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II

The Ontology of the Work of Art and Its Hermeneutical Significance

1 PLAY AS THE CLUE TO ONTOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

(A) THE CONCEPT OF PLAY

I select as my starting-point a notion that has played a major role in aesthetics: the concept of play. I wish to free this concept from the subjective meaning which it has in Kant and Schiller and which dominates the whole of modern aesthetics and philosophy of man. If, in connection with the experience of art, we speak of play, this refers neither to the attitude nor even to the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art, nor to the freedom of a subjectivity expressed in play, but to the mode of being of the work of art itself. In analysing aesthetic consciousness we recognised that the concept of aesthetic consciousness confronted with an object does not correspond to the real situation. This is why the concept of play is important in my exposition.

We can certainly distinguish between play and the attitude of the player, which, as such, belongs with the other attitudes of subjectivity. Thus it can be said that for the player play is not serious: that is why he plays. We can try to define the concept of play from this point of view. What is merely play is not serious. Play has its own relation to what is serious. It is not only that the latter gives it its 'purpose': we play 'for the sake of recreation', as Aristotle says.¹ It is more important that play itself contains its own, even sacred, seriousness. Yet, in the attitude of play, all those purposive relations which determine active and caring existence have not simply disappeared, but in a curious way acquire a different quality. The player himself knows that play is only play and exists in a world which is determined by the seriousness of purposes. But he does not know this in such a way

that, as a player, he actually intends this relation to seriousness. Play fulfils its purpose only if the player loses himself in his play. It is not that relation to seriousness which directs us away from play, but only seriousness in playing makes the play wholly play. One who doesn't take the game seriously is a spoilsport. The mode of being of play does not allow the player to behave towards play as if it were an object. The player knows very well what play is, and that what he is doing is 'only a game'; but he does not know what exactly he 'knows' in knowing that.

Our question concerning the nature of play itself cannot, therefore, find an answer if we look to the subjective reflection of the player to provide it.² Instead, we are enquiring into the mode of being of play as such. We have seen that it is not the aesthetic consciousness, but the experience of art and thus the question of the mode of being of the work of art that must form the object of our examination. But this was precisely the experience of the work of art which I maintained in opposition to the levelling process of the aesthetic consciousness: namely, that the work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person experiencing it. The 'subject' of the experience of art, that which remains and endures, is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it, but the work itself. This is the point at which the mode of being of play becomes significant. For play has its own essence, independent of the consciousness of those who play. Play also exists—indeed, exists properly—when the thematic horizon is not limited by any being-for-itself of subjectivity, and where there are no subjects who are behaving 'playfully'.

The players are not the subjects of play; instead play merely reaches presentation through the players. We can see this first from the use of the word, especially from its multiple metaphorical applications, which Buytendijk in particular has noted.³

The metaphorical usage has here, as always, a methodological priority. If a word is applied to a sphere to which it did not originally belong, the actual 'original' meaning emerges quite clearly. Language has performed in advance a work of abstraction which is, as such, the task of conceptual analysis. Now thinking needs only to make use of this advance achievement.

The same is also true of etymologies. They are far less reliable because they are abstractions which are not performed by language, but by linguistic science, which can never be wholly verified by language itself: that is, by their actual usage. Hence even when they are right, they are not proofs, but advance

achievements of conceptual analysis, and only in this obtain a firm foundation.⁴

If we examine how the word 'play' is used and concentrate on its so-called transferred meanings we find talk of the play of light, the play of the waves, the play of a component in a bearing-case, the inter-play of limbs, the play of forces, the play of gnats, even a play on words. In each case what is intended is the to-and-fro movement which is not tied to any goal which would bring it to an end. This accords with the original meaning of the word *spiel* as 'dance', which is still found in many word forms (eg in *Spielmann*, *jongleur*).⁵ The movement which is play has no goal which brings it to an end; rather it renews itself in constant repetition. The movement backwards and forwards is obviously so central for the definition of a game that it is not important who or what performs this movement. The movement of play as such has, as it were, no substrate. It is the game that is played—it is irrelevant whether or not there is a subject who plays. The play is the performance of the movement as such. Thus we speak of the play of colours and do not mean only that there is one colour, that plays against another, but that there is one process or sight, in which one can see a changing variety of colours.

Hence the mode of being of play is not such that there must be a subject who takes up a playing attitude in order that the game may be played. Rather, the most original sense of playing is the medial one. Thus we say that something is 'playing' somewhere or at some time, that something is going on (*sich abspielt*, *im Spiele ist*).⁶

This linguistic observation seems to me to be an indirect indication that play is not to be understood as a kind of activity. As far as language is concerned, the actual subject of play is obviously not the subjectivity of an individual who among other activities also plays, but instead the play itself. Only we are so used to relating a phenomenon such as playing to the sphere of subjectivity and its attitudes that we remain closed to these indications from the spirit of language.

However, modern research has conceived the nature of play so widely that it is led more or less to the verge of that attitude to it that is based on subjectivity. Huizinga has investigated the element of play in all cultures and above all worked out the connection of children's and animal play with the 'sacred plays of the religious cult'. That led him to recognise the curious lack of decisiveness in the playing consciousness, which makes it absolutely impossible to decide between belief and non-belief.

'The savage himself knows no conceptional distinction between being and playing; he knows of no identity, image or symbol. And that is why it may be asked whether one does not get closest to the mental condition of the savage in his sacred actions by holding on to the primary idea of play. In our idea of play the difference between faith and pretence is dissolved'.⁷

Here the primacy of play over the consciousness of the player is fundamentally acknowledged and, in fact, even the experiences of play that the psychologist and anthropologist have to describe are illuminated afresh if one starts from the medial sense of the word *spielen*. Play obviously represents an order in which the to-and-fro motion of play follows of itself. It is part of play that the movement is not only without goal or purpose but also without effort. It happens, as it were, by itself. The ease of play, which naturally does not mean that there is any real absence of effort, but phenomenologically refers only to the absence of strain,⁸ is experienced subjectively as relaxation. The structure of play absorbs the player into itself, and thus takes from him the burden of the initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence. This is seen also in the spontaneous tendency to repetition that emerges in the player and in the constant self-renewal of play, which influences its form (eg the refrain).

The fact that the mode of being of play is so close to the mobile form of nature permits us to make an important methodological conclusion. It is obviously not correct to say that animals too play and that we can even say metaphorically that water and light play. Rather, on the contrary, we can say that man too plays. His playing is a natural process. The meaning of his play, precisely because—and insofar as—he is part of nature, is a pure self-presentation. Thus it becomes finally meaningless to distinguish in this sphere between literal and metaphorical usage.

But above all there comes from this medial sense of play the connection with the being of the work of art. Nature, inasmuch as it is without purpose or intention, as it is, without exertion, a constantly self-renewing play, can appear as a model for art. Thus Friedrich Schlegel writes: 'All the sacred games of art are only remote imitations of the infinite play of the world, the eternally self-creating work of art'.⁹

Another question that Huizinga discusses is also clarified as a result of the fundamental role of the to-and-fro movement of play namely the playful character of the contest. It is true that it does not appear to the contestant that he is playing. But there

arises through the contest the tense movement to-and-fro from which the victor emerges, thus showing the whole to be a game. The movement to-and-fro obviously belongs so essentially to the game that there is an ultimate sense in which you cannot have a game by yourself. In order for there to be a game, there always has to be, not necessarily literally another player, but something else with which the player plays and which automatically responds to his move with a counter-move. Thus the cat at play chooses the ball of wool because it responds to play, and ball games will be with us forever because the ball is freely mobile in every direction, appearing to do surprising things of its own accord.

The primacy of the game over the players engaged in it is experienced by the players themselves in a special way, where it is a question of human subjectivity that adopts an attitude of play. Once more it is the improper uses of the word that offer the most information about its proper essence. Thus we say of someone that he plays with possibilities or with plans. What we mean is clear. He still has not committed himself to the possibilities as to serious aims. He still has the freedom to decide one way or the other, for one or the other possibility. On the other hand this freedom is not without danger. Rather the game itself is a risk for the player. One can only play with serious possibilities. This means obviously that one may become so engrossed in them that they, as it were, outplay one and prevail over one. The attraction of the game, which it exercises on the player, lies in this risk. One enjoys a freedom of decision, which at the same time is endangered and irrevocably limited. One has only to think of jig-saw puzzles, games of patience etc. But the same is true in serious matters. If someone, for the sake of enjoying his own freedom of decision, avoids making pressing decisions or plays with possibilities that he is not seriously envisaging and which, therefore, offer no risk that he will choose them and thereby limit himself, we say he is only 'playing with life' (*verspielt*).

This suggests a general characteristic of the way in which the nature of play is reflected in an attitude of play: all playing is a being-played. The attraction of a game, the fascination it exerts, consists precisely in the fact that the game tends to master the players. Even when it is a case of games in which one seeks to accomplish tasks that one has set oneself, there is a risk whether or not it will 'work', 'succeed', and 'succeed again', which is the attraction of the game. Whoever 'tries' is in fact the one who is tried. The real subject of the game (this is shown in precisely those experiences in which there is only a single player) is not

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the player, but instead the game itself. The game is what holds the player in its spell, draws him into play, and keeps him there.

This is shown also by the fact that games have their own proper spirit.¹⁰ But even this does not refer to the mood or the mental state of those who play the game. Rather, this difference of mental attitude in the playing of different games and in the desire to play them is a result and not the cause of the difference of the games themselves. Games themselves differ from one another by their spirit. The reason for this is that the to-and-fro movement, which is what constitutes the game, is differently arranged. The particular nature of a game lies in the rules and structures which prescribe the way that the area of the game is filled. This is true universally, whenever there is a game. It is true, for example, of the play of fountains and of playing animals. The area in which the game is played is, as it were, set by the nature of the game itself and is defined far more by the structure that determines the movement of the game than by what it comes up against, ie the boundaries of the free area, which limits movement from outside.

Apart from these general determining factors, it seems to me characteristic of human play that it plays something. That means that the structure of movement to which it submits has a definite quality which the player 'chooses'. He first of all expressly separates off his playing behavior from his other behaviour by wanting to play. But even within his readiness to play he makes a choice. He chooses this game and not that. It accords with this that the movement of the game is not simply the free area in which one 'plays oneself out', but is one that is specially marked out and reserved for the movement of the game. The human game requires its playing field. The setting apart of the playing field—just like that of sacred precincts, as Huizinga rightly points out¹¹—sets the sphere of play as a closed world without transition and mediation over against the world of aims. That all play is a playing of something is true here, where the ordered to-and-fro movement of the game is determined as an attitude and marks itself off from other attitudes. The playing man is, even in his play, still someone who takes up an attitude, even if the proper essence of the game consists in his getting rid of the tension which he feels in his attitude to his aims. This determines more exactly why playing is always a playing of something. Every game presents the man who plays it with a task. He cannot enjoy the freedom of playing himself out except by transforming the aims of his behaviour into mere tasks of the game. Thus the child gives itself a task in playing with the ball, and

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such tasks are playful ones, because the purpose of the game is not really the solution of the task, but the ordering and shaping of the movement of the game itself.

Obviously the characteristic lightness and sense of relief which we find in the attitude of play depends on the particular character of the task set by the game, and comes from solving it.

One can say that to perform a task successfully 'represents it'. One can say this all the more when it is a question of a game, for here the fulfilment of the task does not point to any purposive context. Play is really limited to representing itself. Thus its mode of being is self-representation. But self-representation is a universal aspect of the being of nature. We know today how inadequate biological conceptions of purpose are when it comes to understanding the form of living things.¹² It is likewise true of play that to ask what its life-function is and its biological purpose is is an inadequate approach. It is, pre-eminently, self-representation.

The self-representation of human play depends, as we have seen, on behaviour which is tied to the make-believe goals of the game, but the 'meaning' of the latter does not in fact depend on achieving these goals. Rather, in spending oneself on the task of the game, one is, in fact, playing oneself out. The self-representation of the game involves the player's achieving, as it were, his own self-representation by playing, ie representing something. Only because play is always representation is human play able to find the task of the game in representation itself. Thus there are games which must be called representation games, either in that, by the use of meaningful allusion, they have something about them of representation (say 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor') or in that the game itself consists in representing something (eg when children play motor-cars).

All representation is potentially representative for someone. That this possibility is intended is the characteristic feature of the playful nature of art. The closed world of play lets down as it were, one of its walls.¹³ A religious rite and a play in a theatre obviously do not represent in the same sense as the playing child. Their being is not exhausted by the fact that they represent; at the same time they point beyond themselves to the audience which is sharing in them. Play here is no longer the mere self-representation of an ordered movement, nor mere representation, in which the playing child is totally absorbed, but it is 'representing for someone'. This assignment in all representation comes to the fore here and is constitutive of the being of art.

In general, games, however much they are in essence rep-

representations and however much the players represent themselves in them, are not represented for anyone, ie they are not aimed at an audience. Children play for themselves, even when they represent. And not even those games, eg sports, which are played before spectators are aimed at them. Indeed, they threaten to lose their real play character as a contest precisely by becoming a show. A procession as part of a religious rite is more than a demonstration, since its real meaning is to embrace the whole religious community. And yet the religious act is a genuine representation for the community, and equally a theatrical drama is a playful act that, of its nature, calls for an audience. The representation of a god in a religious rite, the representation of a myth in a play, are play not only in the sense that the participating players are wholly absorbed in the representative play and find in it their heightened self-representation, but also in that the players represent a meaningful whole for an audience. Thus it is not really the absence of a fourth wall that turned the play into a show. Rather, openness towards the spectator is part of the closedness of the play. The audience only completes what the play as such is.¹⁴

This is the point which shows the importance of the medial nature of the play process. We have seen that play does not have its being in the consciousness or the attitude of the player, but on the contrary draws the latter into its area and fills him with its spirit. The player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses him. This is more than ever the case where it itself is 'intended' as such a reality—for instance the play which appears as representation for an audience.

Even a theatrical drama remains a game, ie it has the structure of a game, which is that of a closed world. But the religious or profane drama, however much it represents a world that is wholly closed within itself, is as if open toward the side of the spectator, in whom it achieves its whole significance. The players play their roles as in any game, and thus the play is represented, but the play itself is the whole, comprising players and spectators. In fact, it is experienced properly by, and presents itself as what is meant to, one who is not acting in the play, but is watching. In him the game is raised, as it were, to its perfection.

For the players this means that they do not simply fulfil their roles as in any game—rather, they play their roles, they represent them for the audience. Their mode of participation in the game is no longer determined by the fact that they are completely absorbed in it, but by their playing their role in relation

and regard to the whole of the play, in which not they, but the audience is to become absorbed. When a play activity becomes a play in the theatre a total switch takes place. It puts the spectator in the place of the player. He—and not the player—is the person for and in whom the play takes place. Of course this does not mean that the player is not able to experience the significance of the whole, in which he plays his representing role. The spectator has only methodological precedence. In that the play is presented for him, it becomes apparent that it bears within itself a meaning that must be understood and that can therefore be detached from the behaviour of the player. Basically the difference between the player and the spectator is removed here. The requirement that the play itself be intended in its meaningfulness is the same for both.

This is still the case even when the play community is sealed off against all spectators, either because it opposes the social institutionalisation of artistic life, as in so-called chamber music, which seeks to be music-making in a fuller sense, because it is performed for the players themselves and not for an audience. If someone performs music in this way, he is also in fact trying to make the music 'sound well', but that means that it would be properly there for any listener. Artistic presentation, by its nature, exists for someone, even if there is no one there who listens or watches only.

(B) TRANSFORMATION INTO STRUCTURE AND TOTAL MEDIATION

I call this development, in which human play finds its true perfection in being art, 'the transformation into structure'. Only through this development does play acquire its ideality, so that it can be intended and understood as play. Only now does it emerge as detached from the representing activity of the players and consist in the pure appearance of what they are playing. As such the play—even the unforeseen elements of improvisation—is fundamentally repeatable and hence permanent. It has the character of a work, of an ergon and not only of energeia.¹⁵ In this sense I call it a structure.

What can be separated in this way from the representing activity of the player still remains dependent on representation. This dependence does not mean that it is only through the particular persons representing it that the play acquires its definite meaning, not even through him who as the originator of the work is its real creator, the artist. Rather, the play has, in relation to them

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all, an absolute autonomy, and that is what is suggested by the idea of transformation.

The implications for the definition of the nature of art emerge when one takes the sense of transformation seriously. Transformation is not change, even a change that is especially far-reaching. A change always means that what is changed also remains the same and is held on to. However totally it may change, something changes in it. In terms of categories, all change (alloiosis) belongs in the sphere of quality, ie of an accident of substance. But transformation means that something is suddenly and as a whole something else, that this other transformed thing that it has become is its true being, in comparison with which its earlier being is nothing. When we find someone transformed we mean precisely this, that he has become, as it were, another person. There cannot here be any transition of gradual change leading from one to the other, since the one is the denial of the other. Thus the transformation into a structure means that what existed previously no longer exists. But also that what now exists, what represents itself in the play of art, is what is lasting and true.

It is clear here that to start from subjectivity is to miss the point. What no longer exists is the players—with the poet or the composer being considered as one of the players. None of them has his own existence for himself, which he retains so that his acting would mean that he 'only acts'. If we describe from the point of view of the actor what his acting is, then obviously it is not transformation, but disguise. A man who is disguised does not want to be recognised, but instead to appear as someone else and be taken for him. In the eyes of others he no longer wants to be himself, but to be taken for someone else. Thus he does not want to be discovered or recognised. He plays another person, but in the way that we play something in our daily intercourse with other people, ie that we merely pretend, act a part and create an impression. A person who plays such a game denies, to all appearances, continuity with himself. But in truth that means that he holds on to this continuity with himself for himself and only keeps it from those before whom he is acting.

According to all that we have observed concerning the nature of play, this subjective distinction between oneself and the play, which is what acting a part is, is not the true nature of play. Play itself is, rather, transformation of such a kind that the identity of the player does not continue to exist for anybody. Everybody asks instead what it is supposed to be, what is 'meant'. The players (or poets) no longer exist, but only what of theirs is played.

But, above all, what no longer exists is the world, in which we live as our own. Transformation into a structure is not simply transposition into another world. Certainly it is another, closed world in which play takes place. But inasmuch as it is a structure, it has, so to speak, found its measure in itself and measures itself by nothing outside it. Thus the action of a drama—in this it still entirely resembles the religious act—exists absolutely as something that rests within itself. It no longer permits of any comparison with reality as the secret measure of all copied similarity. It is raised above all such comparisons—and hence also above the question whether it is all real—because a superior truth speaks from it. Even Plato, the most radical critic of the high estimation of art in the history of philosophy, speaks sometimes, without differentiating between them, of the comedy and tragedy of life and of the stage.¹⁶ For this difference disappears if one knows how to see the meaning of the game that unfolds before one. The pleasure offered in the spectacle is the same in both cases: it is the joy of knowledge.

This gives the full meaning to what we called transformation into a structure. The transformation is a transformation into the true. It is not enchantment in the sense of a bewitchment that waits for the redeeming word that will transform things to what they were, but it is itself redemption and transformation back into true being. In the representation of play, what is emerges. In it is produced and brought to the light what otherwise is constantly hidden and withdrawn. If someone knows how to perceive the comedy and tragedy of life, he is able to resist the suggestiveness of purposes which conceal the game that is played with us.

'Reality' always stands in a horizon of the future of observed and feared or, at any rate, still undecided possibilities. Hence it is always the case that mutually exclusive expectations are aroused, not all of which can be fulfilled. The undecidedness of the future is what permits such a superfluity of expectations that reality necessarily falls behind them. If, now, in a particular case, a meaningful whole completes and fulfils itself in reality, such that no lines of meaning scatter in the void, then this reality is itself like a drama. Equally, someone who is able to see the whole of reality as a closed circle of meaning, in which everything is fulfilled, will speak of the comedy and tragedy of life. In these cases, in which reality is understood as a play, there emerges what the reality of play is, which we call the play of art. The being of all play is always realisation, sheer fulfilment, *energeia* which has its *telos* within itself. The world of the work of art, in which play expresses itself fully in the unity of its

course, is in fact a wholly transformed world. By means of it everyone recognises that that is how things are.

Thus the concept of transformation characterises the independent and superior mode of being of what we called structures. From this viewpoint 'reality' is defined as what is untransformed, and art as the raising up of this reality into its truth. Also the classical theory of art, which bases all art on the idea of mimesis, imitation, has obviously started from play which, in the form of dancing, is the representation of the divine.¹⁷

But the concept of imitation can only describe the play of art if one retains the element of knowledge contained in imitation. What is represented is there—this is the original imitative situation. If a person imitates something, he produces what he knows and in the way that he knows it. A child begins to play by imitation, doing what he knows and affirming his own being in the process. Also, children's delight in dressing-up, to which Aristotle refers, does not seek to be a hiding of themselves, a pretence, in order to be discovered and recognised behind it but, on the contrary, a representation of such a kind that only what is represented exists. The child does not want at any cost to be discovered behind his disguise. He intends that what he represents should exist, and if something is to be guessed, then this is it. What it "is" should be recognised.¹⁸

We have established that the element of knowledge in imitation is recognition. But what is recognition? A more exact analysis of the phenomenon will make quite clear to us the nature of representation, which is what we are concerned with. As we know, Aristotle emphasises that artistic representation even makes the unpleasant appear as pleasant,¹⁹ and Kant for this reason defined art as the beautiful representation of something, because it is even able to make the ugly appear beautiful.²⁰ But this obviously does not refer to artificiality and artistic technique. One does not, as with a circus performer, admire the art with which something is done. This has only secondary interest. What one experiences in a work of art and what one is directed towards is rather how true it is, ie to what extent one knows and recognises something and oneself.

But we do not understand what recognition is in its profoundest nature, if we only see that something that we know already is known again, ie that what is familiar is recognised again. The joy of recognition is rather that more becomes known than is already known. In recognition what we know emerges, as if through an illumination, from all the chance and variable circumstances that condition it and is grasped in its essence. It is known as something.

This is the central motif of Platonism. In his theory of anamnesis Plato combined the mythical idea of remembrance with his dialectic, which sought in the *logos*, ie the ideality of language, the truth of being.²¹ In fact this kind of idealism of being is already suggested in the phenomenon of recognition. The 'known' enters into its true being and manifests itself as what it is only when it is recognised. As recognised it is grasped in its essence, detached from its accidental aspects. This is wholly true of the kind of recognition that takes place in relation to what is represented in a play. This kind of representation leaves behind it everything that is accidental and unessential, eg the private particular being of the actor. He disappears entirely in the recognition of what he is representing. But even that which is represented, a well-known event of mythological tradition, is raised by its representation, as it were, to its own validity and truth. With regard to the recognition of the true, the being of representation is superior to the being of the material represented, the Achilles of Homer more than the original Achilles.

Thus the basic mimic situation that we are discussing not only involves what is represented being there, but also that it has in this way come to exist more fully. Imitation and representation are not merely a second version, a copy, but a recognition of the essence. Because they are not merely repetition, but a 'bringing forth', the spectator is also involved in them. They contain the essential relation to everyone for whom the representation exists.

Indeed, one can say even more: the presentation of the essence, far from being a mere imitation, is necessarily revelatory. When someone makes an imitation, he has to leave out and to heighten. Because he is pointing to something, he has to exaggerate, whether he likes it or not. Hence there exists an unbridgeable gulf between the one thing, that is a likeness, and the other that it seeks to resemble. As we know, Plato insisted on this ontological gulf, on the greater or lesser distance between the copy and the original and for this reason considered imitation and representation in the play of art, as an imitation of an imitation, in the third rank.²² Nevertheless, in the representation of art, recognition is operative, which has the character of genuine knowledge of essence, and since Plato considers all knowledge of being to be recognition, this is the ground of Aristotle's remark that poetry is more philosophical than history.²³

Thus imitation, as representation, has a clear cognitive function. Therefore the idea of imitation was able to continue in the theory of art for as long as the significance of art as knowledge was unquestioned. But that is valid only while it is held that

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knowledge of the true is knowledge of the essence,²⁴ for art supports this kind of knowledge in a convincing way. For the nominalism of modern science, however, and its idea of reality, from which Kant drew the conclusion that aesthetics has nothing to do with knowledge, the concept of mimesis has lost its aesthetic force.

Having seen the difficulties of this subjective development in aesthetics, we are forced to return to the older tradition. If art is not the variety of changing experiences whose object is each time filled subjectively with meaning like an empty mould, representation must be recognised as the mode of being of the work of art. This was prepared for by the idea of representation being derived from the idea of play, in that self-representation is the true nature of play—and hence of the work of art also. The playing of the play is what speaks to the spectator, through its representation, and this in such a way that the spectator, despite the distance between it and himself, still belongs to it.

This is seen most clearly in the type of representation that is a religious rite. Here the relation to the community is obvious. An aesthetic consciousness, however reflective, can no longer consider that only the aesthetic differentiation, which sees the aesthetic object in its own right, discovers the true meaning of the religious picture or the religious rite. No one will be able to hold that the performance of the ritual act is unessential to religious truth.

This is equally true for drama, and what it is as a piece of literature. The performance of a play, likewise, cannot be simply detached from the play itself, as if it were something that is not part of its essential being, but is as subjective and fluid as the aesthetic experiences in which it is experienced. Rather, in the performance, and only in it—as we see most clearly in the case of music—do we encounter the work itself, as the divine is encountered in the religious rite. Here the methodological advantage of starting from the idea of play becomes clear. The work of art cannot be simply isolated from the 'contingency' of the chance conditions in which it appears, and where there is this kind of isolation, the result is an abstraction which reduces the actual being of the work. It itself belongs to the world to which it represents itself. A drama exists really only when it is played, and certainly music must resound.

My thesis, then, is that the being of art cannot be determined as an object of an aesthetic awareness because, on the contrary, the aesthetic attitude is more than it knows of itself. It is a part of the essential process of representation and is an essential part of play as play.

What are the ontological consequences of this? If we start in this way from the play character of play, what emerges for the closer definition of the nature of aesthetic being? This much is clear: drama and the work of art understood in its own terms is not a mere schema of rules or prescriptions of attitudes, within which play can freely realise itself. The playing of the drama does not ask to be understood as the satisfying of a need to play, but as the coming into existence of the work of literature itself. And so there arises the question of the being proper to a poetic work that comes to be only in performance and in theatrical representation, although it is still its own proper being that is there represented.

Let us recall the phrase used above of the 'transformation into a structure'. Play is structure—this means that despite its dependence on being played it is a meaningful whole which can be repeatedly represented as such and the significance of which can be understood. But the structure is also play, because—despite this theoretical unity—it achieves its full being only each time it is played. It is the complementary nature of the two sides of the one thing that we seek to underline, as against the abstraction of aesthetic differentiation.

We may now formulate this by opposing to aesthetic differentiation, the properly constitutive element of aesthetic consciousness, 'aesthetic non-differentiation'. It has become clear that what is imitated in imitation, what is formed by the poet, represented by the actor, recognised by the spectator is to such an extent what is meant—that in which the significance of the representation lies—that the poetic formation or the achievement involved in the representation are not distinguished from it. When a distinction is made, it is between the material and the forming, between the poem and the 'conception'. But these distinctions are of a secondary nature. What the actor plays and the spectator recognises are the forms and the action itself, as they are intended by the poet. Thus we have here a double mimesis: the writer represents and the actor represents. But even this double mimesis is one: it is the same thing that comes to existence in each case.

More exactly, one can say that the mimic representation of the performance brings into being—there what the written play actually requires. The double distinction between a drama and its subject matter and a drama and performance corresponds to a double non-distinction as the unity of the truth which one recognises in the play of art. It is to move out of the actual experience of a piece of literature if one investigates the origin of the plot on which it is based, and equally it is to move out of the actual

experience of the drama if the spectator reflects about the conception behind a performance or about the proficiency of the actors. This kind of reflection already contains the aesthetic differentiation of the work itself from its representation. But for the meaningfulness of the experience as such it is, as we have seen, not even important whether the tragic or comic scene which is played before one takes place on the stage or in life—if one is only a spectator. What we have called a structure is one insofar as it presents itself as a meaningful whole. It does not exist in itself, nor is it experienced in a communication accidental to it, but it gains, through being communicated, its proper being.

No matter how much the variety of the performances or realisations of such a structure goes back to the conception of the players—it also does not remain enclosed in the subjectivity of what they think, but it is embodied there. Thus it is not at all a question of a mere subjective variety of conceptions, but of the possibilities of being that the work itself possesses, which lays itself out in the variety of its aspects.

This is not to deny that here there is a possible starting-point for aesthetic reflection. In different performances of the same play, say, one can distinguish between one kind of mediation and another, just as one can conceive the conditions of access to works of art of a different kind in various ways, eg when one looks at a building from the point of view of how it would look on its own or how its surroundings ought to look. Or when one is faced with the question of the restoration of a painting. In all these cases the work itself is distinguished from its 'representation'.²⁵ But one fails to appreciate the compelling quality of the work of art if one regards the variations possible in the representation as free and optional. In fact they are all subject to the supreme criterion of the 'right' representation.²⁶

We know this in the modern theatre as the tradition that stems from a production, the creation of a role, or the practice of a musical performance. Here there is no random succession, a mere variety of conceptions, but rather from the constant following of models and from a productive and changing development there is cultivated a tradition with which every new attempt must come to terms. The interpretative artist too has a sure consciousness of this. The way that he approaches a work or a role is always related in some way to models which did the same. But it has nothing to do with blind imitation. Although the tradition that is created by a great actor, producer or musician remains effective as a model, it is not a brake on free creation, but

has become so one with the work that the concern with this model stimulates the creative interpretative powers of an artist no less than the concern with the work itself. The reproductive arts have this special quality that the works with which they are concerned are explicitly left open to this kind of re-creation and thus have visibly opened the identity and continuity of the work of art towards its future.²⁷

Perhaps the criterion that determines here whether something is 'a correct representation' is a highly mobile and relative one. But the compelling quality of the representation is not lessened by the fact that it cannot have any fixed criterion. Thus we do not allow the interpretation of a piece of music or a drama the freedom to take the fixed 'text' as a basis for a lot of ad-lib effects, and yet we would regard the canonisation of a particular interpretation, eg in a gramophone recording conducted by the composer, or the detailed notes on performance which come from the canonised first performance, as a failure to understand the actual task of interpretation. A 'correctness', striven for in this way, would not do justice to the true binding nature of the work, which imposes itself on every interpreter in a special and immediate way and does not allow him to make things easy for himself by simply imitating a model.

It is also, as we know, wrong to limit the 'freedom' of interpretative choice to externals or marginal phenomena and not rather to think of the whole of an interpretation in a way that is both bound and free. Interpretation is probably, in a certain sense, re-creation, but this re-creation does not follow the process of the creative act, but the lines of the created work which has to be brought to representation in accord with the meaning the interpreter finds in it. Thus, for example, performances of music played on old instruments are not as faithful as they seem. Rather, they are an imitation of an imitation and in danger 'of standing at a third remove from the truth' (Plato).

In view of the finite nature of our historical existence there is, it would seem, something absurd about the whole idea of a uniquely correct interpretation. We shall come back to this in another context. Here the obvious fact, that every interpretation seeks to be correct, serves only to confirm that the non-differentiation of the interpretation from the work itself is the actual experience of the work. This accords with the fact that the aesthetic consciousness is generally able to make the aesthetic distinction between the work and its interpretation only in a critical way, ie where the interpretation breaks down. The communication of the work is, in principle, a total one.

Total communication means that the communicating element cancels itself out. In other words, reproduction (in the case of drama and music, but also with the recitation of stories or poetry) does not become, as such, thematic, but the work presents itself through it and in it. We shall see that the same is true of the character of approach and encounter in which buildings and statues present themselves. Here also the approach is not, as such, thematic, but neither is it true that one would have to abstract from life-references in order to grasp the work itself. Rather, it exists within them. The fact that works come out of a past from which they stretch into the present as permanent monuments, still does not make their being into an object of aesthetic or historical consciousness. As long as they still fulfil their function, they are contemporaneous with every age. Even if their place is only in museums as works of art, they are not entirely alienated from themselves. Not only does a work of art never completely lose the trace of its original function which enables an expert to reconstruct it, but the work of art that has its place next to others in a gallery is still its own origin. It affirms itself, and the way in which it does that—by 'killing' other things or using them profitably to complement itself—is still part of itself.

We ask what this identity is that presents itself so differently in the changing course of ages and circumstances. It does not disintegrate into the changing aspects of itself so that it would lose all identity, but it is there in them all. They all belong to it. They are all contemporaneous with it. Thus we have the task of giving an interpretation of the work of art in terms of time.

(C) THE TEMPORALITY OF THE AESTHETIC

What kind of contemporaneity is this? What kind of temporality belongs to aesthetic being? This contemporaneity and presentness of aesthetic being is called, in general, its timelessness. But this timelessness has to be thought of together with the temporality to which it essentially belongs. Timelessness is primarily only a dialectical feature which arises out of temporality and in contrast with it. Even if one speaks of two kinds of temporality, a historical and a supra-historical one, as does Sedlmayr, for example, following Baader and with reference to Bollnow, in an effort to determine the temporality of the work of art,²⁸ one cannot move beyond a dialectical tension between the two. The supra-historical 'sacred' time, in which the 'present' is not the

fleeting movement but the fullness of time, is described from the point of view of existential temporality. The inadequacy of this kind of antithesis emerges when one inevitably discovers that 'true time' projects into historical-existential 'appearance time'. This kind of projection would obviously have the character of an epiphany, but this means that for the experiencing consciousness it is without continuity.

This involves again all the difficulties of the aesthetic awareness, which we pointed out above. For it is precisely continuity that every understanding of time has to achieve, even when it is a question of the temporality of a work of art. Here the misunderstanding of Heidegger's ontological exposition of the time horizon avenges itself. Instead of holding on to the methodological significance of the existential analytic of There-being, people treat this existential, historical temporality of There-being, determined by care and the movement towards death, ie radical finiteness, as one among many possible ways of understanding existence, and it is forgotten that it is the mode of being of understanding itself which is here revealed as temporality. The withdrawal of the proper temporality of the work of art as 'sacred time' from transient historical time remains, in fact, a mere mirroring of the human and finite experience of art. Only a biblical theology of time, starting not from the standpoint of human self-understanding, but from divine revelation, would be able to speak of a 'sacred time' and theologially justify the analogy between the timelessness of the work of art and this 'sacred time'. Without this kind of theological justification, to speak of 'sacred time' obscures the real problem, which does not lie in the atemporality of the work of art but in its temporality. Thus we take up our question again: what kind of temporality is this?²⁹

We started from the position that the work of art is play, ie that its actual being cannot be detached from its representation and that in the representation the unity and identity of a structure emerge. To be dependent on self-representation is part of its nature. This means that however much it may be changed and distorted in the representation, it still remains itself. This constitutes the validity of every representation, that it contains a relation to the structure itself and submits itself to the criterion of its correctness. Even the extreme of a wholly distorting representation confirms this. It becomes known as a distortion inasmuch as the representation is intended and appreciated as the representation of the structure. The representation has, in an indissoluble, indelible way the character of the repetition. Re-

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petition does not mean here that something is repeated in the literal sense, ie can be reduced to something original. Rather, every repetition is equally an original of the work.

We know this kind of highly puzzling time structure from festivals.³⁰ It is in the nature, at least of periodic festivals, to be repeated. We call that the return of the festival. But the returning festival is neither another, nor the mere remembrance of the one that was originally celebrated. The originally sacral character of all festivals obviously excludes the kind of distinction that we know in the time-experience of the present; memory and expectation. The time-experience of the festival is rather its celebration, a present time *sui generis*.

The temporal character of celebration is difficult to grasp on the basis of the customary chronological experience of succession. If the return of the festival is related to the usual experience of time and its dimensions, it appears as historical temporality. The festival changes from one time to the next. For there are always other things going on at the same time. Nevertheless it would still remain, under this historical aspect, one and the same festival that undergoes this kind of change. It was originally of a certain nature and was celebrated in this way, then different, and then different again.

However, this aspect does not cover the time character of the festival that comes from its being celebrated. For the essence of the festival its historical connections are secondary. As a festival it is not an identity, in the manner of an historical event, but neither is it determined by its origin so that there was once the 'real' festival—as distinct from the way in which it came later to be celebrated. From the start it belonged to it that it should be regularly celebrated. Thus it is its own original essence always to be something different (even when celebrated in exactly the same way). An entity that exists only by always being something different is temporal in a more radical sense than everything that belongs to history. It has its being only in becoming and in return.³¹

A festival exists only in being celebrated. This is not to say that it is of a subjective character and has its being only in the subjectivity of those celebrating it. Rather the festival is celebrated because it is there. The same is true of drama—it must be represented for the spectator, and yet its being is by no means just the point of intersection of the experiences that the spectators have. Rather the contrary is true, that the being of the spectator is determined by his being there present. To be present does not mean simply to be in the presence of something else

that is there at the same time. To be present means to share. If someone was present at something, he knows all about how it really was. It is only in a derived sense that presence at something means also a kind of subjective attitude, that of attention to something. Thus to watch something is a genuine mode of sharing. Perhaps we may remind the reader of the idea of sacral communion which lies behind the original Greek idea of *theoria*. *Theoros* means someone who takes part in a mission to a festival. Such a person has no other qualification and function than to be there. Thus the *theoros* is a spectator in the literal sense of the word, who shares in the solemn act through his presence at it and in this way acquires his sacred quality: for example, of inviolability.

In the same way, Greek metaphysics still conceives the nature of *theoria* and of *nous* as pure presence to what is truly real,³² and also the capacity to be able to act theoretically is defined for us by the fact that in attending to something it is possible to forget one's own purposes.³³ But *theoria* is not to be conceived primarily as an attitude of subjectivity, as a self-determination of the subjective consciousness, but in terms of what it is contemplating. *Theoria* is a true sharing, not something active, but something passive (*pathos*), namely being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees. It is from this point that people have tried recently to explain the religious background of the Greek idea of reason.³⁴

We started by saying that the true being of the spectator, who is part of the play of art, cannot be adequately understood in terms of subjectivity, as an attitude of the aesthetic consciousness. But this does not mean that the nature of the spectator cannot be described in terms of being present at something, in the way that we pointed out. To be present, as a subjective act of a human attitude, has the character of being outside oneself. Even Plato, in his *Phaedrus*, makes the mistake of judging the ecstasy of being outside oneself from the point of view of rational reasonableness and of seeing it as the mere negation of being within oneself, ie as a kind of madness. In fact, being outside oneself is the positive possibility of being wholly with something else. This kind of being present is a self-forgetfulness, and it is the nature of the spectator to give himself in self-forgetfulness to what he is watching. Self-forgetfulness here is anything but a primitive condition, for it arises from the attention to the object, which is the positive act of the spectator.³⁵

Obviously there is an important difference between a spectator who gives himself entirely to the play of art, and someone

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who merely gazes at something out of curiosity. It is also characteristic of curiosity that it is as if drawn away by what it looks at, that it forgets itself entirely in it, and cannot tear itself away from it. But the important thing about an object of curiosity is that it is basically of no concern to the spectator, it has no meaning for him. There is nothing in it which he would really be able to come back to and which would focus his attention. For it is the formal quality of novelty, ie abstract difference, which makes up the charm of what one looks at. This is seen in the fact that its dialectical complement is becoming bored and jaded. Whereas that which presents itself to the spectator as the play of art does not simply exhaust itself in the ecstatic emotion of the moment, but has a claim to permanence and the permanence of a claim.

The word 'claim' does not occur here by accident. In the type of theological reflection which started with Kierkegaard and which we call 'dialectical theology' this idea has made possible a theological explanation of what is meant by Kierkegaard's notion of simultaneity. A claim is something lasting. Its justification (or pretended justification) is the first thing. Because a claim continues, it can be affirmed at any time. A claim exists against someone and must therefore be asserted against him; but the concept of a claim also contains the idea that it is not itself a fixed demand, the fulfilment of which is agreed by both sides, but is, rather, the ground for such. A claim is the legal basis for an unspecified demand. If it is to be answered in such a way as to be settled, then it must first take the form of a demand when it is made. It belongs to the permanence of a claim that it is concretised into a demand.

The application to lutheran theology is that the claim of the call to faith persists since the proclamation of the gospel and is made afresh in preaching. The words of the sermon perform this total mediation which otherwise is the work of the religious rite, say, of the mass. We shall see that the word is called also in other ways to mediate contemporaneity, and that therefore in the problem of hermeneutics it has the chief place.

At any rate 'contemporaneity' forms part of the being of the work of art. It constitutes the nature of 'being present'. It is not the simultaneity of the aesthetic consciousness, for that simultaneity refers to the coexistence and the equal validity of different aesthetic objects of experience in the one consciousness. Contemporaneity, however, here means that a single thing that presents itself to us achieves in its presentation full presentness, however remote its origin may be. Thus contemporaneity is not

a mode of givenness in consciousness, but a task for consciousness and an achievement that is required of it. It consists in holding on to the object in such a way that it becomes contemporaneous, but this means that all mediation is dissolved in total presentness.

This idea of contemporaneity comes, as we know, from Kierkegaard, who gave to it a particular theological emphasis.³⁶ Contemporaneity, for Kierkegaard, does not mean existing at the same time, but is a formulation of the believer's task of so totally combining one's own presence and the redeeming act of Christ, that the latter is experienced as something present (not as something in the past) and is taken seriously as such. Against this the simultaneity of the aesthetic consciousness depends on the concealment of the task that contemporaneity sets.

Hence contemporaneity is something that is found especially in the religious act, and in the sermon. The sense of being present is here the genuine sharing in the redemptive action itself. No one can doubt that the aesthetic differentiation, eg of a 'beautiful' ceremony or of a 'good' sermon is, in view of the appeal that is made to us, misplaced. Now I maintain that the same thing is basically true for the experience of art. Here also mediation must be conceived as total. Neither the separate life of the creating artist—his biography—nor that of the performer who acts a work, nor that of the spectator who is watching the play, has any separate legitimacy in the face of the being of the work of art.

What unfolds before one is for every one so lifted out of the continuing progression of the world and so self-enclosed as to make an independent circle of meaning that no one is motivated to go beyond it to another future and reality. The spectator is set at an absolute distance which makes any practical, purposive share in it impossible. But the distance is, in the literal sense, aesthetic distance, for it is the distance from seeing that makes possible the proper and comprehensive sharing in what is represented before one. Thus to the ecstatic self-forgetfulness of the spectator there corresponds his continuity with himself. Precisely that in which he loses himself as a spectator requires his own continuity. It is the truth of his own world, the religious and moral world in which he lives, which presents itself to him and in which he recognises himself. Just as the parousia, absolute presence, describes the ontological mode of aesthetic being, and a work of art is the same wherever it becomes such a presence, so the absolute moment in which a spectator stands is at once self-forgetfulness and reconciliation with self. That which detaches

him from everything also gives him back the whole of his being.

The dependence of aesthetic being on representation does not mean any deficiency, any lack of autonomous determination of meaning. It belongs to its essence. The spectator is an essential element of the kind of play that we call aesthetic. Let us remember here the famous definition of tragedy which we find in Aristotle's *Poetics*. There the attitude of the spectator is expressly included in the definition.

(D) THE EXAMPLE OF THE TRAGIC

The Aristotelian theory of tragedy may serve as an example for the structure of aesthetic being as a whole. It exists in the content of a poetics and seems to be valid only for dramatic poetry. However, the tragic is a basic phenomenon, a meaningful structure which does not exist only in tragedy, the tragic work of art in the narrower sense, but can have its place also in other artistic genres, especially epic. Indeed, it is not even a specifically artistic phenomenon, inasmuch as it is found also in life. For this reason, the tragic is seen by modern scholars (Richard Hamann, Max Scheler³⁷) as something extra-aesthetic. It is an ethical and metaphysical phenomenon that enters into the sphere of aesthetic problems only from outside. But after we have seen how questionable the idea of the aesthetic is, we must now raise the contrary issue, namely, whether the tragic is not, rather, a basic aesthetic phenomenon. The nature of the aesthetic has emerged for us as play and representation. Thus we may also consult the theory of the tragic play, the poetics of tragedy, as to the essence of the tragic.

What we find reflected in thought about the tragic, from Aristotle down to the present, is by no means of an unchangeable nature. There is no doubt that the essence of tragedy is presented in Attic tragedy in a unique way; and differently for Aristotle, for whom Euripides was the 'most tragic',³⁸ differently again for someone to whom Aeschylus reveals the truth of the tragic phenomenon, and very differently for someone who thinks of Shakespeare. But this change does not simply mean that the question of the unified nature of the tragic would be without an object, but rather, on the contrary, that the phenomenon presents itself in an outline given by a historical unity. The reflection of classical tragedy in modern tragedy of which Kierkegaard speaks is constantly present in all modern thinking on the tragic. If we start with Aristotle, we shall see the

whole scope of the tragic phenomenon. In his famous definition of tragedy Aristotle made a point that had a great influence on the problem of the aesthetic: he included in the definition of tragedy the effect on the spectator.

I cannot hope to treat his famous and much discussed definition fully here. But the mere fact that the spectator is taken into the definition makes clear what was said above concerning the essential part that the spectator plays in a drama. The way in which the spectator is part of it makes apparent the meaningfulness of the figure of play. Thus the distance that the spectator retains from the drama is not an optional attitude, but the essential relation whose ground lies in the meaningful unity of the play. Tragedy is the unity of a tragic succession of events that is experienced as such. But what is experienced as a tragic succession of events, even if it is not a play that is shown on the stage, but a tragedy in 'life', is a closed circle of meaning that resists, of itself, all penetration and influence. What is understood as tragic must simply be accepted. Hence it is, in fact, a basic 'aesthetic' phenomenon.

We learn from Aristotle that the representation of the tragic action has a specific effect on the spectator. The representation works through *eleos* and *phobos*. The traditional translation of these emotions by 'pity' and 'terror' gives them a far too subjective tinge. Aristotle is not at all concerned with pity or with the evaluation of pity as it has changed through the centuries,³⁹ and fear is similarly not to be understood as an inner emotion. Rather both are events that overwhelm man and sweep him away. *Eleos* is the distress that comes over us in the face of what we call distressing. Thus the fate of Oedipus is distressing (the example that Aristotle always returns to). The English word 'distress' is a good equivalent because it too refers not merely to an inner state, but likewise to its manifestation. Accordingly, *phobos* is not just a state of mind but, as Aristotle says, a cold shudder⁴⁰ that makes one's blood run cold, that makes one shiver. In the particular sense in which, in this definition of tragedy, *phobos* is combined with *eleos*, *phobos* means the shivers of apprehension which come over us for someone whom we see rushing to his destruction and for whom we fear. Distress and apprehension are modes of ecstasis, being outside oneself, which testify to the power of what is taking place before us.

Now Aristotle says of these emotions that they are what the play uses in order to purify us of them. As is well-known, this translation is doubtful, especially the sense of the genitive.⁴¹ But what Aristotle means seems to me to be quite independent of

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this, and this must ultimately show why two conceptions so different grammatically can continue to be held so firmly. It seems clear to me that Aristotle is thinking of the tragic pensiveness that comes over the spectator at a tragedy. But pensiveness is a kind of relief and resolution, in which pain and pleasure are variously mixed. How can Aristotle call this condition a purification? What is the impure element in feeling, and how is this removed in the tragic emotion? The answer seems to me the following: being overcome by distress and horror involves a painful division. There is a disjunction with what is happening, a refusal to accept, that rebels against the agonising events. But it is precisely the effect of the tragic catastrophe that this disjunction with what exists is removed. The heart is freed from constraint. We are freed not only from the spell in which the painful and horrifying nature of the tragic destiny had held us, but at the same time we are free from everything that divides us from what is.

Thus tragic pensiveness reflects a kind of affirmation, a return to ourselves, and if, as is often the case in modern tragedy, the hero is affected in his own consciousness by the emotion, he himself shares a little in this affirmation, in that he accepts his fate.

But what is the real object of this affirmation? What is affirmed? Certainly not the justice of a moral world order. The notorious tragic theory of guilt that scarcely retains any importance for Aristotle is not a suitable explanation for modern tragedy. For tragedy does not exist where guilt and expiation correspond to each other in the right measure, where a moral bill of guilt is paid in full. Nor in modern tragedy can and must there be a full subjectivisation of guilt and of fate. Rather the excess of tragic consequences is typical of the nature of the tragic. Despite all the subjectivisation of guilt in modern tragedy it still retains an element of that classical sense of the power of destiny that, in the very disproportion between guilt and fate, reveals itself as the same for all. Hebbel seems to stand on the borderline of what can still be called tragedy, so exactly is subjective guilt fitted into the course of the tragic action. For the same reason the idea of christian tragedy presents a special problem, since in the light of divine salvation history the values of happiness and misfortune that are constitutive of the tragic action no longer determine human destiny. Even Kierkegaard's⁴² brilliant contrast of the classical suffering that followed from a curse laid on a family, with the suffering that rends the consciousness that is not at one with itself, but involved in conflict, only reaches the

bounds of the tragic. His rewritten *Antigone*⁴³ would no longer be a tragedy.

So we must repeat the question: what is affirmed here of the spectator? Obviously it is the disproportionate, terrible immensity of the consequences that flow from a guilty deed which is the real claim made on the spectator. The tragic affirmation is the fulfilment of this claim. It has the character of a genuine communion. It is something truly common which is experienced in such an excess of tragic suffering. The spectator recognises himself and his own finiteness in the face of the power of fate. What happens to the great ones of the earth has an exemplary significance. The tragic emotion is not a response to the tragic course of events as such or to the justice of the fate that overtakes the hero, but to the metaphysical order of being that is true for all. To see that 'this is how it is' is a kind of self-knowledge for the spectator, who emerges with new insight from the illusions in which he lives. The tragic affirmation is an insight which the spectator has by virtue of the continuity of significance in which he places himself.

It follows from this analysis of the tragic not only that it is a basic aesthetic idea, inasmuch as the distance of the spectator is part of the essence of the tragic but, more importantly, that the distance of the spectator, which determines the nature of the aesthetic, does not include the 'aesthetic differentiation' which we recognised as a feature of 'aesthetic consciousness'. The spectator does not hold himself aloof at a distance of aesthetic consciousness enjoying the art of representation,⁴⁴ but in the communion of being present. The real emphasis of the tragic phenomenon lies ultimately on what is represented and recognised and to share in it is not a question of choice. However much the tragic play that is performed solemnly in the theatre represents an exceptional situation in the life of everyone, it is not an experience of an adventure producing a temporary intoxication from which one re-awakens to one's true being, but the emotion that seizes the spectator deepens in fact his continuity with himself. The tragic emotion flows from the self-knowledge that the spectator acquires. He finds himself in the tragic action, because it is his own world, familiar to him from religious or historical tradition, that he encounters, and even if this tradition is no longer binding for a later consciousness—as was already the case with Aristotle, and was certainly true of Seneca or Corneille—there is more in the continuing effect of such tragic works and themes than merely the continuing validity of a literary model. It is not only assumed that the spectator is still famil-

iar with the legend, but it is also necessary that its language still really reaches him. Only then can the encounter with the tragic theme and tragic work become an encounter with self.

What is true here of the tragic, however, is true in a far wider context. For the writer, free invention is always only one side of a communication which is conditioned by what is pre-given as valid. He does not freely invent his plot, however much he imagines that he does. Rather there remains up to the present-day some of the old basis of the mimesis theory. The free invention of the writer is the presentation of a common truth that is binding on the writer also.

It is the same with the other arts, especially the plastic arts. The aesthetic myth of freely creative imagination that transforms experience into literature proves only that in the nineteenth century the store of mythical and historical tradition was no longer a self-evident possession. But even then the aesthetic myth of imagination and of the invention of genius is an exaggeration that does not stand up to reality. The choice of material and the formation of it still does not proceed from the free discretion of the artist and is not the mere expression of his inner life. Rather does the artist address people whose minds are prepared and chooses what he expects will have an effect on them. He himself stands in the same tradition as the public that he is aiming at and which he gathers around him. In this sense it is true that he does not need to know explicitly as an individual, a thinking consciousness, what he is doing and what his work says. It is never simply a strange world of magic, of intoxication, of dream to which the play, sculptor or viewer is swept away, but it is always his own world to which he comes to belong more fully by recognising himself more profoundly in it. There remains a continuity of meaning which links the work of art with the world of real existence and from which even the alienated consciousness of a cultured society never quite detaches itself.

Let us sum up. What is aesthetic being? We have sought to show something general in the idea of play and of the transformation into a structure, which is characteristic of the play of art: namely, that the presentation or performance of a work of literature or of music is something essential, and not incidental, for in this is merely completed what the works of art already are: the being there of what is represented in them. The specific temporality of aesthetic being, of having its being in the process of being represented, becomes existent in reproduction as a separate, independent phenomenon.

Now we may ask whether this has effectively general validity, so that the character of aesthetic being can be determined from

it. Can this also be applied to works of sculptural and architectural art? Let us ask this question first of the plastic arts. We shall find that the most plastic of the arts, architecture, is especially instructive.

Notes

PART ONE, SECTION II

¹ Aristotle, *Pol* VIII, 3 1337 b 39 and elsewhere Cf *Eth. Nic.* x, 6, 1176 b 33: *paizein hopos spoudaze kat' anacharsin orthos echein dokei*

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³ Kurt Riezler, in his brilliant *Traktat vom Schönen*, has started with the subjectivity of the player and hence preserved the antithesis of play and seriousness, so that the idea of play becomes too restricted for him and he has to say: 'We doubt whether the play of children is only play' and 'The play of art is not only play'

⁴ F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Wesen und Sinn des Spiels*, 1933

⁵ This obvious point must be made against those who seek to criticise the truth of Heidegger's statements on the basis of his etymological practice

⁶ Cf J. Trier, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 67, 1947

⁷ J. Huizinga (*Homo ludens, Vom Ursprung der Kultur im Spiel*, p 43) points out the following linguistic facts: 'One can certainly say in German *ein Spiel treiben* ('to play a game') and in Dutch *een spelletje doen* (the same), but the appropriate verb is really *spelen* ('to play') itself. *Man speelt ein Spiel* ('one plays a game'). In other words, in order to express the kind of activity, the idea contained in the noun must be repeated in the verb. That means, it seems, that the action is of such a particular and independent kind that it is different from the usual kinds of activity. Playing is not an activity in the usual sense'. Similarly, the phrase *ein spielchen machen* (to take a hand) describes a use of one's time that is by no means play

⁸ Huizinga, *loc cit*, p 32

⁹ Rilke writes in the fifth Duino Elegy: 'wo sich das reine Zuwenig unbegreiflich verwandelt—umspringt in jenes leere Zuviel' ('where the sheer dearth is incomprehensibly transformed—switches into that void excess')

¹⁰ Friedrich Schlegel, *Gespräch über die Poesie* (*Friedrich Schlegels Jugendschriften*, ed J. Minor, 1882, II, p 364)

¹¹ F. G. Junger, *Die Spiele*

¹² Huizinga, *loc cit*, p 17

¹³ In numerous writings Adolf Portmann has made this criticism and given a new basis to the legitimacy of the morphological approach.

¹⁴ Cf Rudolf Kassner, *Zahl und Gesicht*, p 161f. Kassner states that 'the extraordinary unity and duality of child and doll' is connected with the fact that the fourth 'open wall of the audience' (as in a religious rite) is missing. I am arguing the other way round that it is precisely this fourth wall of the audience that closes the play world of the world of art

¹⁵ Cf note 13

¹⁶ I am making use here of the classical distinction in which Aristotle (*Eth. Eud.* B1; *Eth. Nic.* VI, 5, 1140 a 20) separates the *poesis* from the *praxis*

¹⁷ Plato, *Phileb.* 50b

¹⁸ Cf the recent research by Koller, *Mimesis*, 1954, which proves the original connection between *mimesis* and dance

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Poet.* 4 esp 1448 b 16: 'inferring what class each object belongs to; for example that this individual is a so-and-so' (Else trans)

²⁰ *loc cit* 1448 b 10

²¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, § 48

²² Plato, *Phaed.* 73ff

²³ Plato, *Republic* x

²⁴ Aristotle, *Poet.* 9, 1451 b 6

²⁵ Anna Tumarkin has been able to show very clearly in the aesthetics of the eighteenth century the transition from 'imitation' to 'expression' (*Festschrift für Samuel Singer*, 1930)

²⁶ It is a problem of a particular kind whether the formative process itself should not be seen also as an aesthetic reflection on the work. It is undeniable that when he considers the idea of his work the creator can ponder and criti-

cally compare and judge various possibilities of carrying it out. But this sober awareness which is part of creation itself seems to me to be something very different from aesthetic reflection and aesthetic criticism, which is able to be stimulated by the work itself. It may be that what was the object of the creator's reflection, ie the possibilities of form, can also be the occasion of aesthetic criticism. But even in the case of this kind of agreement in content between creative and critical reflection the criterion is different. Aesthetic criticism is based on the disturbance of unified understanding, whereas the aesthetic reflection of the creator is directed towards establishment of the unity of the work itself. We shall see later the hermeneutical consequences of this point. It still seems to me a remnant of the false psychologism that stems from taste and genius aesthetics if one makes the processes of production and of reproduction coincide in the idea. This is to fail to appreciate the event of the success of a work, which goes beyond the subjectivity both of the creator and of the spectator or listener

²⁷ Although I think his analyses on the 'schematism' of the literary work of art have been too little noted, I cannot agree when R. Ingarden (in his 'Bemerkungen zum Problem des ästhetischen Werturteils', *Rivista di Estetica*, 1959) sees in the process of the concretisation of an 'aesthetic object' the area of the aesthetic evaluation of the work of art. The aesthetic object is not constituted in the aesthetic experience of grasping it, but the work of art itself is experienced in its aesthetic quality through the process of its concretisation and creation. In this I agree fully with L. Pareyson's aesthetics of *formativita*

²⁸ This is not limited to the interpretative arts, but includes any work of art, in fact any meaningful structure, that is raised to a new understanding, as we shall see later

²⁹ Hans Sedlmayr, *Kunst und Wahrheit*, 1958, p 140ff

³⁰ For the following, compare the fine analyses by R. and G. Koebner, *Vom Schönen und seiner Wahrheit*, 1957, which I came across only when my own work was completed. Cf the review in the *Philosophische Rundschau* 7, p 79

³¹ Walter F. Otto and Karl Kerényi have noted the importance of the festival for the history of religions and anthropology (cf Karl Kerényi, *Vom Wesen des Festes*, Paideuma, 1938)

³² Aristotle refers to the characteristic mode of being of the *apeiron*: for instance in his discussion of the mode of being of the day, the games, and hence the festival—a discussion that does not forget Anaximander. (*Physics* III, 6, 206 a 20). Had Anaximander already sought to define the fact that the *apeiron* never came to an end in relation to such pure time phenomena? Did he perhaps intend more than can be conceived in the Aristotelian ideas of becoming and being? For the image of the day recurs in another connection with a special function: in Plato's *Parmenides* (131b) Socrates seeks to demonstrate the relation of the idea to things in terms of the presence of the day, which exists for all. Here by means of the nature of the day, there is demonstrated not what exists only as it passes away, but the unsharable presence and *parousia* of something that remains the same, despite the fact that the day is everywhere different. When the early thinkers thought of being, ie presence, did that which was presence for them appear in the light of a sacral communion in which the divine shows itself? The *parousia* of the divine is still for Aristotle the most real being, *energeia* (*Met* XIII, 7) which is limited by no *dunamai*. The character of this time cannot be grasped in terms of the usual experience of succession. The dimensions of time and the experience of these dimensions cause us to see the return of the festival only as something historical: the one and the same thing changes from time to time. But in fact a festival is not one and the same thing: it exists by being always something different. An entity that exists

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only in always being something else is temporal in a radical sense: it has its being in becoming. Cf on the ontological character of the 'while' (*Weile*) M. Heidegger, *Holzwege*, p 322ff

²² Cf my essay 'Zur Vorgeschichte der Metaphysik' on the relationship between 'Zein' and 'Denken' in Parmenides (*Antelle*, 1949)

²³ Cf what was said above on p 12 about culture, formation (*Bildung*)

²⁴ Cf Gerhard Krüger, *Einsicht und Leidenschaft. Das Wesen des platonischen Denkens*, first edition (1940). The Introduction in particular contains important insights. Since then a published lecture by Krüger (*Grundfragen der Philosophie*, 1958) has made his systematic intentions even clearer. Perhaps we may make a few observations on what he says. His criticism of modern thinking and its emancipation from all connections with 'ontic truth' seems to me without foundation. That modern science, however constructively it may proceed, has never abandoned and never can abandon its fundamental connection with experiment, modern philosophy has never been able to forget. One only has to think of Kant's question of how a pure natural science is possible. But one is also very unfair to speculative idealism if one understands it in the onesided way that Krüger does. Its construction of the totality of all determinants of thought is by no means the thinking out of some random view of the world, but desires to bring into thinking the absolute *a posteriori* character of experiment. This is the exact sense of transcendental reflection. The example of Hegel can teach us that even the renewal of classical conceptual realism can be attempted by its aid. Krüger's view of modern thought is based entirely on the desperate extremism of Nietzsche. However, the perspectivism of the latter's 'will-to-power' is not in agreement with idealistic philosophy but, on the contrary, has grown up on the soil which nineteenth century historicism had prepared after the collapse of idealist philosophy. Hence I am not able to give the same value as Krüger to Dilthey's theory of knowledge in the human sciences. Rather, the important thing, in my view, is to correct the philosophical interpretation of the modern human sciences, which even in Dilthey proves to be too dominated by the onesided methodological thinking of the exact natural sciences. I certainly agree with Krüger when he appeals to the experience of life and the experience of the artist. But the continuing validity of these for our thinking seems to me to show that the contrast between classical thought and modern thought, in Krüger's oversimplified formulation, is itself a modern construction.

If we are reflecting on the experience of art—as opposed to the subjectivisation of philosophical aesthetics—we are not concerned simply with a question of aesthetics, but with an adequate self-interpretation of modern thought in general, which has more in it than the modern concept of method recognises

²⁵ E. Fink has tried to clarify the meaning of man's being outside himself in enthusiasm by making a distinction which is obviously inspired by Plato's *Phaedrus*. But whereas there the counter-ideal of pure rationality makes the distinction that between good and bad madness, Fink lacks a corresponding criterion when he contrasts 'purely human rapture' with that enthusiasm by which man is in God. For ultimately 'purely human rapture' is also a being away from oneself and an involvement with something else which man is not able to achieve of himself, but which comes over him, and thus seems indistinguishable from enthusiasm. That there is a kind of rapture which it is in man's power to induce and that enthusiasm is the experience of a superior power which simply overwhelms us: these distinctions of control over oneself and of being overwhelmed are themselves conceived in terms of power and therefore do not do justice to the interrelation of being outside oneself and being involved with something, which is the case in every form of rapture and enthusiasm. The forms of 'purely human rapture' described by Fink are themselves, if

only they are not narcissistically and psychologically misinterpreted, modes of 'finite self-transcendence of finiteness' (cf Eugen Fink, *Vom Wesen des Enthusiasmus*, esp pp 22–25)

²⁶ Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, ch 4, and elsewhere

²⁷ Richard Hamann, *Asthetik*, p 97: 'Hence the tragic has nothing to do with aesthetics', Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte*. 'Zum Phänomen des Tragischen': 'It is even doubtful whether the tragic is an essentially "aesthetic" phenomenon'. For the meaning of the word 'tragedy' see E. Staiger, *Die Kunst der Interpretation*, p 132ff

²⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 13, 1453 a 29. Kierkegaard, *Either—Or* 1

²⁹ Max Kommerell (*Lessing und Aristoteles*) has described this history of pity, but not distinguished sufficiently from it the original sense of *eleus*. Cf also W. Schadewaldt, "Furcht und Mitleid?" *Hermes* 83, 1955, p 129ff and the supplementary article by H. Flashar, *Hermes* 1956, pp 12–48

³⁰ Aristotle, *Rhet*, II, 13, 1389 b 32

³¹ Cf M. Kommerell, who gives an account of the older interpretations: *loc cit*, pp 262–272. There have also been those who defend the objective genitive, eg K. H. Volkmann-Schluck in 'Varia Variorum' (*Festschrift für Karl Reinhardt*, 1952)

³² Kierkegaard, *Either—Or*, I

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics* 4, 1448 b 18: '... but by virtue of its workmanship or its finish or some other cause of that kind'. (Else trans)

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