert Steiner (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1954), pp. 52–53 – Ed.
- 3 Friedrich Schiller, “Ueber das gegenwärtige Teutsche Theater,” *Sämtliche Werke*, V (Munich: Artemis & Winkler, 1975), p. 88 – Ed.