Traces II

TRAGEDY - COMEDY

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Gustave Courbet, *The Wounded Man, X-RAY* (1854)

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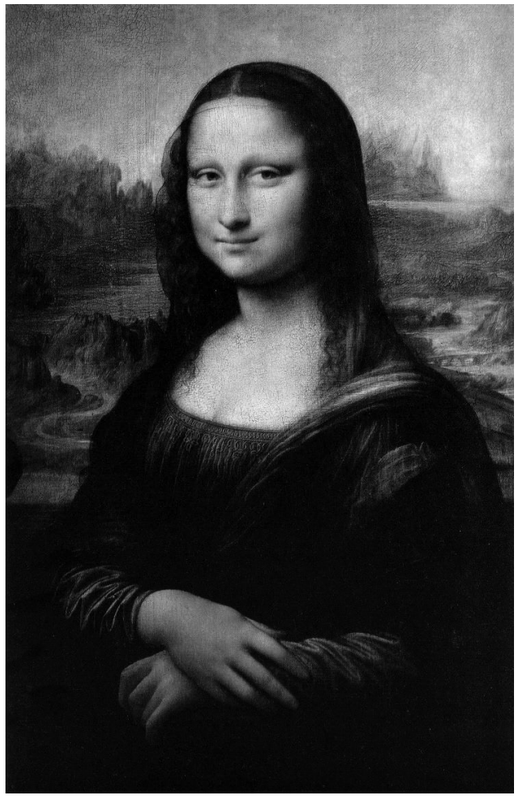
Tragedy - Comedy

I. Prologue



Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa* (1503)

[...] le portrait d'une femme par un grand artiste ne cherchera aucunement à donner satisfaction à quelques unes des exigences de la femme [...] et mettra au contraire en relief les désavantages qu'elle cherche à cacher et qui, comme un teint fièvreux, voire verdâtre, le tentent d'autant plus parce qu'ils ont du "caractère" [...]. Maintenat déchue, située hors de son propre type où ell trônait invulnérable, elle n'est plus qu'une femme quelconque en la supériorité de qui nous avons perdu toute foi. Ce type, nous faisions tellement consister en lui, non seulement la beauté d'une Odette, mais sa personnalité, son identité, que devant le portrait qui l'a dépouillée de lui, nous sommes tentés de nous écrier non seulement: "Comme c'est enlaidi!", mais: "Comme c'est peu ressemblant!". Nous avons peine à croire que ce soit elle. Nous ne la reconnaissons pas. Et pourtant il y a là un être que nous sentons bien que nous avons déjà vu. Mais cet être-là, ce n'est pas Odette; le visage de cet être, son corps, son aspect, nous sont bien connus. Ils nous rappellent, non pas la femme, qui ne se tenait jamais ainsi, dont la pose habituelle ne dessine nullement une telle étrange et provocante arabesque, mais d'autres femmes, toutes celles qu'a peintes Elstir et que toujours, si différentes qu'elles puissent être, il a aimé à camper ainsi de face, [...] le large chapeau rond tenu à la main, répondant symétriquement à la hauteur du genou qu'il couvre, à cet autre disque vu de face, le visage.

Marcel Proust, À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs, sous la dir. de Pierre-Louis Rey, Collection Folio Classique, Gallimard, 1988.

[...] not only will the portrait of a woman by a great artist not seek in the least to give satisfaction to various demands on the woman's part [...]. It will on the contrary emphasise those very blemishes which she seeks to hide, and which (as for instance a sickly, almost greenish complexion) are all the more tempting to him since they show "character" [...] Fallen now, situated outside her own type in which she sat unassailably enthroned, she is now just an ordinary woman, in the legend of whose superiority we have lost all faith. We are so accustomed to incorporating in this type not only the beauty of an Odette, but her personality, her identity, that standing before the portrait that has thus stripped her of it we are inclined to protest not simply "How plain he has mde her!" but "Why, it isn't the least bit like her". We find it hard to believe that it can be she. We do not recognize her. And yet there is a person there on the canvas whom we are quite conscious of having seen before. But that person is not Odette; the face of the person, her body, her general appearance seems familiar. They recall to us not this particular woman who never held herself like that, whose natural pose never formed any such strange and teasing arabesque, but other women, all the women whom Estir has ever painted, women, whom invariably, however they may differ from one another, he has chosen to plant thus, in full face, [...] a large round hat in one hand, symmetrically corresponding, at the level of the knee that it covers, to that other disc, higher up in the picture, the face.

Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things Past, within a Budding Grove translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, Copyright Chatto & Windus and Random House Inc., 1981.

Egyptian hieroglyphics (3000 BC)

[...] The IS OF IDENTITY. You are an animal. You are a body. Now whatever you may be you are not an "animal", you are not a "body", because these are verbal labels. The IS of identity always carries the assignment of permanent condition. To stay that way. All name calling presupposes the IS of identity. This concept is unnecessary in a hieroglyphic language like ancient Egyptian and in fact frequently omitted. No need to say that the sun IS in the sky, sun in sky suffices. The verb TO BE can easily be omitted from any languages and the followers of Count Korgybski have done this, eliminating the verb TO BE in English. However, it is difficult to tidy up the English language by arbitrary exclusion of concepts which remain in force so long as the unchanged language is spoken.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE THE. THE contains the implication of one and only: THE God, THE univere, THE way, THE right, THE wrong, if there is another, then THAT universe, THAT way is no longer THE universe, The way. The definite article THE will be deleted and the indefinite article A will take its place.

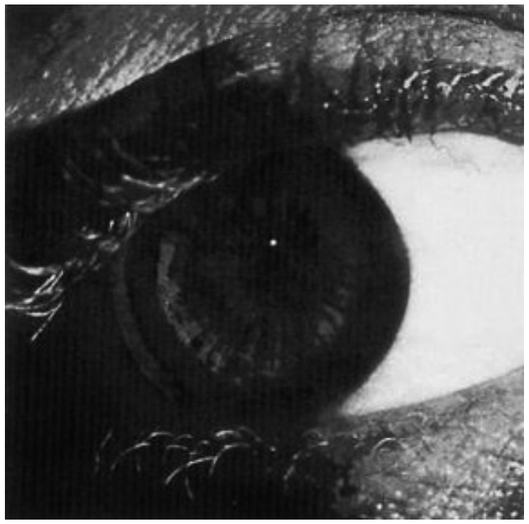
THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF EITHER/OR. Right or wrong, physical or mental, true or false, the whole concept of OR will be deleted from the language and replaced by juxtaposition, by AND. This is done to some extent in any pictorial language where two concepts literally stand side by side. These falsifications inherent in the English and other western alphabetical languages give the reactive mind command their overwhelming force in these languages. Consider the IS of identity. When I say to be me , to be you, to be myself, to be others - whatever I may be called upon to be or to say that I am - I am not the verbal label "myself". The word BE in the English language contains, as a virus contains, its precoded message of damage, the categorical imperative of permanent condition. To be a body, to be an animal. If you see the relation of a pilot to his ship, you see crippling force of the reactive mind command to be a body. Telling the pilot to be the plane, then who will pilot the plane?

The IS of identity, assigning a rigid and permanent status, was greatly reinforced by the customs and passport control that came in after World War I. Whatever you may be, you are not the verbal label in your passport, anymore than you are the word "self". So you must be prepared to prove at all times that you are what you are not. Much of the falsification inherent in the categorical definite THE. THE now, THE past, THE time, THE space, THE energy, THE matter, THE universe. Definite article THE contains the implications of no other. THE universe locks you in THE, and denies the possibility of any other. If other universes are possible, then the universe is no longer THE it becomes A. The definite article THE is deleted and replaced by A. Many of the RM commands are in point of fact contradictory commands and a contradictory command gains its force from the Aristotelian concept of either/or. To do everything, to do nothing, to have everything, to have nothing, to do it all, to do not any, to stay up, to stay down, to stay in, to stay out, to stay present, to stay absent. These are in point of fact either/or propositions. To do nothing OR everything, to have it all, OR not any, to stay present OR to stay absent. Either/or is more difficult to formulate in a written language where both alternatives are pictorially represented and can be deleted entirely from the spoken language. The whole reactive mind can be in fact reduced to three little words - to be "THE". That is to be what you are not, verbal formulations.

I have frequently spoken of word and image as viruses or as acting viruses, and this is not an allegorical comparison. It will be seen that the falsifications of syllabic western languages are in point of fact actual virus mechanisms. The IS of identity, the purpose of a virus is to SURVIVE. To survive at any expense to the host invaded. To be an animal, to be a body. To be an animal body that the virus can invade. To be animals, to be bodies. To be more animal bodies, so that the virus can move from one body to another. To stay present as an animal body, to stay absent as antibody or resistance to the body invasion.

The categorical THE is also a virus mechanism, locking you in THE virus universe. EITHER/OR is another virus formula. It is always you OR the virus. EITHER/OR. This is in point of fact the conflict formula which is seen to be archetypical virus mechanism. The proposed language will delete these virus mechanisms and make them impossible of formulation in the language. This language will be a tonal language like Chinese, it will also have a hieroglyphic script as pictorial as possible without being to cumbersome or difficult to write. This language will give one option of silence. When not talking, the user of this language can take in the silent images of written, pictorial and symbol languages. [...]

William S. Burroughs, *The Electronic Revolution* (1970)



O. M. Ungers
Morphologie
City Metaphors

Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König

Entwerfen und Denken in Vorstellungen, Metaphern und Analogien

Offensichtlich vollziehen sich alle Denkprozesse in zwei verschiedenen Richtungen. Jede beansprucht für sich, der einzig richtige Weg zu sein, durch welchen Denkanstöße hervorgerufen werden, sowohl in der Wissenschaft, der Kunst und auch in der Philosophie. Die erste ist gemeinhin bekannt als empirische Denkweise. Sie beschränkt sich auf das Studium physischer Erscheinungen. Sie bezieht sich auf Tatsachen, die gemessen und beurteilt werden können. Die intellektuelle Sicht konzentriert sich auf getrennte Elemente und isolierte Tatsachen, die von direkten praktischen Erfahrungen abgeleitet werden. Das Denken ist strikt limitiert auf technische und praktische Prozesse, wie sie sehr deutlich formuliert sind in den Theorien und Methoden des Pragmatismus und der Verhaltenslehre.

Die andere Richtung des Denkens sucht Erscheinungen und Erfahrungen, welche mehr beschreiben als nur eine Summe von Teilen und so gut wie keine Aufmerksamkeit auf die einzelnen Elemente verwendet, die ohnedies beeinflußt und verändert werden durch subjektive Anschauungen und umfassende Vorstellungen. Der Hauptbezug oder die wesentliche Bedeutung ist nicht die Betrachtung der Wirklichkeit wie sie ist, sondern die Suche nach einer übergeordneten Idee, einem allgemeinen Inhalt, einem zusammenhängenden Gedanken oder einem Gesamtkonzept, das alle Teile zusammenbindet. Es ist bekannt unter dem Begriff der “Gestalttheorie” und wurde sehr deutlich entwickelt während der Zeit des Humanismus in den philosophischen Abhandlungen des morphologischen Idealismus.

Kant postuliert, daß Wissen seinen Ursprung in zwei fundamentalen Komponenten hat, der Intuition und dem Denken. Nach Kant ist all unser Denken auf Imagination bezogen. Das bedeutet, es beruht auf unseren Sinnen, denn der einzige Weg, Objekte zu begreifen, ist der durch die Vorstellung. Der Intellekt ist unfähig, sich irgend etwas vorzustellen, und die Sinne können nicht denken. Nur durch die Kombination beider kann Wissen entstehen. Die Vorstellung muß allen Denkprozessen vorangehen, denn sie ist nichts anderes als die Synopse, das übergeordnete Prinzip, das Ordnung in die Vielfalt bringt. Wenn wir akzeptieren, daß Denken ein Vorstellungsprozeß höherer Ordnung ist, dann - so argumentiert Kant - beruht alles Wissen auf der Imagination.

In neueren philosophischen Betrachtungen ersetzt Hermann Friedmann Kants Konzept der Imagination und des Denkens als die fundamen talen Komponenten von Wissen mit dem Argument, daß der visuelle Sinn, die Vision, und der Tastsinn, die Haptik, zwei

Designing and Thinking in Images, Metaphors and Analogies

Apparently all thinking processes happen in two different ways. Each is claimed to be the only way in which thought processes occur in science, arts and philosophy.

The first is commonly known as the empirical way ofthinking. It is limited to the study of physical phenomena. The actual concern is with facts that can be measured and justified. This intellectual concern concentrates on separate elements and isolated facts, deriving from direct practical experience. Thinking is strictly limited to technical and practical processes as they are most strongly formulated in the theories and methodologies of pragmatism and behaviourism.

The other way of thinking seeks out phenomena and experiences which describe more than just a sum of parts, paying almost no attention to separate elements which would be affected and changed through subjective vision and comprehensive images anyway. The major concern is not the reality as it is but the search for an allround idea, for a general content, a coherent thought, or an overall concept that ties everything together. It is known as holism or Gestalt theory and has been most forcefully developed during the age of humanism in the philosophical treatises of the morphological idealism.

Kant postulates that knowledge has its origin in two basic components: intuition and tbought. According to Kant all our thinking is related to imagination, which means it is related to our senses, because the only way to describe an object is through imagination. The intellect is incapable of perceiving anything, and the senses cannot think. Only through a combination of both can knowledge arise. Imagination has to precede all thinking processes since it is nothing less than a synopsis, an overall ordering principle bringing order into diversity. If we accept that thinking is an imaginative process of a higher order, then, argues Kant, it means all sciences are based on imagination.

In more recent philosophical debates, Herman Friedman replaces Kant’s concept of imagination and thought as the basic components of knowledge with the argument that the sense of sight-the vision-and the sense of touch-the haptic-are the two competing polarities, and that all intellectual activity happens either in an optical or haptic way. Friedman argues that he sense of touch is non-productive; it measures, is geometrical, and acts in congruity. The sense of sight, however, is productive; it interpolates, is integral, and acts in similarities. The sense of sight stimulates spontaneous reactions of mind; it is more vivid and more far-reaching than the sense of touch.

miteinander streitende Polaritäten sind und daß alle intellektuellen Aktivitäten sich im optischen oder im haptischen Bereich abspielen. Friedmann argumentiert, daß der Tastsinn nicht produktiv ist. Er mißt, ist geometrisch und handelt in Kongruenzen. Das Sehen jedoch ist produktiv. Es interpoliert, integriert und handelt in Gleichnissen. Der visuelle Sinn stimuliert spontan das Erinnerungsvermögen. Er ist lebendiger und weitreichender als der Tastsinn. Die Haptik geht vom Spezifischen zum Allgemeinen, die Vision vom Allgemeinen zum Spezifischen. Der visionäre Prozeß, dessen Gegebenheiten auf der Vorstellung beruhen, beginnt mit einer Idee, betrachtet ein Objekt in allgemeinster Weise, um eine Vorstellung oder ein Bild zu finden, aus dem sich mehr spezifische Eigenheiten ableiten lassen.

In jedem menschlichen Wesen steckt ein starkes metaphysisches Bedürfnis eine Realität zu schaffen, die durch Vorstellungen strukturiert ist und in welcher Objekte ihre Bedeutung durch Visionen erhalten, eine Realität, die nicht - wie Max Planck glaubt - existiert, weil sie meßbar ist. Vor allem hat die Frage der Imagination und der Ideen als ein Instrument des Denkens und der Analyse Künstler und Philosophen beschäftigt. In jüngster Zeit ist dieser Prozeß des Denkens unterbewertet worden durch die Überschätzung quantitativer und materialistischer Kriterien. Es liegt jedoch auf der Hand, daß das, was wir im allgemeinen Denken nennen, nichts anderes ist als die Anwendung von Vorstellungen und Ideen auf eine gegebene Zahl von Fakten. Es ist nicht nur ein abstrakter Prozeß, sondern ein visuelles und sinnenhaftes Ereignis. Die Art, wie wir die Welt um uns begreifen, hängt davon ab, wie wir sie wahrnehmen und empfinden. Ohne eine übergeordnete Vision erscheint uns die Realität als eine Menge unabhängiger Phänomene und bedeutungsloser Tatsachen, mit anderen Worten: total chaotisch. In solch einer Welt würde man wie in einem Vakuum leben. Alles würde von gleicher Bedeutung sein; nichts könnte unsere Aufmerksamkeit anziehen; es würde keine Möglichkeit geben, unseren Verstand zu gebrauchen.

So wie die Bedeutung eines ganzen Satzes anders ist als die Bedeutung einer Summe einzelner Worte, so ist die schöpferische Vision die Fähigkeit, eine charakteristische Einheit einer Reihe von Tatsachen zu erfassen und nicht nur sie zu analysieren als etwas, das zusammengesetzt ist aus einzelnen Teilen. Das Bewußtsein, daß die Realität durch sinnliche Wahrnehmung und Imagination erfaßt wird, ist der wahre schöpferische Prozeß, denn er erreicht einen höheren Grad von Ordnung als die einfache Methode des Testens, Messens, Prüfens und Kontrollierens. Das ist der Grund, warum die traditionelle Philosophie der permanente Versuch ist, ein gut strukturiertes System von Ideen zu schaffen, um die Welt zu

The sense of touch proceeds from the specific condition to the general, the sense of vision from the general to the specific. The visionary process, whose data are based on imagination, starts out with an idea, looking at an object in the most general way, to find an image from which to descend to more specific properties. In every human being there is a strong metaphysical desire to create a reality structured through images in which objects become meaningful through vision and which does not, as Max Planck believed, exist because it is measureable. Most of all, the question of imagination and ideas as an instrument of thinking and analyzing has occupied artists and philosophers. Only in more recent history this process of thinking has been undervalued because of the predominance of quantitative and materialistic criteria. It is obvious, however, that what we generally call thinking is nothing else than the application of imagination and ideas to a given set of facts and not just an abstract process but a visual and sensuous event. The way we experience the world around us depends on how we perceive it. Without a comprehensive vision the reality will appear as a mass of unrelated phenomena and meaningless facts, in other words, totally chaotic. In such a world it would be like living in a vacuum: everything would be of equal importance; nothing could attract our attention; and there would be no possibility to utilize the mind.

As the meaning of a whole sentence is different from the meaning of the sum of single words, so is the creative vision and ability to grasp the characteristic unity of a set of facts, and not just to analyse them as something which is put together by single parts. The consciousness that catches the reality through sensuous perception and imagination is the real creative process because it achieves a higher degree of order than the simplistic method of testing, recording, proving and controlling. This is why all traditional philosophy is a permanent attempt to create a wellstructured system of ideas in order to interpret, to perceive, to understand the world, as other sciences have done. There are three basic levels of comprehending physical phenomena: first, the exploration of pure physical facts; second, the psychological impact on our inner-self; and third, the imaginative discovery and reconstruction of phenomena in order to conceptualize them. If, for instance, designing is understood purely technically, then it results in pragmatic functionalism or in mathematical formulas. If designing is exclusively an expression of psychological experiences, then only emotional values matter, and it turns into a religious substitute. If, however, the physical reality is understood and conceptualized as an analogy to our imagination of that reality, then we pursue a morphological design concept, turning it into

interpretieren, wahrzunehmen und zu verstehen, wie es auch andere Wissenschaften getan haben. Es gibt drei Grundebenen, physikalische Phänomene zu begreifen:
1. die Entdeckung der reinen physikalischen Fakten,
2. der psychologische Eindruck oder die psychologische Aufnahme in unserem Inneren, und
3. die imaginative Entdeckung und visuelle Rekonstruktion der Phänomene, um sie zu konzeptualisieren.

Wenn z. B. das Entwerfen, der Entwurfsvorgang, als reine Technik verstanden wird, dann sind die Ergebisse ein pragmatischer Funktionalismus oder mathematische Formeln. Ist Entwerfen ausschließlich der Ausdruck psychologischer Erfahrungen und Versuche, dann zählen nur emotionale Werte, und Entwerfen wird zu einer religiösen Ersatzhandlung. Wenn jedoch die physische Realität verstanden und begriffen wird als eine Analogie unserer Vorstellung von dieser Realität, dann verfolgen wir ein morphologisches Entwurfskonzept und verwandeln Tatsachen in Phänomene, die wie alle realen Konzepte ausgedehnt oder verdichtet werden konnen. Sie können als Polaritäten gesehen werden, die sich widersprechen oder sich auch gegenseitig ergänzen, die als reine Konzepte auf sich selbst beruhen wie ein Kunstwerk. Deshalb kann man sagen, wenn man physikalische Phänomene im morphologischen Sinne betrachtet wie Gestalten in ihrer Metamorphose, dann können wir es einrichten, unser Wissen auch ohne Maschinen und Apparate zu entwickeln. Dieser imaginative Prozeß des Denkens findet Anwendung auf alle intellektuellen und geistigen Bereiche menschlicher Aktivitäten, wenn auch die Vorgehensweise in den verschiedenen Disziplinen unterschiedlich sein mag. Es ist immer ein fundamen taler Prozeß der Konzeptualisierung einer unabhängigen diversen und daher unterschiedlichen Realität durch den Gebrauch von Vorstellungen, Imaginationen, Metaphern, Analogien, Modellen, Zeichen, Symbolen und Allegorien.

Imgination und Vorstellung

Wahrscheinlich erinnern wir uns alle noch an die Geschichte von dem Mann im Mond, der die Phantasiewelt unserer Kindheit beherrschte und in uns phantasievolle Vorstellungen von einem alten Mann hervorrief, der ein Bündel auf dem Rücken trug, und dessen Gesicht sich je nach der Klarheit der Nacht änderte. Er hat so manchen geheimen Wunsch erfüllt, und er war der freundliche Begleiter vieler romantisch Verliebter. Bevor menschliche Intelligenz es fertigbrachte, sein Geheimnis zu lüften, war er das Ziel so vieler Sehnsüchte, daß er ein Teil unseres Lebens wurde,

phenomena which, like all real concepts, can be expanded or condensed; they can be seen as polarities contradicting or complementing each other, existing as pure concepts in themselves like a piece of art. Therefore we might say, if we look at physical phenomena in a morphological sense, like Gestalten in their metamorphosis, we can manage to develop our knowledge without machine or apparatus. This imaginative process of thinking

applies to all intellectual and spiritual areas of human activites though the approaches might be different in various fields. But it is always a fundamental process of conceptualizing an unrelated, diverse reality through the use of images, metaphors, analogies, models, signs, symbols and allegories.

Image and perception

Probably all of us remember the story of the man in the moon which occupied our childhood fantasies, producing all sorts of images of an old man, carrying a bundle on his back, and whose face used to change depending on the clarity of the night. He helped to fulfill secret wishes, and he became the friendly companion of romantic couples. Before human intelligence managed to uncover his secret, he was the subject of so many desires and wishes that he became part of our life while existing only in our imagination.

Not only about the moon, but also about the

das nur in unserer Vorstellung existierte. Nicht nur mit dem berühmten Mann im Mond, sondern mit dem gesamten nächtlichen Firmament hat der menschliche Geist ein lebhaftes Phantasiebild geschaffen. Es hat wahrscheinlich eine sehr lange Zeit gebraucht, um den weiten nächtlichen Himmel zu strukturieren und seine chaotische Realität in ein zusammenhängendes System von Bildern zu verwandeln. Lange bevor die Wissenschaft in der Lage war, das Weltall zu kalkulieren und zu messen, die Schwerkraft, die Intensität und die Schnelligkeit oder Geschwindigkeit des Lichtes, der Sterne und alle relevanten Einzelheiten zu registrieren, lange bevor dies geschah, beruhte das Verständnis ausschließlich auf bildhaften Übereinstimmungen. Anstelle einer Reihe von Fakten basierte das Wissen auf einer Reihe von Vorstellungen. Das Firmament wurde mit Figuren und Phantasieformen angefüllt, wie von Orion, Kastor und Pollux, der Große Bär u.a. Solche Sternbilder besitzen eine sinnenhafte Realität im menschlichen Bewußtsein. Daraus kann man schließen: Realität ist, was unsere Vorstellung als solche begreift. Im allgemeinen Sinne beschreibt die Vorstellung eine Reihe von Tatsachen in einer Weise, daß die gleiche visuelle Vorstellung mit den Voraussetzungen wie auch mit der Vorstellung selbst verbunden ist.

Metaphern

Wir benutzen im täglichen Sprachumgang ständig Metapherausdrücke, ohne diesem Umstand Bedeutung beizumessen. So sprechen wir z. B. vom Fuß des Berges, dem Bein des Stuhles, dem Herzen der Stadt, dem Arm des Gesetzes usw. Wir benutzen viele Worte, die lebendige Metaphern sind, obwohl sie als allgemeine Ausdrücke bestehen. Die Alltagssprache ist voll von spezifischen Ausdrücken und Redensarten, wie z. B. der Zahn der Zeit, der Wald von Masten oder der Dsehungel der Großstadt. Metaphern sind Transformationen von aktuellen Ereignissen in eine figurative Ausdrucksform, die Anschaulichkeiten hervorrufen und einen mehr beschreibenden und illustrativen Charakter haben anstelle einer rein abstrakten Wahrnehmung von Vorgängen. Gewöhnlich handelt es sich um einen Vergleich zwischen zwei Ereignissen, welche nicht gleich sind, aber in einer anschaulichen Art miteinander verglichen werden können . Der Vergleich wird meist durch einen schöpferischen Gedanken gefunden, der unterschiedliche Objekte miteinander verbindet und ein neues Bild erfindet, in welches die Charakteristiken beider einfließen. Die Bedeutung von Metaphern beruht auf dem Vergleich und der Gleichartigkeit von meist anthropomorphem Charakter, wie dem menschlichen Körper als Metapher für die Form einer romanischen Kathedrale oder die Gestalt des Universums. Entwerfer benützen die Metapher als ein Instrument gedanklicher Art, das der Klarheit

whole firmament the human mind created a vivid fantasy. It probably took a long time to structure the wide starry sky, and to develop a coherent system within a chaotic reality long before science was capable of calculating and measuring the orbits, the gravity, the intensity and speed of light of the stars and to register all relevant data. Before that, understanding was based entirely on imaginative concepts. Instead of a set of facts, knowledge referred to a set of constellations derived from perception .. The firmament was filled with figures and images, such as the Orion, Castor and Pollux, the Great Bear, and others. Those star images represented a sensuous reality in the human consciousness. Therefore we might conclude: Reality is what our imagination perceives it to be. In a general sense, an image describes a set of facts in such a way that the same visual perception is connected with the conditions as with the image itself.

Metaphors

In everyday language we are constantly using metaphorical expressions without paying any attention to them. For instance, we talk about the foot of the mountain , the leg of a chair, the heart of the city, the mouth of the river, the long arm of the law, the head of the family and a body of knowledge. We use many words that are vivid metaphors although they exist as common expressions. In addition to the words, everyday language abounds in phrases and expressions of metaphorical character such as: straight from the horse's mouth, the tooth of time, or the tide of events, a forest of masts, the jungle of the city.

Metaphors are transformations of an actual event into a figurative expression, evoking images by substituting an abstract notion for something more descriptive and illustrative. It usually is an implicite comparison between two entities which are not alike but can be compared in an imaginative way. The comparison is mostly done through a creative leap that ties different objects together, producing a new entity in which the characteristics of both take part. The meaning of metaphors is based on comparison and similarities most often of anthropomorphical character, like the human body as a metaphor for the shape of a romanesque cathedral or the conformation of the universe. Designers use the metaphor as an instrument of thought that serves the function of clarity and vividness antedating or bypassing logical processes. "A metaphor is an intuitive

und Lebendigkeit dient, indem es logische Prozesse umgeht und ihnen entgegengesetzt ist. "Eine Metapher ist eine intuitive Begrifflichkeit von Gleichartigkeiten in Ungleichheiten", wie Aristoteles es definiert.

Modelle

Unter einem Modell wird gemeinhin eine Person verstanden, die als Prototyp eine ideale Form verkörpert. Allgemeiner gesehen ist ein Modell eine Struktur, ein Muster, nach dem etwas geformt wird. Ein Künstler malt seine Gemälde nach den Formen oder Prinzipien seines Modells. Ein Wissenschaftler bildet seine Theorien natürlicher Ereignisse auf der Grundlage eines Konzeptes oder eines Plans, der als Modell dient. Dies ist um so mehr der Fall, wenn die Komplexität einer Sache zunimmt oder die wissenschaftliche Sphäre so schwierig wird, daß jede Art von Beobachtung versagt. In der Chemie oder der Physik z. B. werden Modelle benützt, um die Positionen von Atomen in Molekülen zu zeigen, oder es werden biologische Modelle verwandt, um organische Formationen zu demonstrieren, in denen jedes Organ seine Funktion in Beziehung zum System als Ganzem hat. Solche Modelle dienen als Instruktionen für die technisehe Auseinandersetzung mit der Realität. Allgemein gesprochen ist ein Modell eine theoretische Komplexität in sich selbst, welche entweder eine visuelle Form oder eine konzeptionelle Ordnung in die Bestandteile komplexer Situationen bringt. In solch einem Modell ist die äußere Form Ausdruck der inneren Struktur. Es zeigt die Art, wie etwas zusammengesetzt ist. Ein Modell zu machen, bedeutet Zusammenhänge in einer gegebenen Kombination und in festgelegten Dispositionen zu erkennen. Das geschieht gewöhnlich mit zwei Modelltypen: visuelle Modelle und Denkmodelle. Sie dienen als konzeptuelles Instrument, um unseren Erfahrungen Struktur zu verleihen und daraus Funktionen abzuleiten oder ihnen eine Absicht zu geben. Mit diesen beiden Modellen formulieren wir eine objektive Struktur, die Annahmen in etwas mehr Gewißheit und deshalb mehr Realität verwandeln. Es ist nichts anderes als ein formales Prinzip, das es ermöglicht, die Komplexität der Erscheinungen in besser geordneter Weise sichtbar zu machen, und die
- anders gesehen - ein schöpferischer Ansatz ist zu einer strukturierten Realität, die sich an der Kenntnis des Modells ausrichtet. Nicht zuletzt ist das Modell eine intellektuelle Struktur, die Ziele setzt für unsere schöpferischen Aktivitäten. Gerade so wie der Entwurf von Modellgebäuden, von
Modellstädten, von Modellgemeinschaften und anderen Modellbedingungen die Richtschnur sind für folgerichtige Aktionen.

perception of similarities in dissimilars," as Aristotle defined it.

Models

A model is commonly understood as somebody who poses as a prototype representing an ideal form. In a more general sense a model is a structure, a pattern, along the line of which something is shaped. As an artist paints his painting after the lines of a model, a scientist builds his theory of natural events on the basis of a concept or a plan which acts as a model. This is all the more so when the complexity of something increases or the scientific sphere becomes so minute that any kind of observation would fail. In chemistry or physics, for instance, models are built to demonstrate the position of atoms in molecules, or biological models are used to represent the organic formation in which every organ has its function in relation to the whole system. Such models serve as instructions for technical intrusion with the reality. Generally a model is a theoretical complexity in itself which either brings a visual form or a conceptual order into the components of complex situations. In such a model the external form is the expression of an internal structure. It shows the way something is put together. To make a model means to find coherence in a given relationship of certain combinations and fixed dispositions. This is usually done with two types of models, visual models and thinking models. They serve as conceptual devices to structure our experience and turn them into functions or make them intentional.

By means of these two models we formulate an objective structure that turns facts into something more certain and therefore more real. It is nothing else than a formal principle which makes it possible to visualize the complexity of appearances in a more ordered way, and which in reverse is a creative approach to structured reality along the knowledge of a model. Not the least the model is an intellectual structure setting targets for our creative activities, just like the design of model-buildings, model-cities, model-communities, and other model conditions supposedly are setting directions for subsequent actions.

Analogien

Als Le Corbusier ein Gebäude mit einer Maschine verglich, sah er eine Analogie, die vorher niemand gesehen hatte. Als Alvar Aalto den Entwurf einer organisch geformten Vase mit der finnischen Landschaft verglich oder den Entwurf für ein Theater in Essen mit einem Baumstumpf, tat er dasselbe. Und als Hugo Häring mit anthropomorphen Vorbildern entwarf, tat auch er nichts anderes, als eine Analogie zu sehen, wo niemand vorher eine gesehen hatte. Im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts wurde es erkennbar, daß die Analogien in weitestem Sinne eine vieI größere Rolle spielten in der Architektur als die einfache Erfüllung funktioneller Bedürfnisse oder die Lösung rein technischer Probleme. Alle Entwürfe der Konstruktivisten z. B. müssen als eine Referenz an die dynamische Welt der Maschinen, die Fabriken und Industrieteile gesehen werden, denen sie analog sind. Melnikov hat einmal eine Serie von Entwürfen für Arbeiterclubs in Moskau geschaffen, die Analogien sind zu Kolben, Zylindern, Gängen und Zahnradern.

Es wird gesagt, daß wissenschaftliche Entdeckungen darin bestehen, Analogien zu sehen, wo der andere nur nackte Tatsachen sieht. Nimmt man z. B. den menschlichen Körper, so sieht ein Chirurg in ihm hauptsachlich ein System von Knochen, Muskeln, Organen und Zirkulationssystemen; ein Fußballtrainer sieht die Leistungsfähigkeit; ein Liebhaber hat eine romantische Vorstellung von dem Körper, und ein Geschäftsmann kalkuliert die Arbeitskraft, ein General die Kampfkraft usw. Architekten wie Cattaneo, Häring, Soleri u.a. empfinden den menschlichen Körper als eine Gestalt, die analog ist zu ihren Planen - sei es für Gebäude oder Städte. Sie konstruieren eine Abhängigkeit durch Analogien von einem zum anderen. Die Analogie errichtet eine Gleichartigkeit oder die Existenz von gleichartigen Prinzipien zwischen zwei Ereignissen, welche normalerweise völlig unterschiedlich sind. Kant betrachtet die Analogie als etwas, das unerläßlich ist, um das Wissen zu erweitern. Durch die Anwendung der Methode der Analogien sollte es möglich sein, neue Konzepte zu entwickeln und neue Zusammenhänge zu erkennen.

Analogies

When Le Corbusier compared the edifice with a machine he saw an analogy where nobody saw one before. When Aalto compared the design of his organically shaped vases with the Finnish landscape, or his.design for a theater in Germany with a tree stump, he did the same; and when Haring designed with anthropomorphic images in mind he again did just that-seeing an analogy where nobody has seen one before. In the course of the twentieth century it has become recognized that analogy taken in the most general sense plays a far more important role in architectural design than that of simply following functional requirements or solving pure technical problems. All the constructivist designs for instance, have to be seen as a reference to the dynamic world of machines, factories and industrial components to which they are analogous. Melnikov once produced a series of designs for workers' clubs in Moscow which are analogies to pistons, tubes, gears and bearings.

It has been said that scientific discovery consists in seeing analogies where everybody else sees just bare facts. Take, for instance, the human body: a surgeon perceives it mainly as a system of bones, muscles, organs and a circulatory system. A football coach appreciates the performance capacity of the body, the lover has a romantic notion about it, a businessman calculates the working power, a general the fighting strength, and so on. Architects, like Cattaneo, Haring, Soleri and others perceive the human body as a Gestalt which is analogous to their plans either for buildings or cities. They draw an inference by analogy from one to the other. The analogy establishes a similarity, or the existence of some similar principles, between two events which are otherwise completely different. Kant considered the analogy as something indispensable to extend knowledge. In employing the method of analogy it should be possible to develop new concepts and to discover new relationships.

Zeichen, Symbole und Allegorien

Fast unsere gesamte Kommunikation basiert auf Zeichen, Symbolen, Signalen und Allegorien, die nicht nur die meisten Aspekte unserer täglichen Routine ausmachen, sondern meistens oder sehr oft auch religiose und metaphysische Systeme tragen. Die Benutzung eines Autos z. B. ist nur möglich durch den regulierenden Effekt von Verkehrssignalen, -zeichen und -symbolen, und ohne sie würde Autofahren ein sehr verwegenes und wahrscheinlich katastrophales Abenteuer sein. Die moderne wissenschaftliche Welt ist voll von komplizierten symbolischen Codes und Systemen, von synthetischen Zeichen und Symbolen, welche vorteilhafter sind, weil sie objektiver und kürzer sind als die normale Sprache. Aber hinter der objektiven Welt repräsentieren Symbole auch eine metaphysische Welt als magische Erleuchtungen und kultische Symbole in verschiedensten Religionen, wie das Rad des Lebens im Buddhismus, der Fisch als Symbol der Christenheit und der Phönix als ein Zeichen der Regeneration in der alten Mythologie.

Während Zeichen auf etwas hinweisen, das sie darstellen - wie Worte künstliche Zeichen für Ideen und Gedanken sind -, sind Symbole die Durchdringung von Geist und Vorstellung, die durch Mysterien, Tiefe und unerschöpfliche Interpretation charakterisiert sind. Um etwas Abstraktes auszudrücken und zu visualisieren, benützt man transzendentale oder geistige Symbole oder Allegorien. Die Durchdringung zwischen Symbolen oder Allegorien ist f1ießend und kann nicht streng getrennt werden. Allegorien werden als eine Dimension der kontrollierten Indirektheit betrachtet und haben eine doppelte Bedeutung. Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Wortes gibt die Richtung seiner Entwicklung an. Es kommt vom griechischen Wort "alios" und "agorein", das bedeutet "anderes Sprechen" und suggeriert eine mehr doppeldeutige und hintergründige Sprache. Die Methode der Allegorie wird in der Kunst gebraucht, wenn sie mehr einen thematischen Inhalt und Ideen ausdrückt als Ereignisse und Tatsachen. Der bleibende Eindruck, der bei einem allegorischen Vergleich entsteht, ist etwas Indirektes, Ambivalentes und manchmal sogar Emblemhaftes, das zwangsläufig nach einer Interpretation verlangt. Die Allegorie hebt den Nachdenkenden auf eine Bedeutungsebene und versorgt den Entwerfer mit einem Mittel, das weit über die pragmatische Repräsentation hinausgeht. Insbesondere Kunst und Mythologie machen weiten Gebrauch von Allegorien, beide in subjektiven Vorgängen und in der Vorstellung. Oft werden Personifikationen benutzt, um abstrakte Ideen und Ereignisse sichtbar zu machen, so der Tod als Sensenmann, die Gerechtigkeit als Frau mit verbundenen Augen, die Glücksgöttin auf einem drehenden Rad sitzend, selbst in Allegorien wie John Bull als dem Repräsentanten für die britische Nation, dem Michel für die deutsche und der Marianne für die französische Nation sowie dem guten "Uncle Sam", der für Amerika steht. Dies allegorische Mittel jedoch war in der Vergangenheit nicht nur von größter Bedeutung für die Repräsentation des Kosmos in der antiken Welt oder für die Spekulation über die Natur des Universums im Mittelalter, es spielt auch eine bedeutende Rolle in der modernen Literatur, urn begreifliche Dimensionen zu erfassen, die

Signs, symbols and allegories

Almost all our communication is based on signs, signals, symbols and allegories which structure not only most aspects of our daily routine but also are most often carriers of religious and metaphysical systems. Riding in a motorcar, for example, is only possible because of the regulating effect of traffic signals, signs and symbols, and it would be a most daring and deadly adventure without them. The modern scientific world is full of complicated symbolic codes and systems of synthetic signs and symbols which are more advantageous because they are unambiguous, distinct, and shorter than regular language. But beyond the objective world, symbols also represent a metaphysical world as magical illuminations and cult symbols in various religions, such as the wheel of life in Buddhism, the fish as a symbol of Christianity, and the phoenix as a sign of regeneration in ancient mythology.

While signs point to something that they represent, as words are artificial signs for ideas and thoughts, symbols are a penetration of mind and image characterized by mystery, depth and inexhaustible interpretation. To express and visualize something abstract, transcendental or spiritual either symbols or allegories are used. The transition between symbols and allegories is flexible and cannot be strictly separated. Allegory is regarded as a dimension of controlled indirectness and double meaning. The original meaning of the term suggests the direction of its development, it comes from the Greek word "alios" and "agorein" which means an "other speaking" and suggests a more deceptive and oblique language. The method of allegory is represented in art whenever it emphasizes thematic content and ideas rather than events and facts. The abiding impression left by the allegorical mode is one of indirect, ambiguous and sometimes even emblematic symbolism which inevitably calls for interpretation. The allegory arouses in the contemplator a response to levels of meaning, and provides the designer with a tool that goes beyond pragmatic representation. Particularly art and mythology make wide use of allegories, both in subject matter and in its imagery. Quite often personifications are employed to visualize abstract ideas and events, such as death as reaper, justice as the blindfolded woman, the goddess of luck sitting on a flying wheel; even in allegories like "John Bull" as the representative of the British nation, "Michael" for the Germans, "Marianne" for the French, and good old "Uncle Sam" who stands for America.

The allegorical mode however has not only been of major importance in the past as representing the Cosmos in the ancient world or speculating on the nature of the Universe in the Middle Ages, it also plays a significant role in modern literature, exhibiting incomprehensible and unconceivable dimensions rooted in the depth of the unconscious as in Beckett's " Waiting for Godot" or in Kafka's novels.

What all that means-thinking and designing in images, metaphors, models, analogies, symbols and allegories- is nothing more than a transition from purely pragmatic approaches to a more creative mode of thinking. It means a process of thinking in qualitative values rather than quantitative data, a process that is based on

in der Tiefe des Unterbewußtseins wurzeln, wie in Becketts “Waiting for Godot” oder in den Novellen Kafkas.

Die Bedeutung des Denkens und Entwerfens in Bildern, Metaphern, Modellen, Analogien, Symbolen und Allegorien ist nichts anderes als der Übergang von rein pragmatischen Denkansätzen zu einer mehr kreativeren Methode des Denkens. Es bedeutet einen Prozeß des Denkens in qualitativen Werten statt in quantitativen Daten, einen Prozeß, der mehr auf der Synthese als auf der Analyse basiert - nicht so verstanden, daß analytische Methoden abgelehnt werden, sondern mehr in der Richtung, daß Analyse und Synthese alternieren, so natürlich wie das Einatmen und Ausatmen, wie Goethe es ausgedrückt hat. Es ist als ein Obergang der Denkprozesse vom metrischen Raum zum visionären Raum kohärenter Systeme zu verstehen, von Konzepten gleicher Beschaffenheit zu Konzepten der Gestaltfindung. All die unterschiedlichen Methoden, die hier beschrieben worden sind, sind Teil eines morphologischen Konzeptes, das als eine Studie der Formation und Transformation zu verstehen ist, seien es Gedanken, Tatsachen, Objekte oder Bedingungen, wie sie sich selbst in sensitiven Experimenten oder Erfahrungen ausdriicken.

Diese Vorgehensweise soll nicht als Ersatz für qualitative Wissenschaft stehen, die die Erscheinungsformen, die uns bekannt sind, in Funktionen zerlegt, um sie kontrollierbar zu machen, sondern es ist so zu verstehen, daß sie gegen den zunehmenden Einfluss der Verwissenschaftlichung gerichtet sind, die für sich ein Monopol der Erkenntnis beansprucht.

Deshalb sind die Städtebilder, die in dieser Anthologie gezeigt werden, nicht nach Funktionen und meßbaren Kriterien analysiert, Methoden, welche normalerweise angewandt werden, sondern sie sind auf einem konzeptuellen Niveau interpretiert, das Ideen, Vorstellungen, Metaphern und Analogien zeigen soll. Die Interpretationen sind im morphologischen Sinn begriffen, weit offen für subjektive Spekulationen und Transformationen. Das Büchlein zeigt einen mehr transzendentalen Aspekt, der dem tatsächlichen Entwurf zugrunde liegender Gedanken . Anders ausgedrückt zeigt es das allgemeine Prinzip, das gleich ist in ungleichen Situationen oder unter ungleichen Bedingungen. Drei unterschiedliche Ebenen der Realität werden herausgestellt: die faktische Realität - das Objekt; die konzeptuelle Realität - die Analogie; die begriffliche Realität - die Idee, gezeigt als Plan, als Bild und als Begriff.

synthesis rather than analysis. Not that analytical methods are opposed but more in the direction that analysis and synthesis alternate as naturally as breathing in and breathing out, as Goethe put it. It is meant to be a transition in the process of thinking from a metrical space to the visionary space of coherent systems, from the concepts of homology to the concepts of morphology. All of the different modes described are part of a morphological concept which is understood as a study of formations and transformations whether of thoughts, facts, objects or conditions as they present themselves to sentient experiences.

This approach is not meant to act as a substitute for the quantitative sciences which break down forms, as we know them, into functions to make them controllable, but it is meant to counteract the increasing influence of those sciences that claim a monopoly of understanding.

Therefore, the city-images as they are shown in this anthology are not analysed according to function and other measurable criteria-a method which is usually applied-but they are interpreted on a conceptual level demonstrating ideas, images, metaphors and analogies. The interpretations are conceived in a morphological sense, wide open to subjective speculation and transformation. The book shows the more transcendental aspect, the underlying perception that goes beyond the actual design. In other terms, it shows the common design principle which is similar in dissimilar conditions. There are three levels of reality exposed: the factual reality-the object; the perceptual reality-the analogy; and the conceptual reality-the idea, shown as the plan-the image-the word.

Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie City Metaphors* (2011)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Frontispiece (1651)

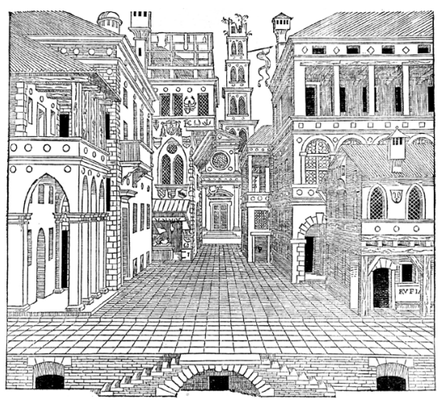
Made in

OUTLINING MANNER

Authorship - Actorship

In the chapter XVI of his *Leviathan – Of Persons, Authors and Things personated* (1651), Hobbes defines the person as he *«whose words and actions are considered, either as his own or as representing the words and actions of another man [...]»* accordingly delineating two subcategories : that of the natural person – when the words are his own - and that of the artificial person – when these are representing the words and actions of another ; he further states: *«Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions 'owned' by those whom they represent. And then the person is the 'actor', and he that owns his words and actions is the 'author', in which case the actor acts by authority – but is not the author [...]. So that by authority is always understood a right of doing any act, and 'done by authority', done by commission or license from him whose right it is»*.

The distinction between *authorship* and *actorship* expediently polarizes the paramount questions of the *What?* and of the *How?*, of the *content* and of the *form*. The point is not to apply a literary notion to some emulative acceptation of its content, but rather to hypothetically submit a conceptual intendment to its potential adequation in the field of architecture; and as such, Hobbes' axiomatic statement informs us on the condition of the architect, whose authority is fundamentally a licensed and commissioned one; as the tributary of given programmatic, economic and legal prerequisites and impelled through exogeneous necessities, architecture resolutely assigns its agent toperforming a given act in the name and interest of (x) : the architect is a political *actor*.



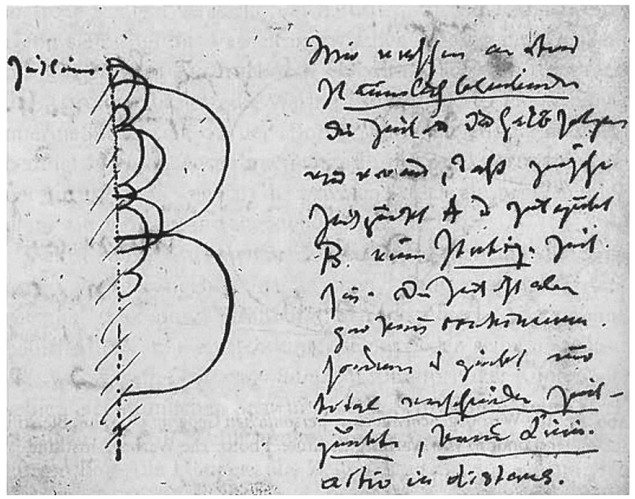
Sebastiano Serlio, *Scena tragica / Scena comica* (1545)

Tragedy - Comedy

In the second book of Serlio's *Regole generali di Architettura* (1545), the tragic scenery shows a series of court buildings, war memorials, civil monuments settled along the rigid axis of a central perspective and punctuated by a memorial thresholdopening onto an unobstructed vanishing point; rigorously subordinated to the spinal street, the laminary lineup is ordered such as ingresses are staged perpendicular to the street avoiding frontal views of the representative entablatures. Corroborating the prevalence of the public over the private, a pair of outward orientated stairs lead to the set.

The comic stage setting on the other hand displays a turbulent sequence of doorways, storefronts and arcades disjointedly eroding the central *political* void; no convergence point here, but the richly ornamented porch of a religious shrine as the absolving sign to a collection of artifacts striving for attention. Converging steps to the stage achieve to portrait the manifest surrender of the public realm to the sphere of the intimate. As a result of the transversal capitalist conformity, of its economical horizon and its inferent indvidualism, the city has long capitulated under the assaults of private interests; the ascendency of the *oikos* over the *polis*, respectively of the *product* over the *process*, has disrated the urban content to a long accumulative array of equivocal signs.

Bowing under the conceited laughs of licentious opportunism and its compulsion for visibility, the contemporary city has deserted the tragedy: comic scenery is now its only stage.



Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dynamisches Schema der Zeit*, drawing (1873)

Original - Repertorial

A byproduct of the pervasive theatricality of the metropol is its relentless need for the *new*, therein not only complying with the essence of its outcome, the *product* – which is to be consumed and therefore ever renewed – but also with the quickly evolving rules of comic features - whereas Aristophanes' rethorics now hardly trigger any hilarity, we are still moved by Antigone's tragic audacity; and by indulging in a often irrelevant alterity, metropolitan *actors* seem to have made any meaningful difference hardly legible: however, legitimate discordances are bound to the prerequisite of the *repetition* as the dominant marker of singularities.

Derived from the late latin *repertorium* – storehouse – a repertory is in its first and most common connotation *the entire assortment of things available in a field or of a kind*; inasmuch as the manyfold identities of a repertoire, its range so to speak, account for its protean expertise, yet its most essential attribute lies in its availability: a repertory is a *potentiality* to be constantly *re*-activated. In its search for a dynamic consideration of time, withstanding the contemplative view of collective memory and its sententious unfolding of events, *manner* advocates for a deflective handling of history, of its canons as much as of its failures, and generates *anexact* figures – rigorously inexact, that is inexact by essence and not by accident (G. Deleuze & F. Guattari in Mille Plateaux, 1980).

History is a beat.

Made in, *Outlining Manner* (2015)

II. Tragedy

Dionysos and Satyrs, Attic red-figured cup (480 BC)

Friedrich Nietzsche

THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

An Attempt at Self-Criticism

Whatever might have been be the basis for this dubious book, it must have been a question of the utmost importance and charm, as well as a deeply personal one. Testimony to that effect is the time in which it arose (in spite of which it arose), that disturbing era of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. While the thunderclap of the Battle of Worth was reverberating across Europe, the meditative lover of enigmas whose lot it was to father this book sat somewhere in a corner of the Alps, extremely reflective and perplexed (thus simultaneously very distressed and carefree) and wrote down his thoughts concerning the Greeks, the kernel of that odd and difficult book to which this later preface (or postscript) should be dedicated. A few weeks after that, he found himself under the walls of Metz, still not yet free of the question mark which he had set down beside the alleged "serenity" of the Greeks and of Greek culture, until, in that month of the deepest tension, as peace was being negotiated in Versailles, he finally came to peace with himself and, while slowly recovering from an illness he'd brought back home with him from the field, finished composing the Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music.

– From music? Music and tragedy? The Greeks and the Music of Tragedy? The Greeks and the art work of pessimism? The most successful, most beautiful, most envied people, those with the most encouraging style of life – the Greeks? How can this be? Did they really need tragedy? Even more to the point, did they really need art? And Greek art, what is that, and how did it come about?

One can guess from all this just where the great question mark about the worth of existence was placed. Is pessimism necessarily the sign of collapse, destruction, and disaster, of the exhausted and enfeebled instinct, as it was among the Indians, as it is now, to all appearances, among us "modern" peoples and Europeans? Is there a pessimism of the strong? An intellectual inclination for what in existence is hard, dreadful, angry, and problematic, emerging from what is healthy, from overflowing well being, from living existence to the full? Is there perhaps a way of suffering from the very fullness of life, a tempting courage of the keenest sight which demands what is terrible, like an enemy – a worthy enemy – against which it can test its power, from which it will learn what "to fear" means?

What does the tragic myth mean precisely for the Greeks of the best, strongest, and bravest age? What about that tremendous phenomenon of the Dionysian? And what about what was born out of the Dionysian – the tragedy? By contrast, what are we to make of what killed tragedy – Socratic morality, dialectic, the satisfaction and serenity of the theoretical man? Could not this very Socratic way be a sign of collapse, exhaustion, sickness, and the dissolution of the anarchic instinct? And could the "Greek serenity" of later Greek periods be only a red sunset? Could the Epicurean will hostile to pessimism be merely the prudence of a suffering man? And even scientific enquiry itself, our science – indeed, what does all scientific enquiry in general mean considered as a symptom of life? What is the point of all that science and, even more serious, where did it come from? What about that? Is scientific scholarship perhaps only a fear and an excuse in the face of pessimism, a delicate self- defence against – the Truth? And speaking morally, something like cowardice and falsehood? Speaking unmorally, a clever trick? Oh, Socrates, Socrates, was that perhaps your secret? Oh you secretive ironist, was that perhaps your – irony?

2

What I managed to seize upon at that time, something fearful and dangerous, was a problem with horns (not necessarily a bull exactly, but in any event a new problem). Today I would state that it was the problem of scholarship itself, scholarly research for the first time grasped as problematic, as dubious. But that book, in which my youthful courage and suspicion then spoke, what an impossible book had to grow out of a task so contrary to the spirit of youth!

Created out of merely premature and really immature personal experiences, which lay close to the threshold of something communicable, and built on the basis of art (for the problem of scientific research cannot be understood on the

basis of scientific enquiry) – a book perhaps for artists with analytical tendencies and a capacity for retrospection (that means for exceptions, a type of artist whom it is necessary to seek out and whom one never wants to look for), full of psychological innovations and artists' secrets, with an artist's metaphysics in the background, a youthful work full of the spirit of youth and the melancholy of youth, independent, defiantly self-sufficient as well, even where it seemed to bow down with special reverence to an authority – in short, a first work also in the bad sense of the word, afflicted, in spite of the antiquity of the problem, with every fault of youth, above all with its excessive verbiage and its storm and stress.

On the other hand, looking back on the success the book had (especially with the great artist to whom it addressed itself, as if in a conversation, that is, with Richard Wagner), the book proved itself – I mean it was the sort of book which at any rate was effective enough among "the best people of its time." For that reason the book should at this point be handled with some consideration and discretion. However, I will not totally hide how unpleasant the book seems to me now, how strangely after sixteen years it stands there in front of me, an older man, a hundred times more discriminating, but with eyes which have not grown colder in the slightest. The issue which that bold book dared to approach for the first time has itself become no more remote: to look at scientific enquiry from the perspective of the artist, but to look at art from the perspective of life...

3

Let me say again: today for me it is an impossible book. I call it something poorly written, ponderous, painful, with fantastic and confused imagery, here and there so saccharine it is effeminate, uneven in tempo, without any impulse for logical clarity, extremely self-confident and thus dispensing with evidence, even distrustful of the relevance of evidence, like a book for the initiated, like "Music" for those baptized in music, those who are bound together from the start in secret and esoteric aesthetic experiences, a secret sign recognized among artistic blood relations, an arrogant and rhapsodic book, which right from the start hermetically sealed itself off from the profane vulgarity of the "intelligentsia" even more than from the "people," but a book which, as its effect proved and continues to prove, must also understand enough of this issue to search out its fellow rhapsodists and tempt them to new secret paths and dancing grounds.

At any rate here a strange voice spoke (curious people understood that, as did those who found it distasteful), the disciple of an as yet unknown God, who momentarily hid himself under the hood of a learned man, under the gravity and dialectical solemnity of the German man, even under the bad manners of the followers of Wagner. Here was a spirit with alien, even nameless, needs, a memory crammed with questions, experiences, secret places, beside which the name Dionysus was written like a question mark. Here spoke (so people told themselves suspiciously) something like a mystic and an almost maenad-like soul, which stammered with difficulty and arbitrarily, as if talking a foreign language, almost uncertain whether it wanted to communicate something or remain silent. This "new soul" should have sung, not spoken! What a shame that I did not dare to utter as a poet what I had to say at that time. Perhaps I might have been able to do that! Or at least as a philologist – even today in this area almost everything is still there for philologists to discover and dig up, above all the issue that there is a problem right here and that the Greeks will continue remain, as before, entirely unknown and unknowable as long as we have no answer to the question, "What is the Dionysian?"

4

Indeed, what is the Dionysian? This book offers an answer to that question: a "knowledgeable person" speaks there, the initiate and disciple of his own god. Perhaps I would now speak with more care and less eloquently about such a difficult psychological question as the origin of tragedy among the Greeks. A basic issue is the relationship of the Greeks to pain, the degree of their sensitivity. Did this relationship remain constant? Or did it turn itself around? That question whether their constantly strong desire for beauty, feasts, festivities, and new cults arose out of some lack, deprivation, melancholy, or pain. If we assume that this desire for the beautiful and the good might be quite true – and Pericles, or, rather, Thucydides, in the great Funeral Oration gives us to understand that it is – where must that contradictory desire stem from,

which appears earlier than the desire for beauty, namely, the desire for the ugly or the good strong willing of the ancient Hellenes for pessimism, for tragic myth, for pictures of everything fearful, angry, enigmatic, destructive, and fateful as the basis of existence? Where must tragedy come from? Perhaps out of desire, out of power, out of overflowing health, out of overwhelming fullness of life?

And psychologically speaking, what then is the meaning of that madness out of which tragic as well as comic art grew, the Dionysian madness? What? Is madness perhaps not necessarily the symptom of degradation, collapse, cultural decadence? Is there perhaps (a question for doctors who treat madness) a neurosis associated with health, with the youth of a people, and with youthfulness? What is revealed in that synthesis of god and goat in the satyr? Out of what personal experience, what impulse, did the Greeks have to imagine the Dionysian enthusiast and original man as a satyr? And what about the origin of the tragic chorus?

In those centuries when the Greek body flourished and the Greek soul bubbled over with life, perhaps there were endemic raptures, visions, and hallucinations which entire communities, entire cultural bodies, shared. What if it were the case that the Greeks, right in the midst of their rich youth, had the desire for tragedy and were pessimists? What if it was clearly lunacy, to use a saying from Plato, which brought the greatest blessings throughout Hellas?

And, on the other hand, what if, to turn the issue around, it was clearly during the time of their dissolution and weakness that the Greeks became constantly more optimistic, more superficial, more hypocritical, with a lust for logic and rational understanding of the world, as well as "more cheerful" and "more scientific"? What's this? In spite of all "modern ideas" and the judgments of democratic taste, could the victory of optimism, the developing hegemony of reasonableness, practical and theoretical utilitarianism, as well as democracy itself (which occurs in the same period) perhaps be a symptom of failing power, approaching old age, physiological exhaustion, all these factors rather than pessimism? Was Epicurus an optimist for the very reason that he was suffering? We see that this book was burdened with an entire bundle of difficult questions. Let us add its most difficult question: What, from the point of view of living, does morality mean?

5

The preface to Richard Wagner already proposed that art, and not morality, was the essential metaphysical human activity, and in the book itself there appears many times over the suggestive statement that the existence of the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. In fact, the entire book recognizes only an aesthetic sense and a deeper meaning under everything that happens, a "God," if you will, but certainly only a totally unthinking and amoral artist-God, who in creation and destruction, in good things and bad, dispassionately desires to become aware of his own pleasures and power, a God who, as he creates worlds, rids himself of the strain of fullness and superfluity, from the suffering of pressing internal contradictions. The world is at every moment the attained manifestation of God, as the eternally changing, eternally new vision of the person who suffers most, who is the most rent with contradictions, the one with the richest sense of protest, who knows how to save himself only in illusion.

People may call this entire artistic metaphysic arbitrary, pointless, and fantastic, but the essential point about it is that it already betrays a spirit which will at some point establish itself on that dangerous ground and make a stand against the moralistic interpretation and moral meaningfulness of existence. Here is announced, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism "beyond good and evil." Here comes that "perversity in belief" in word and formula against which Schopenhauer never grew tired of hurling his angriest curses and thunderstones in advance, a philosophy which dared to place morality itself in the world of phenomena and so to subsume it, not under the "visions" (in the sense of some idealistic end point) but under "illusions," as an appearance, delusion, fallacy, interpretation, something made up, a work of art.

Perhaps we can best gauge the depth of this tendency hostile to morality from the careful and hostile silence with which Christianity is treated in the entire book, Christianity as the most excessive and thorough figuring out of a moralistic theme which humanity has ever had available to listen to. To tell the truth, there is nothing which stands more in opposition to the purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world, as it was set out in this book, than Christian teaching, which is and will remain merely moralistic and which, with its absolute moral standards (for example, with its truthfulness of God), relegates

art to the realm of lies – in other words, which denies art, condemns it, and passes sentence on it.

Behind such a way of thinking and evaluating, which must be hostile to art, so long as it is in any way consistent, I always perceived also a hostility to life, the wrathful, vengeful aversion to life itself. For all life rests on appearance, art, illusion, optics, the need for perspective and for error. Christianity was from the start essentially and thoroughly disgust and weariness with life, which only dressed itself up, only hid itself in, only decorated itself with the belief in an "other" or "better" life. The hatred of the "world," the curse against the emotions, the fear of beauty and sensuality, a world beyond created so that the world on this side might be more easily slandered, at bottom a longing for nothingness, for extinction, for rest, until the "Sabbath of all Sabbaths" – all that, as well as the absolute desire of Christianity to value only moral worth, has always seemed to me the most dangerous and most eerie form of all possible manifestations of a "Will to Destruction," at least a sign of the deepestillness, weariness, bad temper, exhaustion, and impoverishment in living.

For in the eyes of morality (and particularly Christian morality, that is, absolute morality) life must be seen as constantly and inevitably wicked, because life is something essentially amoral. Hence, pressed down under this weight of contempt and eternal No's, life must finally be experienced as something not worth desiring, as something worthless. And what about morality itself? Isn't morality a "desire for the denial of life," a secret instinct for destruction, a principle of decay, diminution, and slander, a beginning of the end, and thus, the greatest of all dangers?

And so, my instinct at that time turned itself against morality in this questionable book, as an instinctual affirmation of life, and a fundamentally different doctrine, a totally opposite way of evaluating life, was invented, something purely artistic and anti-Christian. What should it be called? As a philologist and man of words, I baptized it, taking some liberties (for who knew the correct name for the Antichrist?), after the name of a Greek god: I called it the Dionysian.

6

Do people understand the nature of the task I dared to stir up with this book? ... How much I now regret the fact that at the time I didn't have the courage (or the presumptuousness?) to consider allowing myself a personal language appropriate to such an odd point of view and such a daring exploit – that I sought laboriously to express strange and new evaluations with formulas from Schopenhauer and Kant – something which basically went quite against the spirit of Kant and Schopenhauer, as well as against their tastes!

What then did Schopenhauer think about tragedy? He says, "What gives all tragedies their characteristic drive for elevation is the working out of the recognition that the world and life cannot provide any just satisfactions, and thus our devotion to it is not worthwhile; the tragic spirit lives on in that insight, and it leads from there to resignation" (The World as Will and Idea, II,495). Oh, how differently Dionysus speaks to me! Oh, how far from me then was just this entire doctrine of resignation!

But there is something much worse about my book, something which I regret even more than to have obscured and spoiled my Dionysian premonitions with formulas from Schopenhauer: namely, that I generally ruined for myself the magnificent problem of the Greeks, as it arose in me, by mixing it up with the most modern issues! I regret that I tied myself to hopes where there was nothing to hope for, where everything indicated all too clearly an end point! I regret that, on the basis of the most recent German music, I began to tell stories of the "German character," just as if that character might be about to discover itself, to find itself again. And all that at a time when the German spirit (which not so long before had the desire to rule Europe and the power to assume leadership of Europe) was, as its last will and testament, abdicating and, beneath the ostentatious pretext of founding an empire, making the transition to a negotiated moderation, to democracy and "modern ideas"!

As a matter of fact, in the intervening years I have learned to think of that "German character" without any hope and without mercy – similarly with German music, which is Romantic through and through and the most un-Greek of all possible art forms, and besides that, the worst sort of narcotic, doubly dangerous among a people who love drink and honour lack of clarity as a virtue, because that has the dual character of a drug which simultaneously intoxicates and befuddles the mind. Of course, set apart from all the rash hopes and the defective practical applications to present times with which I then ruined my first

book, the great Dionysian question mark remains still standing, as it is set out there (also in relation to music): How should a music be created which is no longer Romantic in origin (like the German) but Dionysian?

7

But, my dear sir, what in the earth is Romantic if your book is not? Can the deep hatred against modernism, reality, and modern ideas go any further than it does in your artists' metaphysics, which would sooner believe in nothingness or the devil than in the here and now? Does not a fundamental bass note of anger and desire for destruction rumble underneath all your contrapuntal vocal art and seductive sounds, a raging determination in opposition to everything contemporary, a desire which is something not too distant from practical nihilism and which seems to say "I'd rather that nothingness were the truth than that you were right, than that your truth was justified!"

Listen to yourself, my pessimistic gentleman and worshipper of art, listen with open ears to a single selected passage from your book, to that not ineloquent passage about the dragon killer, who may sound like an awkward pied piper to those with young ears and hearts. What? Is your book not a true and justified Romantic declaration of 1830, under the mask of the pessimism of 1850, behind which is already playing the prelude to the usual Romantic finale – break, collapse, return, and prostration before an ancient belief, before the old gods. . . . What? Isn't your book of pessimism itself an anti-Greek and Romantic piece, even something "as intoxicating as it is befuddling," in any event, a narcotic, even a piece of music, German music? Listen to the following:

"Let's picture for ourselves a generation growing up with this fearlessness in its gaze, with this heroic push into what is monstrous; let's picture for ourselves the bold stride of these dragon slayers, the proud audacity with which they turn their backs on all the doctrines of weakness associated with optimism, so that they live with resolution, fully and completely. Would it not be necessary for the tragic man of this culture, having trained himself for what is serious and frightening, to desire a new art, an art of metaphysical consolation, tragedy as his own personal Helen of Troy, and to have to cry out with Faust:

"And should I not, through my power to yearn,
Drag into life that most extraordinary form?"

"Would it not be necessary?" ... No, three times no! you young Romantics: it should not be necessary! But it is very likely that things will end up – that you will end up – being consoled, as is written, in spite of all the self-training for what is serious and frightening, "metaphysically consoled," as Romantics tend to finish up, as Christians. No! You should for the time being learn the art of consolation in this life: you should learn to laugh, my young friends, even if you wish to remain thoroughly pessimistic. From that, as laughing people, some day or other perhaps you will ship all that metaphysical consolation to the devil – and then away with metaphysics! Or, to speak the language of that Dionysian fiend called Zarathustra:

"Lift up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher! And for my sake don't forget your legs! Raise up your legs, you fine dancers, and better yet, stand on your heads!"

"This crown of the man who laughs, this crown wreathed with roses – I have placed this crown on myself. I speak out my holy laughter to myself. Today I found no one else strong enough for that."

"Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light hearted, who beckons with his wings, a man ready to fly, hailing all birds, prepared and ready, a careless and blessed man."

"Zarathustra the truth-teller, Zarathustra the true laugher, not an impatient man, not a man of absolutes, someone who loves jumps and leaps to the side – I placed the crown on myself!"

"This crown of the laughing man, this crown of rose wreaths: my brothers I throw this crown to you! Laughter I declare sacred: you higher men, for my sake learn to laugh!"

August 1886

Preface to Richard Wagner

In order to keep far away from me all possible disturbances, agitation, and misunderstandings which the assembly of ideas in this piece of writing will bring about on account of the peculiar character of our aesthetic public, and also to be capable of writing a word of introduction to the book with the same contemplative joy which marks every page, the crystallization of good inspirational hours, I am imagining the look with which you, my esteemed friend, will receive this work – how you, perhaps after an evening stroll in the winter snow, look at the unbound Prometheus on the title page, read my name, and are immediately convinced that, no matter what this text consists of, the writer has something serious and urgent to say, and that, in addition, in everything which he composed, he was conversing with you as with someone present and could only write down what was appropriate to such a presence.

In this connection, you will remember that I gathered these ideas together at the same time that your marvelous commemorative volume on Beethoven appeared, that is, during the shock and grandeur of the war which had just broken out . Nevertheless, people might think that this collection of ideas has an aesthetic voluptuousness opposed to patriotic excitement, a cheerful game different from brave seriousness. Such people would be quite wrong. By actually reading the work, they should rather be astonished to recognize clearly the serious German problem which we have to deal with, the problem which we really placed right in the middle of German hopes as its vortex and turning point.

However, it will perhaps be generally offensive for these same people to see an aesthetic problem taken so seriously, if they are in a position to see art as nothing more than a merry diversion, as an easily dispensable bell-ringing summoning us to the "Seriousness of Existence," as if no one knew what such as opposing stance as this has to do with such "Seriousness of Existence."

For these serious readers, let this serve as a caution: I am convinced that art is the highest task and the essential metaphysical capability of this life, in the sense of that man to whom I here, as to my inspiring pioneer on this path, have dedicated this book.

Basel, December 1871

The Birth of Tragedy

1

We will have achieved much for the study of aesthetics when we come, not merely to a logical understanding, but also to the immediately certain apprehension of the fact that the further development of art is bound up with the duality of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, just as reproduction depends upon the duality of the sexes, their continuing strife and only periodically occurring reconciliation. We take these names from the Greeks who gave a clear voice to the profound secret teachings of their contemplative art, not in ideas, but in the powerfully clear forms of their divine world.

With those two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus, we link our recognition that in the Greek world there exists a huge contrast, in origins and purposes, between visual (plastic) arts, the Apollonian, and the non-visual art of music, the Dionysian. Both very different drives go hand in hand, for the most part in open conflict with each other and simultaneously provoking each other all the time to new and more powerful offspring, in order to perpetuate for themselves the contest of opposites which the common word "Art" only seems to bridge, until they finally, through a marvelous metaphysical act, seem to pair up with each other and, as this pair, produce Attic tragedy, just as much a Dionysian as an Apollonian work of art.

In order to get closer to these two instinctual drives, let us think of them next as the separate artistic worlds of dreams and of intoxication, physiological phenomena between which we can observe an opposition corresponding to the one between the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

According to the ideas of Lucretius, the marvelous divine shapes first appeared to the mind of man in a dream. It was in a dream that the great artist saw the delightful anatomy of superhuman existence, and the Hellenic poet, questioned about the secrets of poetic creativity, would have recalled his dreams and given an explanation exactly similar to the one Hans Sachs provides in Die Meistersinger.

"My friend, that is precisely the poet's work –
To figure out his dreams, mark them down.
Believe me, the truest illusion of mankind
Is revealed to him in dreams:
All poetic art and poeticizing
Is nothing but interpreting true dreams."

The beautiful appearance of the world of dreams, in whose creation each man is a complete artist, is the condition of all plastic art, indeed, as we shall see, an important half of poetry. We enjoy the form with an immediate understanding, all shapes speak to us, nothing is indifferent and unnecessary.

For all the very intense life of these dream realities, we nevertheless have the thoroughly disagreeable sense of their illusory quality. At least that is my experience. For their frequency, even normality, I can point to many witnesses and the utterances of poets. Even the philosophical man has the presentiment that this reality in which we live and have our being is an illusion, that under it lies hidden a second quite different reality. And Schopenhauer specifically designates as the trademark of philosophical talent the ability to recognize at certain times that human beings and all things are mere phantoms or dream pictures.

Now, just as the philosopher behaves in relation to the reality of existence, so the artistically excitable man behaves in relation to the reality of dreams. He looks at them precisely and with pleasure, for from these pictures he fashions his interpretation of life; from these events he rehearses his life. This is not merely a case of agreeable and friendly images which he experiences with a complete understanding. They also include what is serious, cloudy, sad, dark, sudden scruples, teasing accidents, nervous expectations, in short, the entire "divine comedy" of life, including the Inferno – all this moves past him, not just like a shadow play, for he lives and suffers in the midst of these scenes, yet not without that fleeting sensation of illusion. And perhaps several people remember, like me, amid the dangers and terrors of a dream, successfully cheering themselves up by shouting: "It is a dream! I want to dream it some more!" I have also heard accounts of some people who had the ability to set out the causal connection of one and the same dream over three or more consecutive nights. These facts are clear evidence showing that our innermost beings, the secret underground in all of us, experiences its dreams with deep enjoyment, as a delightful necessity.

The Greeks expressed this joyful necessity of the dream experience in their god Apollo, who, as god of all the plastic arts, is at the same time the god of prophecy. In accordance with the root meaning of his association with brightness, he is the god of light. He also rules over the beautiful appearance of the inner fantasy world. The higher truth, the perfection of this condition in contrast to the sketchy understanding of our daily reality, as well as the deep consciousness of a healing and helping nature in sleep and dreaming, is the symbolic analogy to the capacity to prophesy the truth, as well as to art in general, through which life is made possible and worth living. But also that delicate line which the dream image may not cross so as to work its effect pathologically (otherwise the illusion would deceive us as crude reality) – that line must not be absent from the image of Apollo, that boundary of moderation, that freedom from more ecstatic excitement, that fully calm wisdom of the god of images. His eye must be sun-like, in keeping with his origin. Even when he is angry and gazes with displeasure, the consecration of the beautiful illusion rests on him.

And so one may verify (in an eccentric way) what Schopenhauer says of the man trapped in the veil of Maja: "As on the stormy sea which extends without limit on all sides, howling mountainous waves rise up and sink and a sailor sits in a row boat, trusting the weak craft, so, in the midst of a world of torments, the solitary man sits peacefully, supported by and trusting in the principium individuationis [the principle of individuality]" (World as Will and Idea, Vol. I, p. 416). Yes, we could say of Apollo that the imperturbable trust in that principle and the calm sitting still of the man conscious of it attained its loftiest expression in him, and we may even designate Apollo himself as the marvelous divine image of the principium individuationis, from whose gestures and gaze all the joy and wisdom of illusion, together with its beauty, speak to us.

In the same place Schopenhauer also described for us the monstrous horror which seizes a man when he suddenly doubts his ways of comprehending illusion, when the sense of a foundation, in any one of its forms, appears to suffer a breakdown. If we add to this horror the ecstatic rapture, which rises up out of the same collapse of the principium individuationis from the innermost depths of human beings, yes, from the innermost depths of nature, then we have a glimpse into the essence of the Dionysian, which is presented to us most closely through the analogy to intoxication.

Either through the influence of narcotic drink, of which all primitive men and peoples speak, or through the powerful coming on of spring, which drives joyfully through all of nature, that Dionysian excitement arises. As its power increases, the subjective fades into complete forgetfulness of self. In the German Middle Ages under the same power of Dionysus constantly growing hordes waltzed from place to place, singing and dancing. In that St. John's and St. Vitus's dancing we recognize the Bacchic chorus of the Greeks once again, and its precursors in Asia Minor, right back to Babylon and the orgiastic Sacaea [a riotous Babylonian festival].

There are men who, from a lack of experience or out of apathy, turn mockingly away from such phenomena as from a "sickness of the people," with a sense of their own health and filled with pity. These poor people naturally do not have any sense of how deathly and ghost-like this very "Health" of theirs sounds, when the glowing life of the Dionysian throng roars past them. Under the magic of the Dionysian, not only does the bond between man and man lock itself in place once more, but also nature itself, now matter how alienated, hostile, or subjugated, rejoices again in her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. The earth freely offers up her gifts, and the beasts of prey from the rocks and the desert approach in peace. The wagon of Dionysus is covered with flowers and wreaths. Under his yolk stride panthers and tigers.

If someone were to transform Beethoven's Ode to Joy into a painting and not restrain his imagination when millions of people sink dramatically into the dust, then we could come close to the Dionysian. Now is the slave a free man, now all the stiff, hostile barriers break apart, those things which necessity and arbitrary power or "saucy fashion" have established between men. Now, with the gospel of world harmony, very man feels himself not only united with his neighbour, reconciled and fused together, but also as if the veil of Maja has been ripped apart, with only scraps fluttering around before the mysterious original unity. Singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a higher unity. He has forgotten how to walk and talk and is on the verge of flying up into the air as he dances. The enchantment speaks out in his gestures. Just as the animals speak and the earth gives milk and honey, so now something supernatural echoes out of him. He feels himself a god. He now moves in a lofty ecstasy, as he saw the gods move in his dream. The man is no longer an artist. He has become a work of art. The artistic power of all of nature, the rhapsodic satisfaction of the primordial unity, reveals itself here in the intoxicated performance. The finest clay, the most expensive marble – man – is here worked and chiseled, and the cry of the Eleusianian mysteries rings out to the chisel blows of the Dionysian world artist: "Do you fall down, you millions? World, do you have a sense of your creator?"

2

Up to this point, we have considered the Apollonian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic forces which break forth out of nature itself, without the mediation of the human artist and in which the human artistic drive is for the time being satisfied directly – on the one hand as a world of dream images, whose perfection has no connection with an individual's high level of intellect or artistic education, on the other hand, as the intoxicating reality, which once again does not respect the individual, but even seeks to abolish the individual and to restore him through a mystic feeling of collective unity. In comparison to these unmediated artistic states of nature, every artist is an "Imitator," and, in fact, an artist either of Apollonian dream or Dionysian intoxication or, finally, as in Greek tragedy, for example, simultaneously an artist of intoxication and dreams. As the last, it is possible for us to imagine how he sinks down in the Dionysian drunkenness and mystical obliteration of the self, alone and apart from the rapturous throng, and how through the Apollonian effects of dream his own state now reveals itself to him, that is, his unity with the innermost basis of the world, in a metaphorical dream picture.

In accordance with these general assumptions and comparisons, let us now approach the Greeks, in order to recognize to what degree and to what heights the natural artistic drives had developed in them and how we are in a position to understand more deeply and assess the relationship of the Greek artist to his primordial images or, to use Aristotle's expression, his "imitation of nature."

In spite of all their literature on dreams and numerous dream anecdotes, we can speak of the dreams of the Greeks only hypothetically, although with fair certainty. Given the incredibly clear and accurate plastic capability of their eyes, along with their intelligent and open love of

colour, one cannot go wrong in assuming that (to the shame all those born later) their dreams also had a logical causality of lines and circumferences, colours, and groupings, a sequence of scenes rather like their best bas-reliefs, whose perfection would justify us, if such a comparison were possible, to describe the dreaming Greek man as a Homer and Homer as a dreaming Greek man, in a deeper sense than when modern man, with respect to his dreams, has the temerity to compare himself with Shakespeare.

On the other hand, we do not need to speak merely hypothetically when we have to expose the immense gap which separates the Dionysian Greeks from the Dionysian barbarians. In all quarters of the old world (setting aside here the newer worlds), from Rome to Babylon, we can confirm the existence of Dionysian celebrations, of a type, at best, related to the Greeks in much the same way as the bearded satyr whose name and characteristics are taken from the goat is related to Dionysus himself. Almost everywhere, the central point of these celebrations consisted of an exuberant sexual promiscuity, whose waves flooded over all established family practices and traditional laws. The wildest bestiality of nature was here unleashed, creating an abominable mixture of lust and cruelty, which has always seemed to me the real witches' potion.

From the feverish excitement of these festivals, knowledge of which reached the Greeks from all directions, by land and sea, they were apparently for a long time completely secure and protected through the figure of Apollo, drawn up in all his pride. Apollo could counter by holding up the head of Medusa in the face of the unequalled power of this crude and grotesque Dionysian force. Doric art has immortalized this majestic bearing of Apollo as he stands in opposition. This opposition became more dubious and even impossible as similar impulses gradually broke out from the deepest roots of Hellenic culture itself. Now the effect of the Delphic god, in a timely process of reconciliation, limited itself to taking the destructive weapon out of the hand of his powerful opponent.

This reconciliation is the most important moment in the history of Greek culture. Wherever we look the revolutionary effects of this experience manifest themselves. It was the reconciliation of two opponents, who from now on observed their differences with a sharp demarcation of the border line between them and with occasional gifts send to honour each other. Basically the gap was not bridged over. However, if we see how, under the pressure of this peace agreement, the Dionysian power revealed itself, then we now understand the meaning of the festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration in the Dionysian orgies of the Greeks, in comparison with the Babylonian Sacaea, which turned human beings back into tigers and apes.

In these Greek festivals, for the first time nature achieves its artistic jubilee. In them, for the first time, the tearing apart of the principii individuationis [the individualizing principle] becomes an artistic phenomenon. Here that dreadful witches' potion of lust and cruelty was without power. The strange mixture and ambiguity in the emotions of the Dionysian celebrant remind him, as healing potions remind him of deadly poison, of that sense that pain awakens joy, that the jubilation in his chest rips out cries of agony. From the most sublime joy echoes the cry of horror or the longingly plaintive lament over an irreparable loss. In those Greek festivals it was as if a sentimental feature of nature is breaking out, as if nature has to sigh over her dismemberment into separate individuals.

The language of song and poetry of such a doubly defined celebrant was for the Homeric Greek world something new and unheard of. Dionysian music especially awoke in that world fear and terror. If music was apparently already known as an Apollonian art, this music, strictly speaking, was a rhythmic pattern like the sound of waves, whose artistic power had developed for presenting Apollonian states of mind. The music of Apollo was Doric architecture expressed in sound, but only in intimate tones, characteristic of the cithara [a traditional stringed instrument}. The un- Apollonian character of Dionysian music keeps such an element of gentle caution at a distance, and with that turns music generally into emotionally disturbing tonal power, a unified stream of melody, and the totally incomparable world of harmony.

In the Dionysian dithyramb man is aroused to the highest intensity of all his symbolic capabilities. Something never felt before forces itself into expression – the destruction of the veil of Maja, the sense of oneness as the presiding genius of form, of nature itself. Now the essence of nature must express itself symbolically; a new world of symbols is necessary, the entire symbolism of the body, not just the symbolism

of mouth, face, and words, but the full gestures of the dance – all the limbs moving to the rhythm. And then the other symbolic powers grow, those of music, rhythm, dynamics, and harmony – all with sudden spontaneity.

To grasp this total unleashing of all symbolic powers, man must already have attained that high level of freedom from the self which seeks to express itself symbolically in those forces. Because of this, the dithyrambic servant of Dionysus will understand only someone like himself. With what astonishment must the Apollonian Greek have gazed at him! With an amazement which was all the greater as he sensed with horror that all this may not be really foreign to him, that even his Apollonian consciousness was covering the Dionysian world in front of him, like a veil.

3

In order to grasp this point, we must dismantle that artistic structure of Apollonian culture, as it were, stone by stone, until we see the foundations on which it is built. Here we become aware for the first time of the marvelous Olympian divine forms, which stand on the pediments of this building and whose actions decorate its friezes all around in illuminating bas relief. If Apollo also stands among them, as a single god next to the others and without any claim to the pre-eminent position, we should not on that account let ourselves be deceived. The same instinct which made Apollo perceptible to the senses gave birth to the entire Olympian world in general. In this sense, we must value Apollo as the father of them all. What was the immense need out of which such an illuminating group of Olympic beings arose?

Anyone who steps up to these Olympians with another religion in his heart and seeks from them ethical loftiness, even sanctity or spiritual longing for the non-physical, for loving gazes filled with pity, must soon enough despondently turn his back on them in disappointment. For here there is no reminder of asceticism, spirituality, and duty. Here speaks to us only a full, indeed a triumphant, existence, in which everything present is worshipped, no matter whether it is good or evil. And thus the onlooker may well stand in real consternation in front of this fantastic excess of life, to ask himself with what magical drink in their bodies these high-spirited men could have enjoyed life so that wherever they look, Helen laughs back at them, that ideal image of their own existence, "hovering in sweet sensuousness."

However, we must summon back this onlooker who has already turned around to go away. "Don't leave them. First listen to what Greek folk wisdom expresses about this very life which spreads out before you here with such inexplicable serenity. There is an old saying to the effect that King Midas for a long time hunted the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, in the forests, without catching him. When Silenus finally fell into the king's hands, the king asked what was the best thing of all for men, the very finest. The daemon remained silent, motionless and inflexible, until, compelled by the king, he finally broke out into shrill laughter and said, 'Suffering creature, born for a day, child of accident and toil, why are you forcing me to say what is the most unpleasant thing for you to hear? The very best thing for you is totally unreachable: not to have been born, not to exist, to be nothing. The second best thing for you, however, is this: to die soon.'"

What is the relationship between the Olympian world of the gods and this popular wisdom? It is like the relationship of the entrancing vision of the tortured martyr to his pain.

Now, as it were, the Olympic magic mountain reveals itself to us and shows us its roots. The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence. In order to live at all, he must have placed in front of him the gleaming Olympians, born in his dreams. That immense distrust of the titanic forces of nature, that Moira [Fate] enthroned mercilessly above all knowledge, that vulture that devoured Prometheus, friend of man, that fatal lot drawn by wise Oedipus, that family curse on the House of Atreus, that Orestes compelled to kill his mother, in short, that entire philosophy of the woodland god, together with its mythical illustrations, from which the melancholy Etruscans died off, all that was overcome time after time by the Greeks (or at least hidden and removed from view) through the artistic middle world of the Olympians.

In order to be able to live, the Greeks must have created these gods out of the deepest necessity. We can readily imagine the sequential development of these gods: through that instinctive Apollonian drive for beauty there developed by slow degrees out of the primordial

titanic divine order of terror the Olympian divine order of joy, just as roses break forth out of thorny bushes. How else could a people so emotionally sensitive, so spontaneously desiring, so singularly capable of suffering have endured their existence, unless the same qualities manifested themselves in their gods, around whom flowed a higher glory. The same instinctual drive which summons art into life as the seductive replenishment for further living and the completion of existence also gave rise to the Olympian world, by which the Hellenic "Will" held before itself a transfiguring mirror.

In this way the gods justify the lives of men because they themselves live it – that is the only satisfactory theodicy! Existence under the bright sunshine of such gods is experienced as worth striving for in itself, and the essential pain of the Homeric men consists in the separation from that sunlight, above all in the fact that such separation is close at hand., so that we could say of them, with a reversal of the wisdom of Silenus, "the very worst thing for them was to die soon, the second worst was to die at all." When the laments resound now, they tell of short-lived Achilles, of the changes in the race of men, transformed like leaves, of the destruction of the heroic age. It is not unworthy of the greatest heroes to long to live on, even as a day labourer. In the Apollonian stage, the "Will" so spontaneously demands to live on, the Homeric man fills himself with that feeling so much, that even his lament becomes a song of praise.

At this point we must point out that this harmony, this union of man with nature (something looked on enviously by more recent ages), for which Schiller coined the artistic slogan "naïve," is in no way such a simple, inevitable, and, as it were, unavoidable condition (like a human paradise) which we necessarily run into at the door of every culture. Such a belief is possible only in an age which seeks to believe that Rousseau's Emile is an artist and imagines it has found in Homer an artist like Emile raised in the bosom of nature. Wherever we encounter the "naïve" in art, we have to recognize the highest effect of Apollonian culture, something which always must come into existence to overthrow the kingdom of the Titans, to kill monsters, and through powerfully deluding images and joyful illusions to emerge victorious over the horrific depths of what we observe in the world and the most sensitive capacity for suffering. But how seldom does the naïve, that sense of being completely swallowed up in the beauty of appearance, succeed. For that reason, how inexpressibly noble is Homer, who, as a single person, was related to Apollonian popular culture as the single dream artist to his people's capacity to dream and to nature in general.

Homeric "naïveté" is only to be understood as the complete victory of the Apollonian illusion. It is the sort of illusion which nature uses so frequently in order to attain her objectives. The true goal is concealed by a deluding image. We stretch our hands out toward this image, and nature reaches its goal through the deception. With the Greeks it was a case of the "Will" wishing to gaze upon itself through the transforming power of genius and the world of art. In order to celebrate itself, its creatures had to sense

that they were worthy of being glorified – they must see themselves again in a higher sphere, without this complete world of contemplation affecting them as an imperative or as a reproach. This is the sphere of beauty, in which they saw their mirror images, the Olympians. With this mirror of beauty, the Hellenic "Will" fought against the talent for suffering and the wisdom of suffering which is bound up with artistic talent, and as a memorial of its victory Homer, the naïve artist, stands before us.

4

Using the analogy of a dream we can learn something about this naïve artist. If we recall how the dreamer, in the middle of his illusory dream world, calls out to himself, without destroying that world, "It is a dream. I want to continue dreaming," and if we can infer, on the one hand, a deep inner delight at the contemplation of dreams, and, on the other, that he must have completely forgotten the pressing problems of his daily life, in order to be capable of dreaming at all with such an inner contemplative joy, then we may interpret all these phenomena, with the guidance of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams, in something like the manner which follows below.

To be sure, with respect to both halves of life, the waking and the dreaming states, the first one strikes us as disproportionately better, more important, more valuable, more worth living – the only way to live. Nevertheless I can assert (something of a paradox to all appearances) on the basis of the secret foundation of our essence, whose manifestation we are, precisely the opposite evaluation of dreams. For the more I become aware of those all-powerful natural artistic

impulses and the fervent yearning for illusion contained in them, the desire to be redeemed through appearances, the more I feel myself forced to the metaphysical assumption that the true basis of being , the ever suffering and entirely contradictory primordial oneness, constantly uses the delightful vision, the joyful illusion, to redeem itself. We are compelled to experience this illusion, totally caught up in it and constituted by it, as the truly non-existent, that is, as a continuing development in time, space, and causality, in other words, as an empirical reality. But if we momentarily look away from our own "reality, " if we grasp our empirical existence and the world in general as an idea of the primordial oneness created in each moment, then we must consider our dreams as illusions of illusions, as well as an even higher fulfillment of the primordial hunger for illusion. For the same reasons, the innermost core of nature takes an indescribable joy in the naïve artist and naïve works of art, which is, in the same way, only "an illusion of an illusion."

Rafael, himself one of those immortal "naïve" artists, in one of his allegorical paintings, has presented that issue of transforming an illusion into an illusion, the fundamental process of the naïve artist and Apollonian culture as well. In his Transfiguration the bottom half shows us, in the possessed boy, the despairing porters, and the helplessly frightened disciples, the mirror image of the eternal primordial pain, the sole basis of the world. The "illusion" here is the reflection of the eternal contradiction, the father of things. Now, out of this illusion there rises up, like an ambrosial fragrance, a new world of illusion, like a vision, invisible to those trapped in the first scene, something illuminating and hovering in the purest painless ecstasy, a shining vision to contemplate with eyes wide open.

Here we have before our very eyes in the highest symbolism of art that Apollonian world of beauty and its foundation, the frightening wisdom of Silenus, and we understand, through intuition, the reciprocal necessity for both of them. But Apollo confronts us once again as the divine manifestation of the principii individuationis [the individualizing principle], in which the eternally attained goal of the primordial oneness, its redemption through illusion, comes into being. He shows us, with his awe-inspiring gestures, how the entire world of torment is necessary, so that through it the individual is pushed to create the redemptive vision and then, absorbed in contemplation of that vision, sits quietly in his rowboat, tossing around in the middle of the ocean.

This deification of the principle of individualization, if it is thought of in general as commanding and proscriptive, understands only one law, that of the individual, that is, observing the limits of individualization, moderation in the Greek sense. Apollo, as the ethical divinity, demands moderation from his followers and self-knowledge, so that they can observe moderation.. And so alongside the aesthetic necessity of beauty run the demands "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess." Arrogance and excess are considered the essentially hostile daemons of the non-Apollonian sphere, therefore characteristic of the pre-Apollonian period, the age of the Titans, and of the world beyond the Apollonian, that is, the barbarian world. Because of his Titanic love for mankind Prometheus had to be ripped apart by the vulture. For the sake of his excessive wisdom, which solved the riddle of the sphinx, Oedipus had to be overthrown in a bewildering whirlpool of evil. That is how the Delphic god interpreted the Greek past.

To the Apollonian Greeks the effect aroused by the Dionysian also seemed "Titanic" and "barbaric." But they could not, with that response, conceal that they themselves were, nonetheless, internally related and similar to those deposed Titans and heroes. Indeed, they must have felt even more that their entire existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on some hidden underground of suffering and knowledge which was reawakened through that very Dionysian. And look! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The "Titanic" and the "barbaric" were, in the end, every bit as necessary as the Apollonian.

And now let us imagine how in this world, constructed on illusion and moderation and restrained by art, the ecstatic sound of the Dionysian celebration rang out all around with a constantly tempting magic, how in such celebrations the entire excess of nature sang out loudly in joy, suffering, and knowledge, even in the most piercing scream. Let's imagine what the psalm-chanting Apollonian artist, with his ghostly harp music could offer in comparison to this daemonic popular singing. The muses of the art of "illusion" withered away in the face of an art which spoke truth in its intoxicated state: the wisdom of Silenus cried out "Woe! Woe!" against the serene Olympian. Individualism, with all its

limits and moderation, was destroyed in the self-forgetfulness of the Dionysian condition and forgot its Apollonian principles.

Excess revealed itself as the truth. The contradictory ecstasy born from of pain spoke of itself right out of the heart of nature. And so the Apollonian was canceled and destroyed, above all where the Dionysian penetrated. But it is just as certain that in those places where the first onslaught was halted, the high reputation and the majesty of the Delphic god manifested itself more firmly and threateningly than ever. For I can explain the Doric state and Doric art only as a constant Apollonian war camp. Only through an uninterrupted opposition to the Titanic-barbaric essence of the Dionysian could such a defiantly aloof art, protected on all sides with fortifications, such a harsh upbringing as a preparation for war, and such a cruel and ruthless basis for government endure.

Up to this point I have set out at some length what I observed at the opening of this essay: how the Dionysian and the Apollonian ruled the Hellenic world, in a constant sequence of births, one after the other, mutually intensifying each other, how, out of the "first" ages, with their battles of the Titans and their harsh popular philosophy, the Homeric world developed under the rule of the Apollonian drive for beauty, how this "naïve" magnificence is swallowed up once more by the breaking out of the Dionysian torrent, and how in opposition to this new power the Apollonian erected the rigid majesty of Doric art and the Doric world view.

If in this way the ancient history of the Greeks, in the struggle of these two hostile principles, falls into four major artistic periods, we are now impelled to ask more about the final stage of this development and striving, in case we should consider the last attained period, the one of Doric art, as the summit and intention of these artistic impulses. Here, the lofty and highly much praised artistic achievement of Attic tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb presents itself before our eyes, as the common goal of both artistic drives, whose secret marriage partnership, after a long antecedent struggle, celebrated itself with such a child, simultaneously Antigone and Cassandra.

5

We are now approaching the essential goal of our undertaking, which aims at a knowledge of the Dionysian-Apollonian genius and its works of art, or at least an intuitive understanding of its mysterious unity. Here now we raise the question of where that new seed first appears in the Hellenic world, the seed which later develops into tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb. On this question classical antiquity itself gives us illustrative evidence when it places Homer and Archilochus next to each other as the originators and torch-bearers of Greek poetry in paintings, cameos, and so on, in full confidence that only these two should be considered equally the original natures from whom a fire-storm flowed out over the entire later world of the Greeks.

Homer, the ancient self-absorbed dreamer, the archetype of the naïve Apollonian artist, now stares astonished at the passionate head of wild Archilochus, the fighting servant of the muses, battered by existence. In its interpretative efforts, our recent aesthetics has known only how to indicate that here the first "subjective" artist stands in contrast to the "objective" artist. This interpretation is of little use, since we recognize the subjective artist as a bad artist and demand in every art and every high artistic achievement, first and foremost, a victory over the subjective, redemption from the "I," and the silence of every individual will and desire – indeed, we are incapable of accepting the slightest artistic creation as true, unless it has objectivity and a purely disinterested contemplation.

Hence, our aesthetic must first solve the problem of how it is possible for the "lyricist" to be an artist. For he, according to the experience of all ages, always says "I" and sings out the entire chromatic sequence of the sounds of his passions and desires. This Archilochus immediately startles us, alongside Homer, through his cry of hate and scorn, through the drunken eruptions of his desire. By doing this, isn't Archilochus (the first artist called subjective) essentially a non-artist? But then where does that veneration come from, which the Delphic oracle, the centre of "objective" art, showed to him, the poet, in very remarkable sayings.

Schiller has illuminated his own writing process with a psychological observation, inexplicable to him, which nevertheless does not appear questionable. He confesses that when he was in a state of preparation, before he actually started writing, he did not have something like a series of pictures, with a structured causality of ideas, in front of him, but rather a musical mood: "With me, feeling at first lacks a defined and clear

object – that develops for the first time later on. A certain musical emotional state comes first, and from this, with me, the poetic idea then follows."

Now, if we add the most important phenomenon of the entire ancient lyric, the union, universally acknowledged as natural, between the lyricist and the musician, even their common identity (in comparison with which our recent lyrics look like the image of a god without a head) then we can, on the basis of the aesthetic metaphysics we established earlier, account for the lyric poet in the following manner. He has, first of all, as a Dionysian artist, become entirely one with the primordial oneness of his painful contradictory nature and produces the reflection of this primordial oneness as music, if music can with justice be called a re-working of the world, its second coat. But now this music becomes perceptible to him once again, as in a metaphorical dream image, under the influence of Apollonian dreaming. That reflection, which lacks imagery and concepts, of the original pain in music, together with its redemption in illusion, gives rise now to a second reflection as the particular metaphor or illustration. The artist has already surrendered his subjectivity in the Dionysian process. The image which now reveals his unity with the heart of the world is a dream scene, which symbolizes that original contradiction and pain, together with the primordial joy in illusion. The "I" of the lyric poet thus echoes out of the abyss of being. What recent aestheticians mean by his "subjectivity" is mere fantasy.

When Archilochus, the first Greek lyric poet, announces his raging love and, at the same time, his contempt for the daughters of Lycambes, it is not his own passion which dances in front of us in an orgiastic frenzy. We see Dionysus and the maenads; we see the intoxicated reveler Archilochus sunk down in sleep – as Euripides describes in the Bacchae, asleep in a high Alpine meadow in the midday sun – and now Apollo steps up to him and touches him with his laurel. The Dionysian musical enchantment of the sleeper now, as it were, flashes around him fiery images, lyrical poems, which are called, in their highest form, tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs.

The plastic artist as well as his relation, the epic poet, is absorbed in the pure contemplation of images. The Dionysian musician lacks any image and is in himself only and entirely the original pain and original reverberation of that image. The lyrical genius feels a world of images and metaphors grow up out of the mysteriously unified state of renunciation of the self. These have a colour, causality, and speed entirely different from that world of the plastic artist and the writer of epic. While the last of these (the epic poet) lives in these pictures and only in them with joyful contentment and does not get tired of contemplating them with love, right down to the smallest details. Even the image of the angry Achilles is for him only a picture whose expressions of anger he enjoys with that dream joy in illusions, so that he, by this mirror of appearances, is protected against the development of that sense of unity and being fused together with the forms he has created. By contrast, the images of the lyric poet are nothing but himself and, as it were, only different objectifications of himself. He can say "I" because he is the moving central point of that world. Only this "I" is not the same as the "I" of the awake, empirically real man, but the single "I" of true and eternal being in general, the "I" resting on the foundation of things. Through its portrayal the lyrical genius sees right into the very basis of things.

Now let's imagine how he looks upon himself among these likenesses, as a non- genius, that is, as his own "Subject," the entire unruly crowd of subjective passions and striving of his will aiming at something particular, which seems real to him. If it now seems as if the lyrical genius and the non-genius bound up with him were one and the same and as if he first spoke that little word "I" about himself, then this illusion could no longer deceive us, not at least in the way it deceived those who have defined the lyricist as a subjective poet.

To tell the truth, Archilochus, the man of passionately burning love and hate, is only a vision of the genius who is no longer Archilochus any more but a world genius and who expresses his primordial pain symbolically in Archilochus as a metaphor for man. That subjectively willing and desiring man Archilochus can never ever be a poet. It is not at all essential that the lyric poet see directly in front of him the phenomenon of the man Archilochus as a reflection of eternal being. Tragedy shows how far the visionary world of the lyric poet can distance itself from that phenomenon clearly standing near at hand.

Schopenhauer, who did not hide from the difficulty which the lyric poet creates for the philosophical observer of art, believed that he had discovered a solution (something which I cannot go along with) when in his profound

metaphysics of music he found a way setting the difficulty decisively to one side, as I believe I have done in his spirit and with due honour to him. He describes the essential nature of song as follows:

The consciousness of the singer is filled with the subject of willing, that is, his own willing, often as an unleashed satisfied willing (joy), but also, and more often, as a restricted willing (sorrow). It is always a mobile condition of the heart: emotional and passionate. However, alongside this condition, the singer simultaneously, through a glimpse at the surrounding nature, becomes aware of himself as a subject of the pure, will-less knowledge, whose imperturbable, blessed tranquilly now enters to contrast the pressure of his always dull, always still limited willing. The sensation of this contrast, this game back and forth, is basically what expresses itself in the totality of the song and what, in general, creates the lyrical state. In this state, pure understanding, as it were, comes to us, to save us from willing and the pressures of willing. We follow along, but only moment by moment. The will, the memory of our personal goals, constantly interrupts this calm contemplation of ours, over and over again, but the next beautiful setting, in which pure will-less knowledge presents itself to us, always, once again, releases us from willing. Hence, in the song and the lyrical mood, willing (our personal interest in our own purposes) and pure contemplation in the setting which presents itself are miraculously mixed up together. We seek and imagine relationships between them both. The subjective mood, the emotional state of the will, communicates with the surroundings we contemplate, and the latter, in turn, gives its colour to our mood, in a reflex action. The true song is the expression of this entire emotional condition, mixed and divided in this way." (World as Will and Idea, I, 295)

Who can fail to recognize in this description that here the lyric has been characterized as an incompletely realized art, a leap, as it were, which seldom attains its goal, indeed, as a semi-art, whose essence must consist of the fact that the will and pure contemplation, that is, the unaesthetic and the aesthetic conditions, must be miraculously mixed up together? In contrast to this, we maintain that the entire opposition, which even Schopenhauer uses as a measurement of value to classify art, that opposition of the subjective and the objective, has generally no place in aesthetics, since the subject, the willing individual demanding his own egotistical purposes, can only be thought of as an enemy of art not as its origin.

But insofar as the subject is an artist, he is already released from his individual willing and has become, so to speak, a medium through which a subject of true being celebrates its redemption. For we need to be clear on this point, above everything else (to our humiliation or ennoblement): the entire comedy of art does not present itself for us in order to make us better or to educate us – even less so that we should be the true creators of the art world. We should really look upon ourselves as beautiful pictures and artistic projections of the true creator, and in that significance as works of art we have our highest value, for only as an aesthetic phenomena are existence and the world eternally justified, while, of course, our own consciousness of this significance of ours is no different from the consciousness which soldiers painted on canvas have of the battle portrayed there.

Hence our entire knowledge of art is basically completely illusory, because, as knowing people, we are not one with or identical to that being who, as the single creator and spectator of that comedy of art, prepares for itself an eternal enjoyment. Only to the extent that the genius in the act of artistic creation is fused with that primordial artist of the world, does he know anything about the eternal nature of art, only in that state in which (as in the weird picture of fairy tales) he can miraculously turn his eyes and contemplate himself. Now he is simultaneously subject and object, all at once poet, actor, and spectator.

6

With respect to Archilochus, learned scholarship has revealed that he introduced the folk song into literature and that, because of this achievement, he earned his place next to Homer in the universal estimation of the Greeks. But what is the folk song in comparison to the completely Apollonian epic poem? What else but the perpetuum vestigum [the eternal mark] of a union between the Apollonian and the Dionysian? Its tremendous expansion, extending to all peoples and constantly increasing with new births, testifies to us how strong that artistic duality of nature is: which, to use an analogy, leaves its trace behind in the folk song just as the orgiastic movements of a people leave their traces

in its music. Indeed, it must also be historically demonstrable how that period rich in folk songs at the same time was stirred in the strongest manner by Dionysian trends, something which we have to recognize as the foundation and precondition of folk songs.

But to begin with, we must view the folk song as the musical mirror of the world, as the primordial melody, which seeks for a parallel dream image of itself and expresses this in poetry. The melody is thus primary and universal, for which reason it can undergo many objectifications, in several texts. It is also far more important and more essential in the naïve evaluations of the people. Melody gives birth to poetry from itself, over and over again. The forms of the strophes in the folk song indicate that to us. I have always observed this phenomenon with astonishment, until I finally came up with this explanation. Whoever looks at a collection of folk songs, for example, Des Knaben Wunderhorn [The Boy's Miraculous Horn] with this theory in mind will find countless examples of how the continually fecund melody emits fiery showers of images all around. These images, with their bright colours, sudden alteration, and their wild momentum, reveal a power completely foreign to the epic illusion and its calm forward progress. From the standpoint of epic this uneven and irregular word of images in the lyric is easy to condemn – something no doubt the solemn rhapsodists of the Apollonian celebrations did in the age of Terpander.

Thus, in the poetry of the folk song we see the language of poetry most strongly pressured to imitate music. Hence, with Archilochus a new world of poetry begins, something which conflicts very profoundly with the Homeric world. Here we have demonstrated the one possible relationship between poetry and music, word and tone: word, image, and idea look for metaphorical expression in music and experience the power of music. In this sense we can distinguish two main streams in the history of the language of the Greek people: language which imitates appearance and images and language which imitates the world of music.

Let's think for a moment more deeply about the linguistic difference in colour, syntactic structure, and vocabulary between Homer and Pindar in order to grasp the significance of this contrast. It will become crystal clear to some that between Homer and Pindar the orgiastic flute melodies of Olympus must have rung out, music which even in the time of Aristotle, in the midst of an infinitely more sophisticated music, drove people into raptures of drunken enthusiasm and with their natural effects no doubt stimulated all the poetical forms of expression of contemporaries to imitate them.

I recall here a well-known phenomenon of our own times, something which strikes our aestheticians as objectionable. Again and again we experience how a Beethoven symphony makes it necessary for the individual listener to talk in images, even if it's true that the collection of different worlds of imagery created by a musical piece really looks fantastically confused, even contradictory. The most proper style of our aestheticians is to exercise their lame wits on such a collection and to overlook the phenomenon which is really worth explaining. Even when the tone poet has spoken in images about his composition, for example, when he describes a symphony as a pastoral, one movement as "A Scene by the Brook," and another as "A Frolicking Meeting of Peasants," these expressions are in any event only metaphors, images born out of the music and not some objective condition imitated by the music. These notions cannot teach us anything at all about the Dionysian content of the music and have no exclusive value alongside other pictures.

Now, we have only to transfer this process of unloading music into pictures to a large, youthful, linguistically creative population in order to sense how the strophic folk song arose and how the entire linguistic capability was stimulated by a new principle, the imitation of music. If we can thus consider the lyrical poem as the mimetic efflorescence of music in pictures and ideas, then we can now ask the following question: "What does music look like in the mirror of imagery and ideas?" It appears as the will, taking that word in Schopenhauer's sense, that is, as the opposite to the aesthetic, pure, contemplative, will-less state. Here we should differentiate as sharply as possible the idea of being from the idea of appearance. For it is impossible for music, given its nature, to be the will, because if that were the case we would have to ban music entirely from the realm of art. For the will consists of what is inherently unaesthetic. But music appears as the will.

In order to express that appearance in images, the lyric poet needs all the excitement of passion, from the whispers of affection right to the ravings of lunacy. Under the impulse to speak of

music in Apollonian metaphors, he understands all nature and himself in nature only as eternal willing, desiring, yearning. However, insofar as he interprets music in images, he is resting in the still tranquility of the sea of Apollonian observation, no matter how much everything which he contemplates through that medium of music is moving around him, pushing and driving. Indeed, if he looks at himself through that same medium, his own image reveals itself to him in a condition of emotional dissatisfaction. His own willing, yearning, groaning, and cheering are for him a metaphor which he interprets the music for himself. This is the phenomenon of the lyric poet: as an Apollonian genius he interprets the music through the image of the will, while he himself, fully released from the greed of his will, is a pure, untroubled eye of the sun.

This entire discussion firmly maintains that the lyric is just as dependent on the spirit of music as is music itself. In its complete freedom, music does not use image and idea, but only tolerates them as something additional to itself. The poetry of the lyricist can express nothing which was not already latent in the immense universality and validity of the music, which forces him to speak in images. The world symbolism of music for this very reason cannot in any way be overcome by or reduced to language, because music addresses itself symbolically to the primordial contradiction and pain in the heart of the original oneness, and thus presents in symbolic form a sphere which is above all appearances and prior to them. In comparison with music, each appearance is far more a mere metaphor. Hence, language, the organ and symbol of appearances, never ever converts the deepest core of music to something external, but always remains, as long as it involves itself with the imitation of music, only in superficial contact with the music. The full eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring us one step closer to the deepest meaning of music.

7

We must now seek assistance from all the artistic principles laid out above in order to find our way correctly through the labyrinth – a descriptive term we have to use to designate the origin of Greek tragedy. I don't think I'm saying anything illogical when I claim that the problem of this origin has not once been seriously formulated up to now, let alone solved, no matter how frequently the scattered scraps of ancient tradition have been put together in combinations with one another and then again ripped apart.

This tradition tells us very emphatically that tragedy developed out of the tragic chorus and originally consisted only of a chorus and nothing else. This fact requires us to look into the heart of this tragic chorus as the essential original drama, without allowing ourselves to be satisfied in any way with the common styles of talking about art – that the chorus is the ideal spectator or had the job of standing in for the people over against the royal area of the scene.

That last mentioned point, a conceptual explanation which sounds so lofty for many politicians (as though the invariable moral law was presented by the democratic Athenians in the people's chorus, which was always proved right in matters dealing with their kings' passionate acts of violence and excess) may have been suggested by a word from Aristotle. But such an idea has no influence on the original formation of tragedy, since all the opposition between people and ruler and every political-social issue in general is excluded from those purely religious origins. Looking with hindsight back on the classical form of the chorus known to us in Aeschylus and Sophocles we might well consider it blasphemous to talk of a premonition of the "constitutional popular representation" here. Others, however, have not been deterred from this blasphemous assertion. The ancient political organizations had no practical knowledge of a constitutional popular representation and they never once "had a hopeful premonition" of such things in their tragedies. Much more famous than this political explanation of the chorus is A. W. Schlegel's idea. He recommended that we consider the chorus to some extent as a sample embodiment of the crowd of onlookers, as the "ideal spectator." This view, combined with that historical tradition that originally the tragedy consisted entirely of the chorus, reveals itself for what it is, a crude and unscholarly, although dazzling, claim. But the glitter survives only in the compact form of the expression, from the real German prejudice for everything which is called "ideal," and from our momentary astonishment.

For we are astonished, as soon as we compare the theatre public we know well with that chorus and ask ourselves whether it would be at all possible on the basis of this public to derive some idealization analogous to the tragic chorus. We

silently deny this and then are surprised by the audacity of Schlegel's claim as well as by the totally different nature of the Greek general public. For we had always thought that the proper spectator, whoever he might be, must always remain conscious that he has a work of art in front of him, not an empirical reality. By contrast, the tragic chorus of the Greeks is required to recognize the shapes on the stage as living, existing people. The chorus of Oceanids really believes that they see the Titan Prometheus in front of them and consider themselves every bit as real as the god of the scene.

And is that supposed to be the highest and purest type of spectator, a person who, like the Oceanids, considers Prometheus vitally alive and real? Would it be a mark of the ideal spectator to run up onto the stage and free the god from his torment? We had believed in an aesthetic public and considered the individual spectator sufficiently capable, the more he was in a position to take the work of art as art, that is, aesthetically. This saying of Schlegel's indicates to us that the completely ideal spectator lets the scenic world work on him, not aesthetically at all, but vitally and empirically. "Oh, what about these Greeks!" we sigh, "they are knocking over our aesthetics!" But once we get used to that idea, we repeat Schlegel's saying every time we talk about the chorus.

But that emphatic tradition speaks here against Schlegel. The chorus in itself, without the stage, that is, the primitive form of tragedy, and that chorus of ideal spectators are not compatible. What sort of artistic style would we have if from this the idea of the spectator we derived, as its essential form, the "spectator in himself" (the pure spectator). The spectator without a play is a contradictory idea. We suspect that the birth of tragedy cannot be explained either from the high estimation of the moral intelligence of the masses or from the idea of the spectator without a play. And we consider this problem too profound to be touched by such superficial styles of commentary.

Schiller has already provided an infinitely more valuable insight into the meaning of the chorus in the famous preface to the Bride from Messina – the chorus viewed as a living wall which tragedy draws about itself in order to separate itself cleanly from the real world and to protect its ideal space and its poetical freedom for itself. With this as his main weapon Schiller fought against the common idea of naturalism, against the common demand for illustionistic dramatic poetry. While in the theatre daytime might be only artistic and stage architecture only symbolic, and the nature of the metrical language might have an ideal quality, nevertheless, on the whole, a misconception still ruled: it was not enough, Schiller claimed, that people merely tolerated as poetic freedom what was the essence of all poetry. The introduction of the chorus, according to Schiller, was the decisive step with which war was declared openly and nobly against naturalism in art.

Such a way of looking at things is the one, it strikes me, for which our age (which considers itself so superior) uses the dismissive catch phrase "pseudo-idealism." I suspect, by contrast, that with our present worship of naturalism and realism we are situated at the opposite pole from all idealism, namely, in the region of a wax works collection. In that, too, there is an art, as in certain romance novels of the present time. Only let no one pester us with the claim that with this we have overthrown the artistic "pseudo-idealism" of Schiller and Goethe.

Of course, it is an "ideal" stage on which, following Schiller's correct insight, the Greek satyr chorus, the chorus of the primitive tragedy, customarily strolled, a stage lifted high above over the real strolling stage of mortal men. For this chorus the Greeks constructed a suspended hovering framework of an imaginary natural condition and on it placed imaginary natural beings. Tragedy grew up out of this foundation and, for that very reason, has, from its inception, been spared the embarrassing business of counterfeiting reality.

That is not to say that it is a world arbitrarily fantasized somewhere between heaven and earth. It is much rather a world possessing the same reality and credibility for the devout Greek as the world of Olympus, together with its inhabitants. The satyr as the Dionysian chorus member lives in a reality permitted by religion, sanctioned by myth and culture. The fact that tragedy begins with him, that out of him the Dionysian wisdom of tragedy speaks, is a phenomenon as foreign to us here as the development of tragedy out of the chorus generally.

Perhaps we can reach a starting point for this discussion when I offer the claim that the satyr himself, the imaginary natural being, is related to the cultural person in the same way that Dionysian music is related to civilization. On this

last point Richard Wagner states that civilization is neutralized by music in the same way lamplight is by daylight. In just such a manner, I believe, the cultured Greek felt himself neutralized by the sight of the chorus of satyrs. This is the most direct effect of Dionysian tragedy: generally, the state and society, the gap between man and man give way to an invincible feeling of unity which leads back to the heart of nature.

The metaphysical consolation, which as I have already indicated, true tragedy leaves us, that at the bottom of everything, in spite of all the transformations in phenomena, life is indestructibly power and delightful, this consolation appears in lively clarity as the chorus of satyrs, the chorus of natural beings, who live, as it were, behind civilization, who cannot disappear, and who, in spite of all the changes in generations and a people's history, always remain the same. With this chorus, the profound Greek, capable of the most delicate and the most severe suffering, consoled himself, the man who looked around with a daring gaze in the middle of the terrifying destructive instincts of so-called world history and equally into the cruelty of nature and who is in danger of longing for the denial of the will of Buddhism. Art saves him, and through art life saves him. The ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its destruction of the customary manacles and boundaries of existence, contains, of course, for as long as it lasts a lethargic element, in which everything personally experienced in the past is immersed. Through this gulf of oblivion, the world of everyday reality and the Dionysian reality separate from each other. As soon as that daily reality comes back again into consciousness, one feels it as something disgusting. The fruit of this condition is an ascetic condition, in which one denies the power of the will.

In this sense the Dionysian man has similarities to Hamlet. Both have had a real glimpse into the essence of things. They have understood, and it now disgusts them to act, for their actions can change nothing in the eternal nature of things. They perceive as ridiculous or humiliating the fact that it is expected of them that they should set right a world turned upside down. The knowledge kills action, for action requires a state of being in which we are covered with the veil of illusion. That is what Hamlet has to teach us, not that really venal wisdom about John-a-Dreams, who cannot move himself to act because of too much reflection, too many possibilities, so to speak. It's not a case of reflection. No! The true knowledge, the glimpse into the cruel truth overcomes the driving motive to act, both in Hamlet as well as in the Dionysian man.

Now no consolation has any effect. His longing goes out over the world, even beyond the gods themselves, toward death. Existence is denied, together with its blazing reflection in the gods or an immortal afterlife. In the consciousness of once having glimpsed the truth, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of being; now he understands the symbolism in the fate of Ophelia; now he recognizes the wisdom of the forest god Silenus. It disgusts him.

Here the will in in the highest danger. Thus, to be saved, it comes close to the healing magician, art. Art alone can turn those thoughts of disgust at the horror or absurdity of existence into imaginary constructs, which permit living to continue. These constructs are the Sublime as the artistic mastering of the horrible and the Comic as the artistic release from disgust at the absurd. The chorus of satyrs in the dithyramb is the saving fact of Greek art. The emotional fits I have just described play themselves out by means of the world of these Dionysian attendants.

8

The satyr and the idyllic shepherd of our more recent times are both the epitome of a longing directed toward the primordial and natural, but with what a strong fearless grip the Greek held onto his men from the woods, and how timidly and weakly modern man toys with the flattering image of a delicate and gentle flute-playing shepherd! The Greek who had not been worked on as yet by any knowledge which kept culture imprisoned saw nature in his satyr, and so he did not yet mistake satyrs for apes. Quite the contrary: the satyr was the primordial image of man, the expression of his highest and strongest emotions, as an inspired reveler, enraptured by the approach of the god, as a sympathetic companion, in whom the suffering of the god was repeated, as a messenger bringing wisdom from the deepest heart of nature, as a perceptible image of the sexual omnipotence of nature, which the Greek was accustomed to observing with reverent astonishment.

The satyr was something sublime and divine – that's how he must have seemed especially to the painfully broken gaze of the Dionysian man, who

would have been insulted by our well groomed fictitious shepherd. His eye lingered with sublime satisfaction on the exposed, vigorous, and magnificent script of nature. Here the illusion of culture was wiped away by the primordial image of man. Here the real man revealed himself, the bearded satyr who cried out with joy to his god. In comparison with him the man of culture was reduced to a misleading caricature. Schiller was also right to see in these matters the start of tragic art: the chorus is a living wall against the pounding reality, because it – the satyr chorus – presents existence more genuinely, truly, and completely than does the civilized person, who generally considers himself the only reality.

The sphere of poetry does not lie beyond this world as the fantastic impossibility of a poet's brain. It wants to be exactly the opposite, the unadorned expression of the truth, and it must therefore cast off the false costume of that truth thought up by the man of culture. The contrast of this real truth of nature and the cultural lie which behaves as if it is the only reality is similar to the contrast between the eternal core of things, the thing-in-itself, and the total world of appearances. And just as tragedy, with its metaphysical consolation, draws attention to the eternal life of that existential core in the continuing destruction of appearances, so the symbolism of the satyr chorus already expresses metaphorically that primordial relationship between the thing-in- itself and appearances. That idyllic shepherd of modern man is only a counterfeit, the totality of cultural illusions which he counts as nature. The Dionysian Greek wants truth and nature in their highest power: he seems himself transformed into a satyr.

The enraptured horde of those who served Dionysus rejoiced under the influence of such moods and insights, whose power transformed them before their very eyes, so that they imagined themselves as restored natural geniuses, as satyrs. The later constitution of the tragic chorus is the artistic imitation of that natural phenomenon, in which now a division was surely necessary between the Dionysian spectators and those under the Dionysian enchantment. But we must always remind ourselves that the public in Attic tragedy re-discovered itself in chorus of the orchestra and that basically there was no opposition between the public and the chorus. For everything is only a huge sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs or of those people who permit themselves to be represented by these satyrs.

We must now appropriate that saying of Schlegel's in a deeper sense. The chorus is the "ideal spectator," insofar as it is the only onlooker, the person who sees the visionary world of the scene. A public of spectators, as we know it, was unknown to the Greeks. In their theatre, given the way the spectators' space was built up in terraces, raised up in concentric rings, it was possible for everyone quite literally to look out over the collective cultural world around him and with a complete perspective to imagine himself a member of the chorus. Given this insight, we can call the chorus, in its primitive stages of the prototypical tragedy, the self-reflection of Dionysian men, a phenomenon which we can make out most clearly in the experience of the actor, who, if he is really gifted, sees perceptibly before his eyes the image of the role he has to play, hovering there for him to grasp.

The satyr chorus is, first and foremost, a vision of the Dionysian mass, just as, in turn, the world of the acting area is a vision of this satyr chorus. The power of this vision is strong enough to dull and desensitize the impression of "reality," the sight of the cultured people ranged in their rows of seats all around. The form of the Greek theatre is a reminder of a solitary mountain valley. The architecture of the scene appears as an illuminated picture of a cloud, which the Bacchae gaze upon, as they swarm down from the mountain heights, as the majestic setting in the middle of which the image of Dionysus is revealed.

This primitive artistic illusion, which we are putting into words here to explain the tragic chorus, is, from the perspective of our scholarly views about the basic artistic process, almost offensive, although nothing can be more obvious than that the poet is only a poet because of the fact that he sees himself surrounded by shapes which live and act in front of him and into whose innermost being he gazes. Through some peculiar weakness in our modern talent, we are inclined to imagine that primitive aesthetic phenomenon in too complicated and abstract a manner.

For the true poet, metaphor is not a rhetorical trope, but a representative image which really hovers in front of him in the place of an idea. The character is for him not a totality put together from individual traits collected bit by bit, but a living person, insistently there before his eyes, which differs from the similar vision of the painter only through its continued further living and acting. Why does Homer give us descriptions so much

more vivid than all the poets? Because he sees so much more around him. We speak about poetry so abstractly because we all tend to be poor poets. The aesthetic phenomenon is fundamentally simple: if someone just possesses the capacity to see a living game going on and to live all the time surrounded by hordes of ghosts, then that man is a poet. If someone just feels the urge to change himself and to speak out from other bodies and souls, then that person is a dramatist.

Dionysian excitement is capable of communicating this artistic talent to an entire multitude, so that they see themselves surrounded by such a horde of ghosts with which they know they are innerly one. This dynamic of the tragic chorus is the original dramatic phenomenon: to see oneself transformed before one's eyes and now to act as if one really had entered another body, another character. This process stands right at the beginning of the development of drama. Here is something different from the rhapsodist, who never fuses with his images, but, like the painter, sees them with an observing eye outside himself. In this drama there is already a surrender of individuality by entering into a strange nature. And this phenomenon breaks out like an epidemic; an entire horde feels itself enchanted in this way.

For this reason the dithyramb is essentially different from every other choral song. The virgins who move solemnly to Apollo's temple with laurel branches in their hands singing a processional song as they go, remain who they are and retain their names as citizens. The dithyrambic chorus is a chorus of transformed people, for whom their civic past, their social position, is completely forgotten. They have become their god's timeless servants, living beyond all regions of society. All other choral lyrics of the Greeks are only an immense intensification of the Apollonian solo singer; whereas in the dithyramb a congregation of unconscious actors stands before us, who look upon each other as transformed. Enchantment is the precondition for all dramatic art. In this enchantment the Dionysian reveler sees himself as a satyr, and then, in turn, as a satyr he looks at his god. That is, in his transformed state he sees a new vision outside himself as an Apollonian fulfillment of his condition. With this new vision drama is complete.

With this knowledge in mind, we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which over and over again constantly discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images. Those choral passages interspersed through tragedy are thus, as it were, the maternal bosom of the entire dialogue so-called, that is, of the totality of the stage word, the drama itself. This primordial basis of tragedy sends its vision pulsing out in several discharges following one after the other, a vision which is entirely a dream image and therefore epic in nature, but, on the other hand, as an objectification of a Dionysian state, it presents not the Apollonian consolation in illusion, but its opposite, the smashing of individuality and becoming one with primordial being. With this, drama is the Apollonian projection of Dionysian knowledge and effects, and thus is separated by an immense gulf from epic.

This conception of ours provides a full explanation for the chorus of Greek tragedy, the symbol for the total frenzied Dionysian multitude. While, given what we are used to with the role of the chorus on the modern stage, especially the chorus in opera, we are totally unable to grasp how this tragic chorus could be older, more original, even more important than the real "action" (as tradition tell us so clearly), while we cannot then figure out why, given that traditionally high importance and original preeminence, that chorus would be put together only out of lowly serving creatures, at first only out of goat-like satyrs, and while for us the orchestra in front of the acting area remains a constant enigma, we have now come to the insight that the acting area together with the action is basically and originally thought of only as a vision, that the single "reality" is the chorus itself, which creates the vision out of itself and speaks of that with the entire symbolism of dance, tone, and word.

This chorus in its vision gazes at its lord and master Dionysus and is thus always the chorus of servants. The chorus sees how Dionysus, the god, suffers and glorifies himself, and thus it does not itself act. But in this role, as complete servants in relation to the god, the chorus is nevertheless the highest (that is, the Dionysian) expression of nature and, like nature, thus in its frenzy speaks the language of oracular wisdom, as the sympathetic as well as wise person reporting the truth from the heart of the world. So arises that fantastic and apparently offensive figure of the wise and frenzied satyr, who is, at the same time, "the naïve man" in contrast to the god: an image of nature and its strongest drives, a symbol of that

and at the same time the announcer of its wisdom and art: musician, poet, dancer, visionary – in a single person.

According to this insight and to the tradition, Dionysus, the essential stage hero and centre of the vision, was not really present in the very oldest periods of tragedy, but was only imagined as present. That is, originally tragedy was only "chorus" and not "drama." Later the attempt was made to show the god as real and then to present in a way visible to every eye the form of the vision together with the transfiguring setting. At that point "drama" in the strict sense begins. Now the dithyrambic chorus takes on the task of stimulating the mood of the listeners right up to the Dionysian level, so that when the tragic hero appeared on the stage, they did not see something like an awkward masked person but a visionary shape born, as it were, out of their own enchantment.

If we imagine Admetus thinking deeply about his recently departed wife Alcestis and pining away in his spiritual contemplation of her, and how suddenly is led up to him an image of a woman of similar form and similar gait, but in disguise, if we imagine his sudden trembling anticipation, his emotional comparisons, his instinctive conviction – then we have an analogy to the sensation with which the aroused Dionysian spectator sees the god stride onto the stage, with whose suffering he has already become one. Spontaneously he transfers the whole picture of the god, which like magic trembles in his soul, onto that masked form and dissolves the reality of that figure as if in a ghostly unreality. This is the Apollonian dream state, in which the world of day veils itself and a new world, clearer, more comprehensible, more moving than the first, and yet shadow-like generates itself anew in a continuing series of changes before our eyes.

With this in mind, we can recognize in tragedy a drastic contrast of styles: speech, colour, movement, dynamics of speech appear in the Dionysian lyric of the chorus and also in the Apollonian dream world of the scene as expressive spheres completely separate from each other. The Apollonian illusions, in which Dionysus objectifies himself, are no longer "an eternal sea, a changing weaving motion, a glowing sense of living" (as is the case with the music of the chorus), no longer those powers which are only felt and cannot be turned into poetic images, in which the frenzied servant of Dionysus feels the approach of the god. Now, from the acting area the clarity and solemnity of the epic form speaks to him; now Dionysus no longer speaks through forces but as an epic hero, almost with the language of Homer.

9

Everything which comes to the surface in the Apollonian part of Greek tragedy, in the dialogue, looks simple, translucent, and beautiful. In this sense the dialogue is an image of the Greeks, whose nature reveals itself in dancing, because in dancing the greatest power is only latent, betraying its presence in the lithe and rich movement. The language of the Sophoclean heroes surprises us by its Apollonian clarity and brightness, so that we immediately imagine that we are glimpsing the innermost basis of their being, with some astonishment that the path to this foundation is so short.

However, once we look away from the character of the hero as it surfaces and becomes perceptible (a character which is basically nothing more than a light picture cast onto a dark wall, that is, an illusion through and through) we penetrate further into the myth which projects itself in this bright reflection. At that point we suddenly experience a phenomenon which is the reverse of a well known optical one. When we make a determined attempt to look directly at the sun and turn away blinded, we have dark coloured specks in front of our eyes, like a remedy. Those illuminated illusory pictures of the Sophoclean heroes are the reverse of that: briefly put, the Apollonian of the mask, necessary creations of a glimpse into the inner terror of nature, are like bright spots to heal us from the horrifying night of the disabled gaze. Only in this sense can we think of correctly grasping the serious and significant idea of "Greek serenity"; whereas nowadays we run into the false idea of this as a condition of safe contentment with all of life's paths and bridges.

The most painful figure of the Greek stage, the unlucky Oedipus, is understood by Sophocles as the noble man who is destined for error and misery in spite of his wisdom, but who at the end through his immense suffering exerts a beneficial effect around him which is effective on those different from him. The noble man does not sin – that's what the profound poet wishes to tell us:

through Oedipus' actions every law, every natural principle of order, indeed, the entire moral world may collapse, but because of these actions a higher circle of consequences is created, which will found a new world on the ruins of the old world which has been overthrown. Insofar as the poet is also a religious thinker, that is what he says to us. As a poet, he shows us first a wonderfully complicated legal knot, which the judge, link by link, undoes, in the process destroying himself. The real joy for the Greek in this dialectical solution is so great that a sense of powerful serenity invests the entire work, which breaks the sting of the dreadful preconditions which started the process.

In Oedipus in Colonus we run into this same serenity, but elevated by an immeasurable transformation. Unlike the old man afflicted with excessive suffering, a man who merely suffers as the victim of everything which happens to him, now we have the unearthly serenity which descends from the sphere of the gods and indicates to us that the hero in his purely passive conduct achieves his highest action, which reaches out far over his own life (whereas his conscious striving in his earlier life led him to pure passivity). Thus for the mortal eye the inextricably tangled legal knot of the Oedipus story is slowly untangled, and the most profound human joy suffuses us with this divine dialectical companion piece.

If we have here correctly explained the poet, one can still ask whether the content of the myth has been exhausted in that explanation. And here we see that the entire conception of the poet is nothing other than that illuminated image which nature as healer holds up before us after a glimpse into the abyss. Oedipus the murderer of his father, the husband of his mother, Oedipus the solver of the riddle of the sphinx! What does the secret trinity of these fatal events tell us? There is a very ancient folk belief, especially in Persia, that a wise magus could be born only out of incest. With hindsight on Oedipus as the solver of riddles and emancipator of his mother, what we have to interpret right away is the fact that right there where, through prophecy and magical powers, the spell of present and future is broken, that rigid law of individuation and the essential magic of nature in general, then an immense natural horror (for example, incest) must have come first as the original cause. For how could we compel nature to yield up its secrets, if not for the fact that we fight back against her and win, that is, if not for the fact that we commit unnatural actions?

I see this idea stamped out in that dreadful trinity of Oedipus's three fates: the same man who solved the riddle of nature (the ambiguous sphinx) must also break the most sacred natural laws when he murders his father and marries his mother. Indeed, the myth seems to want to whisper to us that wisdom – especially Dionysian wisdom – is something horrific and hostile to nature, that a man who through his knowledge pushes nature into the destructive abyss, has to experience in himself the disintegration of nature. "The lance of knowledge turns itself against the wise man. Wisdom is a crime against nature." The myth calls out such frightening statements to us. But, like a ray of sunlight, the Greek poet touches the sublime and fearful Memnon's Column of Myth, so that the myth suddenly begins to play out Sophoclean melodies.

Now I'm going to compare the glory of passivity with the glory of activity which illuminates Aeschylus's Prometheus.. What Aeschylus the thinker had to say to us here, but what Aeschylus as a poet could only hint at through a metaphorical picture – that's what young Goethe knew how to reveal in the bold words of his Prometheus:

"Here I sit – I make men in my own image,
a race like me,
to suffer, to weep,
to enjoy life and rejoice,
and then to pay no attention, like me."

Man, rising up into something Titanic, is victorious over his own culture and compels the gods to unite with him, because in his self-controlled wisdom he holds their existence and the limits to their authority in his hand. The most marvelous thing in that poem of Prometheus, which is, according to its basic concepts, is a hymn celebrating impiety, is, however, the deep Aeschylean impulse for justice. The immeasurable suffering of the brave "individual", on the one hand, and, on the other, the peril faced by the gods, even a presentiment of the twilight of the gods, the compelling power for a metaphysical oneness, for a reconciliation of both these worlds of suffering – all this is a powerful reminder of the central point and major claim of the Aeschylean world view, which sees fate (Moira) enthroned over gods and men as eternal justice.

With respect to the astonishing daring with which Aeschylus places the Olympian world on

his scales of justice, we must remind ourselves that the deep-thinking Greek had an unshakably firm basis for metaphysical thinking in his mystery cults, and that he could unload all his skeptical moods onto the Olympians. The Greek artist, in particular, in looking back on these divinities, felt a dark sense of reciprocal dependency. And this sense is symbolized especially in Aeschylus's Prometheus. The Titanic artist (Prometheus) found in himself the defiant belief that he could make men and, at the very least, destroy Olympian gods – all this through his higher wisdom, which he, of course, was compelled to atone for in eternal suffering. The magnificent capability of the great genius, for whom eternal suffering itself is too cheap a price, the harsh pride of the artist – that is the content and soul of Aeschylean poetry; whereas, Sophocles in his Oedipus makes his case by sounding out the victory song of the holy man.

But also this meaning which Aeschylus gave the myth does not fill the astonishing depth of its terror. The artist's joy in being, the serenity of artistic creativity in spite of that impiety, is only a light picture of cloud and sky, which mirrors itself in a dark ocean of sorrow. The Prometheus saga is a primordial possession of the Aryan population collectively and documentary evidence of their talent for the profoundly tragic. In fact, it could be the case that for the Aryan being this myth has the same defining meaning as the myth of the Fall has for the Semitic peoples, and that both myths are, to some degree, related, as brother and sister.

The pre-condition of this Prometheus myth is the extraordinary value which a naïve humanity associates with fire as the true divine protector of that rising culture. But the fact that man freely controls fire and does not receive it merely as a gift from heaven, as a stirring lightning flash or warming rays of the sun, appeared to these contemplative primitive men as an outrage, a crime against divine nature. And so right there the first philosophical problem posed an awkward insoluble contradiction between man and god and pushed it right up to the door of that culture, like a boulder. The best and loftiest thing which mankind can share is achieved through a crime, and people must now accept the further consequences, namely, the entire flood of suffering and troubles with which the offended divine presences afflict the nobly ambitious human race. Such things must happen – an austere notion which, through the value which it gives to a crime, stands in a curious contrast to the Semitic myth of the Fall, in which curiosity, lying falsehoods, temptation, lust, in short, a row of predominantly female emotions are look upon as the origin of evil.

What distinguishes the Aryan conception is the lofty view of an active transgression as the essentially Promethean virtue. With this, the ethical basis of pessimistic tragedy is established together with the justification of human evil, that is, human guilt as the penalty for that sin. The impiety in the essence of things – that's what the thinking Aryan is not inclined to quibble away. The contradiction in the heart of the world reveals itself to him as the interpenetration of different worlds, for example, a divine and human world, each one of which is right in its separate way but which must suffer for its individuality as the two worlds come close together.

With this heroic push of the individual into the universal, with this attempt to stride out over the limits of individuation and to wish to be oneself a world being, man suffers in himself the contradiction hidden in things, that is, he violates the laws and he suffers. Just as among the Aryans crime is seen as male, and among the Semites sin is seen as female, so the original crime was committed by a man, the original sin by a woman. In this connection, the chorus of witches [in Goethe's Faust] says:

"We're not so particular in what we say:
Woman takes a thousand steps to get her way.
But no matter how quickly she hurries on,
With just one leap the man will get it done."

Anyone who understands this innermost core of the Prometheus saga, namely, the imperative requirement that the individual striving like a Titan has to fall into crime, must also sense at the same time the un-Apollonian quality of this pessimistic concept. For Apollo wants to make these separate individual worlds tranquil precisely because he establishes the border line between them and, with his demands for self-knowledge and moderation, always reminds us once again of the most sacred laws of the world. However, to prevent this Apollonian tendency from freezing form into Egyptian stiffness and frigidity and to prevent the movement of the entire ocean from dying away, through the attempts of the Apollonian tendency to prescribe to the individual waves their path and extent, from time to time the high flood of the Dionysian

destroys those small circles in which the one-sided Apollonian will seeks to confine the Greek spirit. Now suddenly a tidal wave of the Dionysian takes the single small individual crests on its back, just as the brother of Prometheus, the Titan Atlas, shouldered the Earth. This Titanic impulse to become something like the Atlas of all individuals and to bear them on one's wide back, higher and higher, further and further, is the common link between the Promethean and the Dionysian.

In this view, the Aeschylean Prometheus is a Dionysian mask; while, in that previously mentioned deep desire for justice Aeschylus betrays to those who understand his paternal descent from Apollo, the god of individuation and the limits of justice. And the double nature of the Aeschylean Prometheus, his simultaneously Dionysian and Apollonian nature, can be expressed in an understandable way with the following words: "Everything present is just and unjust and both aspects are equally justified."
That is your world! That's what one calls a world!

10

It is an incontestable tradition that Greek tragedy in its oldest form had as its subject only the suffering of Dionysus and that for a long time later the individually present stage heroes were only Dionysus. But with the same certainty we can assert that right up to the time of Euripides Dionysus never ceased being the tragic hero, that all the famous figures of the Greek theatre, like Prometheus, Oedipus, and so on, are only masks of that primordial hero Dionysus. The fact that behind all these masks stands a divinity, that is the fundamental reason for the frequently admired characteristic "ideality" of those well known figures.

Someone (I don't know who) asserted that all individuals, as individuals, have to be taken as comic and thus untragic, that the Greeks in general could not tolerate individuals in their tragic theatre. In fact, they seem to have felt this way. That Platonic distinction between and evaluation of the "idea" in contrast to the "idol" in connection with likenesses lies deeply grounded in the nature of the Greeks. But for us to make use of Plato's terminology, we would have to talk of the tragic figures of the Greek stage in something like the following terms: the one truly real Dionysus appears in a multiplicity of shapes, in the mask of a struggling hero and, as it were, bound up in the nets of the individual will. So now the god made manifest talks and acts in such a way that he looks like an erring, striving, suffering individual. The fact that he appears in general with this epic definition and clarity is the effect of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams, who indicates to the chorus its Dionysian state by this metaphorical appearance.

In reality, however, that hero is the suffering Dionysus of the mysteries, that god who experiences the suffering of the individual in himself, the god about whom the amazing myths tell how he, as a child, was dismembered by the Titans and now in this condition is venerated as Zagreus. Through this is revealed the idea that this dismemberment, the essentially Dionysian suffering, is like a transformation into air, water, earth, and fire, that we also have to look upon the condition of individuation as the source and basis for all suffering, as something in itself reprehensible. From the laughing of this Dionysus arose the Olympian gods, from his tears arose mankind. In that existence as dismembered god Dionysus has the dual nature of a cruelly savage daemon and a lenient, gentle master. The initiates in the Eleusinian mysteries hoped for a rebirth of Dionysus, which we now can understand as the mysterious end of individuation. The initiate's song of jubilation cried out to this approaching third Dionysus. And only with this hope was there a ray of joy on the face of the fragmented world, torn apart into individuals, just as myth reveals in the picture of the eternal sorrow of sunken Demeter, who rejoices again for the first time when someone says to her that she might be able once again to give birth to Dionysus. In these established concepts we already have assembled all the components of a profound and pessimistic world view, together with the mysterious teachings of tragedy: the basic acknowledgement of the unity of all existing things, the idea of individuation as the ultimate foundation of all evil, art as the joyful hope that the spell of individuation is there for us to break, as a premonition of a re-established unity.

It has been pointed out earlier that the Homeric epic is the poetry of Olympian culture, with which it sang its own song of victory over the terrors of the fight against the Titans. Now, under the overwhelming influence of tragic poetry, the Homeric myths were newly reborn and show in this metamorphosis that by now the Olympian culture is overcome by an even deeper world

view. The defiant Titan Prometheus reported to his Olympian torturer that for the first time his rule was threatened by the highest danger, unless he quickly joined forces with him. In Aeschylus we acknowledge the union of the frightened Zeus, worried about the end of his power, with the Titan.

Thus the earlier age of the Titans is belatedly brought back from Tartarus into the light once more. The philosophy of wild and naked nature looks with the unconcealed countenance of truth at the myths of the Homeric world dancing past it. Before the flashing eyes of this goddess, those myths grow pale and tremble, until they press the mighty fist of the Dionysian artist into the service of the new divinity. The Dionysian truth takes over the entire realm of myth as the symbol of its knowledge and speaks of this knowledge, partly in the public culture of the tragedy and partly in the secret celebrations of the dramatic mystery celebrations, but always in the disguise of the old myths. What power was it which liberated Prometheus from his vultures and transformed myth to a vehicle of Dionysian wisdom? It was the Herculean power of music. Music, which attained its highest manifestation in tragedy, had the power to interpret myth with a new significance in the most profound manner, something we have already described before as the most powerful capacity of music.

For it is the lot of every myth gradually to creep into the crevice of an assumed historical reality and to become analyzed as a unique fact in answer to the historical demands of some later time or other. The Greek were already fully on their way to labeling cleverly and arbitrarily the completely mythical dreams of their youth as historical, pragmatic, and youthful history. For this is the way religions tend to die out, namely, when the mythical pre-conditions of a religion, under the strong, rational eyes of an orthodox dogmatism become classified as a closed totality of historical events and people begin anxiously to defend the credibility of their myths, but to resist the naturally continuing life and growth of those myths, and when the feeling for the myth dies out and in its place the claim to put religion on a historical footing steps onto the scene.

The newly born genius of Dionysian music now seized these dying myths, and in its hands myth blossomed again, with colours which it had never shown before, with a scent which stirred up a longing premonition of a metaphysical world. After this last flourishing, myth collapsed, its leaves grew pale, and soon the mocking Lucians of antiquity grabbed up the flowers, scattered around by all winds, colourless and withered. Through tragedy myth attains its most profound content, its most expressive form. It lifts itself up again, like a wounded hero, and with the excessive power and wise tranquilly of a dying man, its eyes burn with its last powerful light.

What did you want, you rascal Euripides, when you sought to force this dying man once more into your service? He died under your powerful hands. And now you had to use a counterfeit, masked myth, which was able only to dress itself up with the old splendour, like Hercules's monkey. And as myth died with you, so died the genius of music as well. Even though you plundered with greedy hands all the gardens of music, you achieved only a counterfeit masked music. And because you abandoned Dionysus, you were then abandoned by Apollo. Even if you hunted out all the passions from their beds and charmed them into your circle, even though you sharpened and filed a really sophisticated dialectic for the speeches of your heroes, nevertheless your heroes have only counterfeit, masked passions and speak only a counterfeit, masked language.

11

Greek tragedy died in a manner different from all its ancient sister arts: it died by suicide, as a result of an insoluble (hence tragic) conflict; whereas, all the others passed away in advanced old age with the most beautiful and tranquil deaths. If it is an appropriately happy natural condition to depart from life with beautiful descendants and without any painful strains in one's life, the end of those ancient artistic genres manifests to us such a fortunate natural state of things. They disappeared slowly, and their more beautiful children were already standing there before their dying gaze, impatiently lifting their heads in courageous gestures. By contrast, with the death of Greek tragedy there was created an immense emptiness, profoundly felt everywhere. Just as the Greek sailors at the time of Tiberius heard from some isolated island the shattering cry "The great god Pan is dead," so now, like a painful lament, rang out throughout the Greek world, "Tragedy is dead! Poetry itself is lost with it! Away, away with you, you stunted,

emaciated epigones! Off with you to hell, so you can for once eat your fill of the crumbs from your former masters!"

If now a new form of art blossomed which paid tribute to tragedy as its predecessor and mistress, it was looked upon with fright, because while it carried the characteristics of its mother, they were the same ones she had shown in her long death struggle. Tragedy's death struggle was fought by Euripides, and this later art form is known as New Attic Comedy. In it the atrophied form of tragedy lived on, as a monument to tragedy's extremely laborious and violent death.

Looking at things this way makes understandable the passionate fondness the poets of the newer comedies felt for Euripides. Thus, Philemon's wish (to be hanged immediately so that he could seek out Euripides in the underworld, provided only he could be convinced that the dead man was still in possession of his wits) is no longer something strange. However, if we ask ourselves to indicate, briefly and without claiming to say anything in detail, what Euripides might have in common with Menander and Philemon and what was so excitingly exemplary and effective for them in Euripides, it is enough to say that the spectator in Euripides is brought up onto the stage. Anyone who recognizes the material out of which the Promethean tragedians before Euripides created their heroes and how remote from them was any intention of bringing the true mask of reality onto the stage will see clearly the totally deviant tendencies of Euripides.

As a result of Euripides, the man of ordinary life pushed his way out of the spectators' space and up onto the acting area. The mirror in which earlier only great and bold features had been shown now displayed a painful fidelity which conscientiously reflected the unsuccessful features of nature. Odysseus, the typical Greek of the older art, now sank in the hands of the newer poets into the figure of Graeculus, who from now on stands right at the centre of dramatic interest as the good hearted, clever slave. What Euripides in Aristophanes' Frogs gives himself credit for as a service, namely, that through his household medicines he freed tragic art of its pompous hustle and bustle, that point we can trace above all in his tragic heroes.

Essentially the spectator now saw and heard his double on the Euripidean stage and was happy that that character understood how to talk so well. But this was not the only delight. People themselves learned from Euripides how to speak. He praises himself on this very point in the contest with Aeschylus – how through him the people learned to observe in an artistic way, with the keenest sophistication, to judge, and to draw consequences. Because of this complete transformation in public language he also made the new comedy possible. For from that time on there was nothing mysterious about how ordinary life could appear on stage and what language it would use.

Middle-class mediocrity, on which Euripides built all his political hopes, now came into prominence. Up to that point, in tragedy the demi-god and in comedy the intoxicated satyr or semi-human had determined the nature of the language. And so the Aristophanic Euripides gave himself high praise for how he presented common, well-known, ordinary living and striving, which any person was capable of judging. If now the entire crowd philosophized, administered their lands and goods with tremendous astuteness, and carried on their own legal matters, well then, he claimed, that was to his credit and the achievement of the wisdom which he had drummed into the people.

The new comedy could now direct its attention to such a prepared and enlightened crowd, for whom Euripides became, to some extent, the choir master. Only this time the chorus of spectators had to have practice. As soon as the chorus was well trained to sing in the Euripidean musical key, a style of drama like a chess game arose, the new comedy, with its continuing triumph of sly shrewdness. But Euripides, the leader of the chorus, was incessantly praised. Indeed, people would have let themselves be killed in order to learn more from him, if they had not been aware that tragic poets were just as dead as tragedy itself.

With tragedy the Greeks had surrendered their faith in immortality, not merely the faith in an ideal past, but also the faith in an ideal future. The saying from the well- known written epitaph, "as an old man negligent and trivial" is applicable also to the old age of Hellenism. The instantaneous, the witty, the foolish, and the capricious – these are its loftiest divinities, the fifth state, that of the slave (or at least the feelings of a slave) now come to rule. And if it is possible to talk still of a "Greek serenity," it is the serenity of the slave, who has no idea how to take responsibility for anything difficult, how to strive

for anything great, or how to value anything in the past or future higher than the present.

It was this appearance of "Greek serenity" which so outraged the profound and fearful natures of the first four centuries of Christianity. To them this feminine flight from seriousness and terror, this cowardly self-satisfaction with comfortable consumption, seemed not only despicable but also the essentially anti-Christian frame of mind. And to the influence of this outrage we can ascribe the fact that the view of Greek antiquity as a time of rose-coloured serenity lasted for centuries with almost invincible tenacity, as if Greek antiquity had never produced a sixth century, with its birth of tragedy, its mystery cults, its Pythagoras and Heraclitus, indeed, as if the artistic works of the great age simply did not exist – although these works, each and every one of them, cannot be explained at all on the grounds of such a senile joy in existence and serenity, moods appropriate to a slave, or of things which testify to a completely different world view as the basis of their existence.

Finally, when it is asserted that Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage in order to make him really capable for the first time of judging drama, it may appear as if the older tragic art had not resolved its false relationship to the spectator, and people might be tempted to value the radical tendency of Euripides to attain an appropriate relationship between the art work and the public as a progressive step beyond Sophocles. However, the "public" is only a word and not at all a constant, firm thing of value. Why should an artist be duty-bound to accommodate himself to a power whose strength is only in numbers?

And if, with respect to his talent and intentions, he senses that he is superior to every one of these spectators, how could he feel more respect for the common expression of all these capacities inferior to his own than for the most highly talented individual spectator. To tell the truth, no Greek artist handled his public over a long lifetime with greater daring and self-satisfaction than Euripides. As the masses threw themselves at his feet, he nonetheless, with a sublime act of defiance, threw his own individual attitudes in their faces, those same attitudes with which he had conquered the masses. If this genius had had the slightest reverence for the pandemonium of the public, he would have broken apart under the cudgel blows of his failures long before the middle of his lifetime.

Taking this into account, we see that our expression – Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage, in order to make the spectator capable of making judgments – was only provisional and that we have to seek out a deeper understanding of his dramatic tendencies. By contrast, it is well known everywhere how Aeschylus and Sophocles during their lifetime and, indeed, well beyond that, stood in full possession of popular favour, and thus, given these predecessors of Euripides, there is no point in talking about a misunderstanding between the art work and the public. What drove the richly talented artist (Euripides), constantly under the urge to create, away from the path above which shone the sun of the greatest poetic names and the cloudless sky of popular approval? What curious consideration of the spectator led him to go against the spectator? How could he be contemptuous of his public out of a high respect for his public?

The solution to the riddle posed immediately above is this: Euripides felt himself as a poet higher than the masses, but not higher than two of his spectators. He brought the masses up onto the stage. Those two spectators he honoured as the only judges capable of rendering a verdict and as the masters of all his art. Following their instructions and reminders, he transposed the entire world of feelings, passions, and experiences, which up to that point had appeared in the rows of spectators as an invisible chorus in every celebratory presentation, into the souls of his stage heroes. Following the demands of these two judges, he sought out for his heroes new characters, a new language, and a new tone. In the vote of these two spectators alone he heard judgment pronounced on his creation, just as much as he heard encouragement promising victory, when he saw himself once again condemned by the justice of the general public.

The first of these two spectators is Euripides himself, Euripides the thinker, not the poet. Of him we can say that the extraordinarily richness of his critical talent, like that of Lessing, constantly stimulated, even if it did not create, an additional productive artistic drive. With this talent, with all the clarity and agility of his critical thinking, Euripides sat in the theatre and struggled to recognize the masterpieces of his great predecessors, as with a painting darkened by age, feature by feature, line by line. And here he encountered something familiar to those who know the profound secrets of Aeschylean tragedy: he became aware of something incommensurable

in each feature and in each line, a certain deceptive clarity and, at the same time, an enigmatic depth, the infinity of the background.

The clearest figure still always had a comet's tail attached to it, which seemed to hint at the unknown, the inexplicable. The same duality lay over the construction of the drama, as well as over the meaning of the chorus. And how ambiguously the solution of the ethical problems remained for him. How questionable the handling of the myths! How unequal the division of luck and disaster! Even in the language of the old tragedies there was a great deal he found offensive or, at least, enigmatic. He especially found too much pomp and circumstance for simple relationships, too many figures of speech and monstrosities for the straightforward characters. So he sat there in the theatre, full of uneasy thoughts, and, as a spectator, he came to realize that he did not understand his great predecessors. Since his reason counted for him as the root of all enjoyment and creativity, he had to ask himself and look around to see if there was anyone who thought the way he did and could in the same way attest to that incommensurability of the old drama.

But the public, including the best individuals among them, met him only with a suspicious smile. No one could explain to him why his reflections about and objections to the great masters might be correct. And in this agonizing condition he found the other spectator, who did not understand tragedy and therefore did not value it. United with him, Euripides could dare to begin emerging from his isolation to fight the immense battle against the art works of Aeschylus and Sophocles – not with critical writings, but as a dramatic poet, who sets up the presentation of his tragedy in opposition to the tradition.

12

Before we designate this other spectator by name, let's linger here a moment to reconsider that characteristic duality and incommensurability at the heart of Aeschylean tragedy (something we described earlier). Let us think about how strange we find the chorus and the hero of those tragedies, which were not able to reconcile with what we are used to or with our traditions, until we recognized that duality itself as the origin and essence of Greek tragedy, as the expression of two artistic drives woven together, the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

To cut that primordial and all-powerful Dionysian element out of tragedy and to rebuild tragedy as a pure, new, and un-Dionysian art, morality, and world view – that has now revealed itself to us very clearly as the tendency of Euripides. Near the end of his life, Euripides himself propounded as emphatically as possible the question about the value and meaning of this tendency in a myth to his contemporaries. Should the Dionysian exist at all? Should we not eradicate it forcefully from Greek soil? Of course we should, the poet says to us, if only it were possible, but the god Dionysus is too powerful. The most intelligent opponent, like Pentheus in the Bacchae, is unexpectedly charmed by Dionysus and runs from him in this enchanted state to his destruction.

The judgment of the two old men, Cadmus and Tiresias, seems also to be the judgment of the aged poet: the mind of the cleverest individual does not throw away that old folk tradition, that eternally propagating reverence for Dionysus; indeed, where such amazing powers are concerned, it is appropriate at least to demonstrate a diplomatically prudent show of joining in. But even with that, the god might still possibly take offense at such a lukewarm participation and transform the diplomat finally into a dragon (as happens here with Cadmus).

The poet tells us this, a poet who fought throughout his long life against Dionysus with heroic force, only to conclude his life finally with a glorification of his opponent and a suicide, like a man suffering from vertigo who, in order to escape the dreadful dizziness, which he can no longer endure, throws himself off a tower. That tragedy is a protest against the practicality of his artistic program, and that program had already succeeded! A miracle had taken place: just when the poet recanted, his program was already victorious. Dionysus had already been chased off the tragic stage, and by a daemonic power speaking out from Euripides. But Euripides was, to some extent, only a mask. The divinity which spoke out of him was not Dionysus, and not Apollo, but an entirely new-born daemon called Socrates.

This is the new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic. And from this contrast, Greek tragedy perished as a work of art. No matter now how much Euripides might seek to console us with his retraction, he was unsuccessful. The most magnificent temple lay in ruins. What use to us

are the laments of the destroyer and his awareness that it had been the most beautiful of all temples? And even if Euripides himself, as a punishment, has been turned into a dragon by the artistic critics of all ages, who can be satisfied with this paltry compensation?

Let's get closer now to this Socratic project, with which Euripides fought against and conquered Aeschylean tragedy. What purpose (that's the question we need to ask at this point) could Euripides' intention to ground drama solely on the un-Dionysian have had, if we assume its implementation had the very highest ideals? What form of drama remained, if it was not to be born from the womb of music, in that mysterious half-light of the Dionysian? All it could be was dramatic epic, an Apollonian art form in which the tragical effect is naturally unattainable.

This is not a matter of the content of the represented events. I might even assert that in Goethe's proposed Nausikaa it would have been impossible to make the suicide of that idyllic being (which was to be carried out in the fifth act) grippingly tragic, for the power of the Apollonian epic is so extraordinary that it magically transforms the most horrific things through that joy in and redemption through appearances right before our very eyes. The poet of the dramatic epic cannot completely fuse with his pictures, any more than the epic rhapsodist can. It is always a matter of still calm, tranquil contemplation with open eyes, a state which sees the images in front of it. The actor in this dramatic epic remains, in the most profound sense, still a rhapsodist; the consecration of the inner dream lies upon all his actions, so that he is never completely an actor.

How is Euripides' work related with respect to this ideal of Apollonian drama? It is just like the relationship of the solemn rhapsodist of the olden times to the younger attitude, whose nature is described in Plato's Ion: "When I say something sad, my eyes fill with tears. But if what I say is horrifying and terrible, then the hairs on my head stand on end from fright, and my heart knocks." Here we do not see any more the epic dissolution of the self in appearances, the disinterested coolness of the real actor, who remain, even in his highest achievements, totally appearance and delight in appearances. Euripides is the actor with the beating heart, with his hair standing on end. He designs his work as a Socratic thinker, and he carries it out as a passionate actor.

Euripides is a pure artist neither in planning his work nor in carrying it out. Thus the Euripidean drama is simultaneously a cool and fiery thing, equally capable of freezing or burning. It is impossible for it to attain the Apollonian effect of the epic, while, on the other hand, it has divorced itself as much as possible from the Dionysian elements, and now, in order to work at all, it needs new ways to arouse people, methods which can no longer lie within either of the two individual artistic drives of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. These method of arousing people are detached paradoxical ideas, substituted for Apollonian objects of contemplation, and fiery emotional effects, substituted for Dionysian enchantment. The fiery effects are, to be sure, imitated with a high degree of realism, but the ideas and emotional effects are not in the slightest way imbued with the spirit of art.

If we have now recognized that Euripides did not succeed in basing his drama solely on Apollonian principles, that his un-Dionysian tendencies much rather led him astray into an inartistic naturalism, we are now able to move closer to the essential quality of his Socratic aesthetics, whose most important law runs something like this: "Everything must be understandable in order to be beautiful," a corollary to the Socratic saying, "Only the knowledgeable person is virtuous." With this canon at hand, Euripides measured all the individual features and justified them according to this principle: the language, characters, dramatic construction, the choral music.

What we habitually assess so frequently in Euripides, in comparison with Sophoclean tragedy, as a poetical deficiency and a backward step is for the most part the product of his emphatic critical process, his daring intelligence. Let the Euripi dean prologue serve as an example of what that rationalistic method produces. Nothing can be more offensive to our stage techniques than the prologue in Euripides's plays. That a single person should step forward at the beginning of a work and explain who he is, what has gone on before the action starts, what has happened up to this point, and even what will occur in the unfolding of the work, that would strike a modern poetical dramatist as a wanton, inexcusable abandonment of all the effects of suspense. If we know everything which is going to happen, who will want to sit around waiting to see that it really does happen? For here there is

nothing like the stimulating relationship between a prophetic dream and a later real event. Euripides thought quite differently about the matter.

The effect of tragedy never depends on epic suspense, on the tempting uncertainty about what will happen now and later. It depends far more on those great rhetorical- lyrical scenes in which the passion and dialectic of the main hero swelled up into a wide and powerful storm. Everything was preparing for pathos, not for action. What did not prepare the way for paths was considered disposable. But what hinders most seriously the listener's delighted devotion to such scenes is any missing part, any gap in the network of the previous events. As long as the listener still has to figure out what this or that person means, what gives rise to this or that conflict in motives or purposes, then his full immersion in the suffering and action of the main character, his breathless sympathy with and fear for them are not possible. The Aeschylean- Sophoclean tragedies made use of the most elegant artistic methods in the opening scenes to provide the spectators, as if by chance, all the necessary clues to understand everything, a technique in which their noble artistry proves its worth by allowing the necessary features to appear, but, so to speak, as something masked and accidental.

But Euripides still believed he noticed that during these first scenes the spectator was oddly disturbed having to figure out the simple arithmetic of the previous events so that the poetical beauties and the pathos of the exposition was lost on him. Therefore Euripides set up the prologue even before the exposition and put it in the mouth of a person whom people could trust – a divinity would necessarily confirm the outcome of the tragedy for the public, more or less, and take away any doubts about the reality of the myth, in a manner similar to the way in which Descartes could establish the reality of the empirical world through an appeal to the truthfulness of God and his inability to lie. At the end of his drama, Euripides once again made use of this same divine truthfulness in order to confirm his hero's future for the public. That is the task of the notorious deus ex machina. Between the epic prologue and epilogue lay the lyrical, dramatic present, the essential "drama."

So Euripides as a poet is, above all, the echo of his conscious knowledge, and it is precisely this which confers upon him such a memorable place in the history of Greek art.

In view of his critically productive creativity it must have often struck him that he must be bringing alive in drama the opening of Anaxagoras's text, the first lines of which go as follows: "In the beginning everything was a confused mixture, but then came reason and created order." And if, among philosophers, Anaxagoras, with his concept of mind, seems to be the first sober man among total drunkards, so Euripides might have conceptualized his relationship to the other poets with a similar image. So long as the single creator of order and ruler of all, the mind, was still excluded from artistic creativity, everything was still mixed up in a chaotic primordial pudding. That's how Euripides must have thought about it; that's how he, the first "sober" poet must have passed sentence on the "drunken" poets.

What Sophocles said about Aeschylus – that he does what's right, without being aware of it – was certainly not said in any Euripidean sense. Euripides would have conceded only that Aeschylus created improperly because he created without any conscious awareness. Even the god-like Plato speaks of the creative capability of poets and how this is not a conscious understanding, but for the most part only ironically, and he draws a comparison with the talent of prophets and dream interpreters, for the poet is not able to write until he has lost his conscious mind and reason no longer resides in him. Euripides undertook the task (which Plato also took on) to show the world the opposite of the "irrational" poet. His basic aesthetic principle, "everything must be conscious in order to be beautiful," is, as I have said, the corollary to the Socratic saying, "Everything must be conscious in order to be good."

With this in mind, it is permissible for us to assess Euripides as the poet of Socratic aesthetics. Socrates, however, was that second spectator, who did not understand the old tragedy and therefore did not value it. With Socrates as his ally, Euripides dared to be the herald of a new artistic creativity. If old tragedy perished in this development, then Socratic aesthetics is the murdering principle. Insofar as the fight was directed against the Dionysian of the older art, we recognize in Socrates the enemy of Dionysus, the new Orpheus, who roused himself against Dionysus, and who, although destined to be torn apart by the maenads of the Athenian Court of Justice, nevertheless himself made the powerful god fly away. Dionysus, as before, when he fled

from Lycurgus, King of the Edoni, saved himself in the depths of the sea, that is, in the mysterious floods of a secret cult which would gradually overrun the entire world.

13

That Socrates had a close relationship to Euripides' project did not escape their contemporaries in ancient times, and the clearest expression for this happy intuition is the rumour floating around Athens that Socrates was in the habit of helping Euripides with his poetry. Both names were invoked by the supporters of the "good old days" when it was time to list the present popular leaders whose influence had brought about a situation in which the old strength of mind and body manifested at the Battle of Marathon was being increasingly sacrificed for a dubious way of explaining things, in a continuing erosion of the physical and mental powers.

This was the tone – half indignation, half contempt – in which Aristophanic comedy habitually talked of these men, to the irritation of the newer generations, who, although happy enough to betray Euripides, were always totally amazed that Socrates appeared in Aristophanes as the first and most important sophist, the mirror and essence of all sophistic ambitions. As a result, they took consolation in putting Aristophanes himself in the stocks as an impudent lying Alcibiades of poetry. Without here defending the profound instinct of Aristophanes against such attacks, I will proceed to demonstrate the close interrelationship between Socrates and Euripides as the ancients saw it.. It's particularly important to remember in this connection that Socrates, as an opponent of tragic art, never attended the performance of a tragedy, and only joined the spectators when a new piece by Euripides was being produced. The best known connection, however, is the close juxtaposition of both names in the oracular pronouncements of the Delphic Oracle, which indicated that Socrates was the wisest of men and at the same time delivered the judgment that Euripides captured second prize in the contest for wisdom.

Sophocles was the third person named in this hierarchy, the man who could praise himself in comparison with Aeschylus by saying that he (Sophocles) did what was right because he knew what was right. Obviously the degree of clarity in these men's knowledge was the factor that designated them collectively as the three "wise men" of their time.

But the most pointed statement about this new and unheard of high opinion of knowledge and reason was uttered by Socrates, when he claimed that he was the only person to assert that he knew nothing; whereas, in his critical wandering about in Athens conversing with the greatest statesmen, orators, poets, and artists, everywhere he ran into people who imagined they knew things. Astonished, he recognized that all these famous people had no correct and clear insight into their occupations and carried out their work instinctually. "Only from instinct" – with this expression we touch upon the heart and centre of the Socratic project.

With this expression Socratic thought condemns existing art as well as contemporary ethics. Wherever he directs his searching gaze, he sees a lack of insight and the power of delusion, and from this he infers the inner falsity and worthlessness of present conditions. On the basis of this one point, Socrates believed he had to correct existence. He, one solitary individual, stepped forward with an expression of contempt and superiority, as the pioneer of a brand new style of culture, art, and morality, into that world, a scrap of which we would count it an honour to catch.

That is the immensely disturbing thing which grips us about Socrates whenever we run into him and which over and over again always stimulates us to find out the meaning and intention of this man, the most problematic figure of ancient times. Who is the man who can dare, as an individual, to deny the very essence of Greece, which with Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Phidias, Pericles, Pythia, and Dionysus is certainly worthy of our highest veneration? What daemonic force is it that could dare to sprinkle this magic drink into the dust? What demi-god is it to whom the ghostly chorus of the noblest specimens of humanity had to cry out: "Alas, alas! You have destroyed our beautiful world with your mighty fist. It is collapsing, falling to pieces!"

A key to the heart of Socrates is offered by that amazing phenomenon indicated by the term Socrates's daimonon. Under special circumstances in which his immense reasoning power was stalled in doubt, he resolved his irresolution firmly with a divine voice which expressed itself at such times. When this voice came, it always sounded

a cautionary note. In this totally strange character instinctive wisdom reveals itself only in order to confront the conscious knowledge now and then as an impediment. Whereas in all productive men instinct is the truly creative and affirming power, and consciousness acts as a critical and cautioning reaction, in Socrates the instinct becomes the critic, consciousness becomes the creator – truly a monstrous defect.

Now, we see here a grotesque defect in mythical consciousness, so that Socrates can be considered specifically a non-mystic man in whom the logical character has become too massive through excessive use, just like instinctive wisdom in the mystic. On the other hand, it was impossible for that logical drive, as it appeared in Socrates, to turn against itself. In its unfettered rush it demonstrates a natural power of the sort we meet, to our shuddering surprise, only in the very greatest instinctive powers. Anyone who has sensed in the Platonic texts the merest scent of the god-like naïveté and confidence in the direction of Socrates's teaching has also felt how that immense drive wheel of Socratic logic is, at it were, in motion behind Socrates and how we have to see this behind Socrates, as if we were looking through a shadow.

That he himself had a premonition of this relationship comes out in the dignified seriousness with which he assessed his divine calling everywhere, even before his judges. To censure him for this is as impossible as it is to approve of his influence on the removal of instinct. When Socrates was hauled before the assembly of the Greek state, there was only one form of sentence for this irreconcilable conflict, namely, banishment. People should have expelled him beyond the borders as something enigmatic, unclassifiable, and inexplicable, so that some future world could not justly charge the Athenians with acting shamefully.

The fact that death and not exile was pronounced over him Socrates himself appears to have brought about, fully clear about what he was doing and without the natural horror of death. He went to his death with the same tranquility Plato describes him showing as he leaves the Symposium, the last drinker in the early light of dawn, beginning a new day, while behind him, on the benches and the ground, his sleeping dinner companions stay behind, to dream of Socrates the truly erotic man. The dying Socrates was the new ideal of the noble Greek youth, never seen before. Right in the vanguard, the typical Greek youth, Plato, prostrated himself before Socrates's picture with all the fervent adoration of his passionately enthusiastic soul.

14

Let's now imagine that one great Cyclops eye of Socrates focused on tragedy, that eye in which the beautiful madness of artistic enthusiasm never glowed – let's imagine how it was impossible for that eye to peer into the Dionysian abyss with a feeling of pleasure. Then what must that eye have seen in the "lofty and highly praised" tragic art, as Plato calls it? Something really unreasonable, with causes without effects, actions which apparently had no causes, and as a whole so varied and with so many different elements that any reasonable person had to reject it, but dangerous tinder for sensitive and easily excitable minds. We know which single form of poetry Socrates understood: Aesop's fables. And no doubt his reaction involved that smiling complacency with which the noble and good Gellert in his fable of the bee and the hen sings the praises of poetry:

"You see in me the use of poetry –
To tell the man without much sense
A picture image of the truth of things."

But for Socrates tragic art did not seem "to speak the truth" at all, apart from the fact that it did address itself to those "without much sense," and thus not to philosophers, a double excuse to keep one's distance from it. Like Plato, he assigned it to the art of cosmetics, which present only a pleasant surface, not the useful, and he therefore demanded that his disciples abstain and stay away from such unphilosophical temptations, with so much success that the young poet of tragedy, Plato, immediately burned his poetical writing in order to be able to become Socrates's student. But where invincible talents fought against the Socratic instructions, his power, together with the force of his immense personality, was always still strong enough to force poetry itself into new attitudes, unknown up until then.

An example of this is Plato himself. To be sure, in his condemnation of tragedy and art in general he did not remain back behind the naïve cynicism of his master. But completely from artistic necessity he had to create an art form related directly to the existing art forms which he had rejected. The major

criticism which Plato made about the old art – that it was the imitation of an illusion and thus belonged to a lower level than the empirical world – must above all not be directed against his new work of art. And so we see Plato exerting himself to go beyond reality and to present the Idea which forms basis of that pseudo-reality.

With that, however, the thinker Plato reached by a detour the very place where, as a poet, he had always been at home and from where Sophocles and all the old art was protesting against Plato's criticism. If tragedy had assimilated all earlier forms of art, so the same holds true, in an odd way, for Plato's dialogues, which were created from a mixture of all available styles and forms and hover between explanation, lyric, drama, prose and poetry, right in the middle, and in so doing broke through the strict old law about the unity of stylistic form. The Cynic philosophers went even further along the same path. With their excessively garish and motley collection of styles, weaving back and forth between prose and metrical forms, they produced the literary image of "raving Socrates," which they were in the habit of presenting in their own lives.

The Platonic dialogue was, so to speak, the boat on which the shipwreck of the old poetry, along with all its children, was saved. Pushed together into a single narrow space and with an anxious Socrates at the helm they humbly set off now into a new world, which never could see enough fantastic images of this event. Plato really gave all later worlds the image of a new form of art, the image of the novel, which can be characterized as an infinitely intensified Aesopian fable, in which the relative priorities of poetry and dialectical philosophy were the same as the relative priorities of that very philosophy and theology for many hundreds of years. Poetry, in other words, was subservient. This was poetry's new position, the place into which Plato forced it under the influence of the daemonic Socrates.

Now philosophical ideas grew up around art and forced it to cling to the trunk of dialectic. Apollonian tendencies metamorphosed into logical systematizing, something corresponding to what we noticed with Euripides, as well as a translation of the Dionysian into naturalistic effects. Socrates, the dialectical hero in Platonic drama, reminds us of the changed nature of the Euripidean hero, who has to defend his actions with reasons and counter-reasons and thus frequently runs the risk of losing our tragic sympathy. For who can fail to recognize the optimistic element in the heart of dialectic, which celebrates a jubilee with every conclusion and can breathe only in a cool conscious brightness, that optimistic element, which, once pushed into tragedy, gradually overruns its Dionysian regions and necessarily drives them to self- destruction, right to their death leap into middle-class drama.

Let people merely recall the consequences of the Socratic sayings "Virtue is knowledge; sin arises only from ignorance; the virtuous person is the happy person." In these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy. For now the virtuous hero must be a dialectician. Now there must be a perceptible link between virtue and knowledge, belief and morality. Now the transcendental vision of justice in Aeschylus is lowered to the flat and impertinent principle of "poetical justice" with its customary deus ex machina.

What does this new Socratic optimistic stage world look like with respect to the chorus and the whole musical-Dionysian basis for tragedy in general? All that seem to be something accidental, a reminder of the origin of tragedy which we can well do without, because we have come to realize that the chorus can be understood only as the origin of tragedy and the tragic in general. Already in Sophocles the chorus reveals itself as something of an embarrassment, an important indication that even with him the Dionysian stage of tragedy was beginning to fall apart. He did not dare to trust the Chorus to carry the major share of the action, but limited its role to such an extent that it appears almost as one of the actors, just as if it had been lifted out of the orchestra into the scene. This feature naturally destroys its nature completely, no matter how much Aristotle approved of this arrangement of the chorus.

This demotion in the position of the chorus, which Sophocles certainly recommended in his dramatic practice and, according to tradition, even in a written text, is the first step toward the destruction of the chorus, whose phases in Euripides, Agathon, and the New Comedy followed with breakneck speed one after the other. Optimistic dialectic, with its syllogistic whip, drove music out of tragedy, that is, it destroyed the essence of tragedy, which can be interpreted only as a manifestation and imaginary presentation of Dionysian states, as a perceptible symbolizing of music, as the dream world of a Dionysian intoxication.

We have noticed an anti-Dionysian tendency already effective before Socrates, which only achieves in him an expression of incredible brilliance. Now we must not shrink back from the question of where such a phenomenon as Socrates points. For we are not in a position, given the Platonic dialogues, to see that phenomenon as a force of totally negative dissolution. And so, while it's true that the immediate effect of the Socratic drive was to bring about the destruction of Dionysian tragedy, the profound living experiences of Socrates himself force us to the question whether or not there must necessarily be only an antithetical relationship between Socrates's doctrines and art and whether the birth of an "artistic Socrates" is in general something of a contradiction.

Where culture is concerned, that despotic logician now and then had the feeling of a gap, an emptiness, a partial sense of reproach for a duty he might have neglected. As he explains to his friends in prison, often one and the same dream apparition came to him, always with the words, "Socrates, practise music!" He calmed himself, right up to his last days, with the interpretation that his philosophizing was the highest musical art, and believed that it was incorrect that a divinity would remind him of "common, popular music." Finally in prison he came to understand how, in order to relieve his conscience completely, to practice that music which he had considered insignificant. And in this mood, he composed a poem to Apollo and rendered a few of Aesop's fables in verse.

What drove him to this practice was something like the voice of his warning daemon. It was his Apollonian insight that, like a barbarian king, he did not understand a divine image and was in danger of sinning against a divinity through his failure to understand. That statement of Socrates's dream vision is the single indication of his thinking about something perhaps beyond the borders of his logical nature. So he had to ask himself: Have I always labeled unintelligible things I could not understand? Perhaps there is a kingdom of wisdom which is forbidden to the logician? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative and supplement to scientific understanding?

15

In the sense of this last ominous question we must how discuss how the influence of Socrates has spread out over later worlds, right up to the present and even into all future ages, like a constantly growing shadow in the evening sun, and how that influence always makes necessary the re-creation of art (I mean art in its most profound and widest metaphysical sense) and through its own immortality guarantees the immortality of art. For this fact to be acknowledged, before it was established that all art inherently depended on the Greeks, from Homer right up to Socrates, we had to deal with these Greeks as the Athenians dealt with Socrates. Almost every age and cultural stage has at some time or another sought in an ill-tempered frame of mind to free itself of the Greeks, because in comparison with the Greeks, all their achievements, apparently fully original and admired in all sincerity, suddenly appeared to lose their colour and life and were reduced to unsuccessful copies, even caricatures.

And so a heartfelt inner anger constantly kept breaking out against that arrogant little nation which dared throughout time to define everything that was not produced in its own country as "barbaric" Who were these Greeks, people asked themselves, who had achieved only an ephemeral historical glitter, only ridiculously restricted institutions, only an ambiguous competence in morality, who could even be identified with hateful vices, yet who had nevertheless taken a pre-eminent place among nations for their value and special importance, something fitted for a genius among the masses? Unfortunately people were not lucky enough to find the cup of hemlock which can do away with such a being, for all the poisons they created – envy, slander, and inner anger – were insufficient to destroy that self-satisfied magnificence.

Hence, confronted by the Greeks, people have been ashamed and afraid. It seems that an individual who values the truth above everything else might dare to propose as true the notion that the Greeks drive the chariot of our culture and every other one, but that almost always the wagon and the horses are inferior material and cannot match the glory of their drivers, who then consider it funny to whip such a team into the abyss, over which they themselves jump with a leap worthy of Achilles.

To demonstrate that Socrates also merits such a place among the drivers of the chariot, it is sufficient to recognize him as typifying a form of existence inconceivable before him, the type known as Theoretical Man. Our next task is to reach some insight about the meaning and purpose

of such a man. The theoretical man, like the artist, takes an infinite satisfaction in the present and is, like the artist, protected by that satisfaction from the practical effects of pessimism with its lynx eyes which glow only in the darkness. But while the artist, in his revelation of the truth, always keeps his enchanted gaze hanging on what still remains hidden after his revelation, theoretical man enjoys and remains satisfied with the covers which have been thrown off and takes his greatest delight in the process of continually successful unveiling, a success which his own power has brought about.

There would be no scientific knowledge if it concerned itself only with that one naked goddess and had nothing else to do. For then its disciples would have to feel like those people who want to dig a hole straight through the earth, and one among them sees that, even with the greatest lifelong effort, he is in a position to dig through only a really small piece of the immense depths, and that piece will be covered over in front of his very eyes by the work of the person next to him, so that a third person would apparently do well to select a new place for the tunneling efforts he undertakes on his own initiative.

Now, if one person convincingly demonstrates that it is impossible to reach the antipodes by this direct route, who will want to continue to work on in the old depths, unless there was a possibility in the meantime that he would be happy finding some valuable rock or discovering some natural law? For that reason, Lessing, the most noble theoretical man, dared to state that for him the search for the truth counted for more than truth itself. That statement unmasks the fundamental secret of scientific knowledge, to the astonishment, even the anger, of scientists. Now, of course, alongside this single recognition, excessively truthful and brave, stands a profound but delusive image, which first came into the world in the person of Socrates, that unshakeable faith that thinking, guided by the idea of causality, might reach into the deepest abyss of being, and that thinking is capable of, not just understanding being, but even correcting it. This lofty metaphysical delusion is inherent in scientific research and leads it over and over again to its limits, at which point it must turn itself into art, something which is really predictable in this mechanical process.

With the torch of this idea, let's look at Socrates. To us he appears as the first person who was capable not only of living under the guidance of this scientific instinct, but also of dying under it (something much more difficult). Therefore the picture of the dying Socrates as a man raised above fear of death by knowledge and reason is the emblazoned shield hanging over the entranceway to scientific research, reminding every individual of his purpose, namely, to make existence intelligible and thus apparently justified. Of course, when reasoning cannot succeed in this endeavour, myth must finally serve, something which I have just noted as the necessary consequence, indeed, even the purpose of, science.

Anyone who clearly sees how, after Socrates, that mystagogue of knowledge, one philosophical school after another, like wave after wave, arose in turn, and how an unimaginable universal greed for knowledge through the full extent of the educated world steered knowledge around on the high seas as the essential task for every person of greater capabilities, a greed which it has been impossible since then completely to expel from scientific knowledge, and how through this universal greed a common net of thinking was cast over the entire earth for the first time (with even glimpses of the rule-bound workings of an entire solar system) – whoever reminds himself of all this, together with that astonishingly high pyramid of contemporary knowledge, cannot deny that in Socrates we see a turning point and vortex of so- called world history.

Imagine for a moment the following scenario: if the incalculable sum of all the energy which has been used in pursuit of this world project is spent not in the service of knowledge but on the practical (i.e., egotistical) aims of individuals and peoples, then in all probability the instinctive delight in living would be so weakened in universal wars of destruction and continuing migrations of people that, with suicide being a common occurrence, the individual, perhaps out of a sense of duty, would have to see death as a final rest and, like the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands, the son would strangle his parents, the friend would strangle his friend. A practical pessimism, which could give rise to a dreadful ethic of mass murder out of sympathy, such a belief is present and was present all over the world, wherever art did not appear in some form or other, especially in religion and science, as a remedy and a defense against that pestilence.

With respect to this practical pessimism, Socrates is the original picture of the theoretical optimist, who in the belief (which I have

described) that we could discover the nature of things conferred upon knowing and discovering the power of a universal medicine and understood evil-in-itself as error. To push forward with that reasoning and to separate true knowledge from appearance and error seem to the Socratic man to be the noblest, even the single truly human vocation, just as that mechanism of ideas, judgments, and conclusions has been valued, from Socrates on, as the highest activity and the most admirable gift of nature, above all other faculties. Even the noblest moral deeds, the sympathetic emotions, self-sacrifice, heroism and that calmness in the soul (so difficult to attain), which the Apollonian Greeks called sophrosyne – all these were derived by Socrates and his like-minded descendants right up to the present from the dialectic of knowledge and therefore described as teachable.

Whoever has experienced the delight of a Socratic discovery and feels how this, in ever-widening rings, seeks to enclose the entire world of phenomena, will experience no spur capable of pushing him into existence more intense than the desire to complete that conquest and to weave a solid impenetrable net. To a man so minded, the Platonic Socrates appears as the teacher of an entirely new form of "Greek serenity" and of a blissful existence which seeks to discharge itself in actions. And these actions will consist, for the most part, like those of a mid-wife, of things concerned with the education of noble disciples, in order to produce an endless supply of geniuses.

But now science, incited by its powerful delusion, speeds on inexorably right to its limits, at which point the optimism hidden in the essence of logic fails. For the circumference of the circle of science has an infinity of points, and while it is still impossible to see how that circumference could ever be completely measured, nevertheless the noble, talented man, before the middle of his life, inevitably comes up against some border point on that circumference, where he stares at something which cannot be illuminated. When, at this point, he sees to his horror how logic turns around on itself and finally bites its own tail, then a new form of knowledge breaks through, the acknowledgement of the tragic, which in order merely to be endured, requires art as a protector and healer.

If we look at the loftiest realms of the world streaming around us, our eyes strengthened and refreshed by the Greeks, we become aware of that greed of insatiably optimistic knowledge (which Socrates previews for us) turning into tragic resignation and a need for art, even if it's true that this same greed, in its lower levels, must express itself as hostile to art and must especially loathe Dionysian tragic art, as I have already explained in the example of the conflict between Aeschylean tragedy and Socratic doctrine.

Here we are now knocking, with turbulent feelings, on the door of the present and future: Will that transformation lead to continuously new configurations of genius and straight to the music-playing Socrates? Will that wide net of art, whether in the name of religion or of science, fly over existence always more tightly and delicately, or is it determined that it will be ripped to shreds by the restless barbaric impulses and hurly- burly which we now call "the present." We are standing here on the sidelines as lookers on, worried but not without hope, for we are being permitted to witness that immense struggle and transition. Ah, but there is a magic spell in these battles: whoever looks at them must also fight them!

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By setting out this historical example, we have attempted to clarify how tragedy surely dies away with the disappearance of the spirit of music, since tragedy can arise only out of this spirit. To mitigate the strangeness of this claim and, on the other hand, to indicate the origin of this idea of ours, we must now openly face up to analogous phenomena of the present time. We must stride right into the midst of those battles which, as I have just said, are being waged in the loftiest spheres of our present world between the insatiably optimistic desire to know and the artistic need for tragedy.

In this discussion, I shall omit all the other opposing drives which have in every age worked against art (especially against tragedy) and which at present have taken hold to such an extent that, for example, in the art of the theatre, only farces and ballets achieve a fairly rich profit with their fragrant blooms, which are perhaps not for everyone. I shall speak only of the most illustrious opposition to the tragic world view: by that I mean research scholarship, optimistic to the core of its being, with its father Socrates perched on the pinnacle. Shortly I shall also indicate by name the forces which seem to me to guarantee a new birth of tragedy and who knows what other blessed hopes for the German character!

Before we leap into the middle of this battle, let us wrap ourselves in the armour of the knowledge we seized upon earlier. In opposition to all those eager to derive art from a single principle as the necessary living origin of every work of art, I keep my eyes fixed on both those artistic divinities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysus, and recognize in them the living and clear representatives of two art worlds, very different in their deepest being and their highest goals. Apollo stands before me as the transfigured genius of the principium individuationis [the individualizing principle], through which release is only to be truly attained in illusion. However, under the mystical joyous cries of Dionysus, the spell of individuation shatters and the way lies open to the maternal source of being, to the innermost core of things.

This tremendous difference, which opens up a yawning gap between plastic art as Apollonian and music as Dionysian art became more or less obvious to only one great thinker, when he, without any prompting from the symbolism of the Greek gods, recognized the different character of music and the origin of all other arts from it, because music is not, like all the others art forms, images of appearances, but an immediate reflection of the will itself, and also because it presents itself as the metaphysical counterpart to all physical things in the world, the thing-in-itself as counterpart to all appearances (Schopenhauer, World as Will and Idea, I, p. 310).

On the basis of this most significant way of understanding all aesthetics, which, taken seriously, marks the first beginning of aesthetics, Richard Wagner, to confirm its lasting truth, set his stamp, when he established in his Beethoven that music must be assessed on aesthetic principles entirely different from those for all fine arts and not at all according to the category of beauty, although an erroneous aesthetics, in the service of a misleading and degenerate art, has become accustomed to the idea of beauty asserting itself in the world of images and to demand from music an effect similar to the effect of plastic arts, namely, the arousal of satisfaction in beautiful forms.

After my recognition of that tremendous opposition, I sensed in myself a strong urge to approach the essence of Greek tragedy and, in so doing, the deepest insight into the Hellenic genius. Now for the first time I believed I was capable of the magical task of posing the basic problem of tragedy in my own mind, over and above the jargon of our customary aesthetics. Through that, such an strange idiosyncratic glimpse into the Hellenic was granted to me that it had to appear to me as if our classical-Hellenistic scholarship (which is so proud of itself) had up to this point known, for the most part, only how to gloat over games with shadows and trivialities.

We may be able perhaps to touch on this original problem with the following question: What aesthetic effect arises when those separate powers of art, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, come to operate alongside each other? Or, put more briefly, what is the relationship between music and images and ideas? Richard Wagner applauded Schopenhauer on this very point for the restrained clarity and perceptiveness of his explanation. Schopenhauer spoke his views on this matter in the greatest detail in the following place (which I will quote again here in full, from World as Will and Idea, I, p. 309):

As a result of all this, we can look upon the world of appearance, or nature, and music as two different expressions of the same thing, which itself is thus the only analogy mediating between the two of them. Thus, an understanding of this thing is required in order to have insight into that analogy. Consequently, music, when considered as an expression of the world, is universal to the highest degree, something which even has a relationship with the universality of ideas, rather like the way these are related to particular things. Its universality is, however, in no way the empty universality of abstractions, but something of an entirely different kind, bound up with a thoroughly clear certainty. In this, music is like geometric figures and numbers, which are the universal forms of all possible objects of experience and applicable to them all a priori [before experience], although they are not abstract but vivid and always fixed.

All possible efforts, excitements, and expressions of the will, all those processes inside human beings, which reason subsumes under the broad negative concept of feelings, are there to express through the infinite number of possible melodies, but always in the universality of mere form, without matter, always only according to the thing-in-itself, not according to its appearance, like its innermost soul, without the body.

From these inner relationships which music has with the true essence of all things, we can also account for the fact that when an appropriate music is heard in any scene, business, action,

or environment, this music appears to open up to us the most secret sense of these things, and seems to come forward as the most correct and clearest commentary on them. In the same way, for the man who surrenders himself entirely to the experience of a symphony it appears as if he saw all the possible events of life and the world drawn over into himself. Nevertheless, he cannot, if he thinks about it, perceive any similarity between that game of sounds and the things which come into his mind.

For music is, as mentioned, different from all other arts, in that it is not a portrayal of appearances, or more correctly, the adequate objectification of the will, but the unmediated portrayal of the will itself, as well as the metaphysical complement of all physical things in the world, presenting the thing-in-itself as complement to all appearances. We could, therefore, call the world the embodiment of music just as much as the embodiment of the will. And that's why it is understandable that music is capable of bringing out every painting, even every scene of real life and the world, with an immediate and higher significance and, of course, to do that all the more, the closer the analogy of its melody to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon. On this point we base the fact that we can set a poem to music as a song or as a vivid presentation in pantomime or as both in an opera. Such individual pictures of men's lives, given a foundation in the universal speech of music, are not bound to music and do not correspond with music by a compelling necessity, but they stand in relation to music as a random example to a universal idea. They present in the clarity of the real the very thing which music expresses in the universality of mere form.

For melodies are, to a certain extent, like general ideas, an abstraction from the real. For reality, the world of separate things, supplies clear phenomena, remarkable and individual things, the single case, to both the universality of ideas and the universality of melodies. Both of these universals, however, are, from a certain point of view, contrary, since ideas consist only of forms abstracted first from perception, rather like the stripped away outer skin of things, and are thus really and entirely abstractions.; whereas, music, by contrast, gives the heart of the thing, the innermost core, which comes before all particular shapes. This relationship is easily expressed properly in the language of the scholastics: ideas are the universalia post rem (universals after the fact); music, however, gives the universalia ante rem (universals before the fact), and reality the universalia in re (universals in the fact).

The fact that in general there can be a connection between a musical composition and a perceptible presentation rests on the point that, as stated, both are only very different expressions of same inner essence of the world. Now, when in a particular case such a connection is truly present and the composer has known how to express in the universal language of music the dynamics of the will, which constitutes the core of the event, then the melody of the song, the music of the opera, is full of expression. The composer's discovery of the analogy between both must, however, issue from the immediate realization of the world essence, unknown to his reason, and must not be an imitation, conveyed in ideas with conscious intentionality. Otherwise the music does not express the inner essence, that is, the will itself, but only imitates inadequately its appearance.

Following what Schopenhauer has taught, we also understand music as the language of the unmediated will and feel our imaginations stirred to shape that spirit world which speaks to us invisibly and nonetheless in such a vital manner and to embody it in ourselves through a metaphorical illustration. By contrast, image and idea, under the influence of a truly appropriate music, reach an elevated significance. Thus, Dionysian art customarily works in two ways on Apollonian artistic potential: music arouses us to consider an image, in some way similar to the Dionysian universality, and music then permits that image to come forward with the highest significance.

From this intelligible observation and without any deeper considerations of unapproachable things, I conclude that music is capable of generating myth (that is the most meaningful example) and, indeed, of giving birth to the tragic myth, that myth which speaks of the recognition of the Dionysian among the Greeks. I have explained the phenomenon of the lyric poet, and after that how music in the lyric poet strives to make known its essence in Apollonian pictures. Let us now imagine that music at its highest intensity also must seek to reach its highest representation. Thus, we must consider it possible that music also knows how to find the symbolic expression for its essentially Dionysian

wisdom. And where else will we have to look for this expression, if not in tragedy and in the idea of tragedy generally?

From the essence of art as it is commonly understood according to the single categories of illusion and beauty it is genuinely impossible to derive the tragic. Only with reference to the spirit of music do we understand a joy in the destruction of the individual. Now, individual examples of such a destruction makes clear the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art, which brings into expression the will in its omnipotence out from behind, so to speak, the principium individuationis, the life beyond all appearances and eternal life, in spite of all destruction.

The metaphysical joy in the tragic is a translation of the instinctive unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of the image. The hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is destroyed, and we are happy at that, because, after all, he is only an illusion, and the eternal life of the will is not disturbed by his destruction. "We believe in eternal life," so tragedy calls out, while the music is the unmediated idea of this life. The work of the plastic artist has an entirely purpose: Here Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual through the bright exaltation in the eternity of the illusion. Here beauty is victorious over the suffering inherent in life. The pain is, in a certain sense, brushed away from the face of nature. In Dionysian art and in its tragic symbolism this same nature speaks to us with its true, undisguised voice: "Be as I am! Under the incessantly changing phenomena the eternal primordial mother, always forcing things into existence, always satisfied with the changing nature of appearances!"

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Dionysian art also wants to convince us of the eternal delight in existence. But we must seek this delight, not in appearances, but behind them. We must recognize how everything which comes into being must be ready for a painful destruction. We are forced to gaze directly into the terror of individual existence but, in the process, must not become paralyzed. A metaphysical consolation tears us momentarily out of the hustle and bustle of changing forms. For a short time we really are the primordial essence itself and feel its unbridled lust for and joy in existence. The struggle, torment, and destruction of appearances we now consider necessary, on account of the excess of countless forms of existence forcefully thrusting themselves into life, and of the exuberant fecundity of the world's will. We are transfixed by the raging barbs of this torment in the very moment when we become, as it were, one with the immeasurable primordial delight in existence and when we sense the indestructible and eternal nature of this Dionysian joy. In spite of fear and compassion, we are fortunate vital beings, not as individuals, but as the one force of Life, with whose procreative joy we have been fused.

The story of how Greek tragedy arose tells us now with clear certainty how the Greeks' tragic work of art really was born out of the spirit of music. With this idea we think we have, for the first time, reached a true understanding of the original and astonishing meaning of the chorus. At the same time, however, we must concede that the significance of the tragic myth explained previously, to say nothing of Greek philosophy, was never entirely clear to the Greek poets. Their heroes speak to a certain extent more superficially than they act, and the myth does not really find its adequate objectification in the spoken word.

The structure of the scenes and the vivid images reveal a deeper wisdom than the poet himself can grasp in words and ideas. We can make the same observation about Shakespeare, whose Hamlet, for example, similarly speaks in a more superficial manner than he acts, so that we derive the above mentioned study of Hamlet, not from the words, but from the deepest view and review of the totality of the work. With respect to Greek tragedy, which, of course, comes to us only as a drama of words, I have even suggested that that incongruity between myth and word can easily seduce us into considering it shallower and more empty of meaning than it is, and thus to assume a more superficial action than it must have had according to the testimony of the ancients. For we easily forget that what the poet as a wordsmith could not achieve, the attainment of the highest intellectualization and idealization of myth, he could achieve successfully at any time as a creating musician.

Admittedly through scholarship we must recreate the extraordinary power of the musical effects in order to receive something of that incomparable consolation necessarily characteristic of true tragedy. But we would experience this extraordinary musical power for what it is only if we were Greeks, because

considering the entire development of Greek music, which is well known, quite familiar to us, and infinitely richer by comparison, we believe we are hearing only youthful songs, sung with only a timid sense of their power. The Greeks are, as the Egyptian priests say, eternal children, and where tragic art is concerned, only children who do not know what an exalted toy has arisen under their hands, something which will be destroyed.

Every struggle of the spirit of music for pictorial and mythic revelation, which becomes increasingly intense from the beginning of the lyric right up to Attic tragedy, suddenly breaks apart, right after developing in full luxuriant bloom, and, so to speak, disappears from the surface of Hellenic art, although the Dionysian world view born out of this struggle lives on in the mysteries and in its most amazing transformations and degeneration never stops attracting serious natures to it. Isn't it possible that it will rise from its mystical depths as art once more?

At this point we are concerned with the question whether the power whose hostile effects broke tragedy has sufficient power for all time to hinder the artistic re-growth of tragedy and the tragic world view. If the old tragedy was derailed by the dialectical drive for knowledge and by the optimism of scholarly research, we might have to infer from this fact an eternal struggle between the theoretical and the tragic world views. And only after the spirit of knowledge is taken right to its limits and its claim to universal validity destroyed by the establishment of that limit would it be possible to hope for a re-birth of tragedy. For a symbol of such a cultural form, we would have to set up Socrates the player of music, in the sense talked about earlier. By this opposition I understand with respect to the spirit of scholarly research the belief (which first came to light in the person of Socrates) that our understanding of nature can be grounded and that knowledge has a universal healing power.

Whoever remembers the most immediate consequences of this restless forward driving spirit of scientific knowledge will immediately recall how it destroyed myth and how through this destruction poetry was driven out of its naturally ideal soil as something from now on without a home. If we have correctly ascribed to music the power to bring about out of itself a re-birth of myth, then we will have to seek out the spirit of science on that very path where it has its hostile encounter with the myth- creating power of music. This occurred in the development of the new Attic dithyramb, whose music no longer expressed the inner essence, the will itself, but only gave back an inadequate appearance in an imitation delivered through ideas. From such innerly degenerate music those with a true musical nature turned away with the same aversion which they had displayed before the art-killing tendency of Socrates.

The instinct of Aristophanes (which grasped issues so surely) was certainly right when he linked together Socrates himself, the tragedies of Euripides, and the music of the new writers of dithyrambs, hating each of them and smelling in all three of them the characteristics of a degenerate culture. Through that new dithyramb, music is criminally turned into a mimetic demonstration of appearances, for example, a battle or storm at sea, and in the process is totally robbed of all its power to create myths. For when music seeks only to arouse our indulgence by compelling us to find external analogies between an event in life or nature and certain rhythmic figures and characteristic musical sounds, when our understanding is supposed to be satisfied with the recognition of these analogies, then we are dragged down into a mood in which a conception of the mythic is impossible. For myth must be vividly felt as a single instance of universality and truth staring into the infinite.

Truly Dionysian music works on us as a universal mirror reflecting the will of the world. Each vivid event reflected in this mirror widens out at once for our feelings into the image of an eternal truth. By contrast, the sound painting of the new dithyramb immediately strips such a vivid event of its mythic character. Now the music has become a feeble copy of a phenomenon and, in the process, infinitely poorer than the phenomenon itself. Through this impoverishment the phenomenon itself is even lowered in our feelings, so that now, for example, a battle imitated in this kind of music plays itself feebly out in marches, trumpet calls, and so forth, and our imagination is held back precisely by these superficialities.

Painting with music is thus in every respect the opposite to the myth creating power of true music. Through the former a phenomenon becomes more impoverished than it is, whereas through Dionysian music the individual phenomenon becomes richer and widens into an image of the world. It was a powerful victory of the non-Dionysian spirit when, in the development of the new dithyramb, it alienated music from itself and

pushed it down to be the slave of appearances. Euripides, who, in a higher sense, must have had a thoroughly unmusical nature, is for this very reason an ardent supporter of the new dithyrambic music and uses all its stock effects and styles with the open-handedness of a thief.

From another perspective we see the force of this un-Dionysian spirit in action directing its effects against myth, when we turn our gaze toward the way in which the way in which the presentation of character and the psychological complexities get way out of hand in the tragedies of Sophocles. The character cannot be allowed to broaden out any more into an eternal type, but, by contrast, must appear an individual through the artistic qualifications and shading, through the most delicate clarity of every line, so that the spectator generally no longer experiences the myth but the commanding naturalism of the artist, his power of imitation.

Here also we become aware of the victory of appearances over the universal and of the delight in the particular, rather like an anatomical specimen. Already we breathe the air of a theoretical world, which values the scientific insight higher than the artistic mirror image of a universal principle. The movement along the line of increasing characterization quickly goes further. While Sophocles still paints whole characters and yokes their sophisticated development to myth, Euripides already paints only large individual character traits, which are capable of expressing themselves in violent passions. In the new Attic comedy there are masks with only one expression, reckless old men, deceived pimps, mischievous slaves in an inexhaustible repetition.

Where now has the myth-building spirit of music gone? What is left now for music is music of stimulation or memory, that is, either music as a means of stimulating jaded and worn out nerves or sound painting. As far as the first is concerned, the text is largely irrelevant. Already in Euripides, when his heroes or chorus first start to sing, things get really out of hand. What must it have been like with his unapologetic successors?

However, the new un-Dionysian spirit manifests itself with the utmost clarity in the conclusions of the new plays. In the old tragedy, the metaphysical consolation was there to feel at the conclusion. Without that, the delight in tragedy simply cannot be explained. The sound of reconciliation from another world echoes most purely perhaps in Oedipus at Colonus. But as soon as the genius of music flew away from tragedy, tragedy is, in the strong sense of the term, dead. For out of what are people now able to create that metaphysical consolation?

Consequently, people looked for an earthly solution to tragic dissonance. After the hero was sufficiently tortured by fate, he was paid a well earned reward in an impressive marriage, in divine testament to his honour. The hero became a gladiator, to whom people gave his freedom, after he had been well beaten and was covered with wounds. The deus ex machina moved in to take the place of metaphysical consolation. I will not say that the tragic world view was destroyed entirely and completely by the surging spirit of the un-Dionysian. We only know that it must have fled out of art as if into the underworld, degenerating into a secret cult.

But over the widest surface area of Hellenistic existence raged the consuming wind of that spirit which announces itself in the form of "Greek serenity," to which I referred earlier as an impotent and unproductive delight in life. This serenity is a counterpart to the marvelous "naïveté" of the old Greeks, which we must see – in accordance with its given characteristics – as the flowering of Apollonian culture, blossoming out of a dark abyss, as the victory over suffering, the wisdom of suffering, which the Hellenic will gains through its ability to mirror beauty.

The noblest form of that other form of "Greek serenity," the Alexandrian, is the cheerfulness of the theoretical man. It manifests the same characteristic features I already derived out of the idea of the un-Dionysian: it fights against Dionysian wisdom and art; it strives to dissolve myth; it places an earthy consonance in place of a metaphysical consolation, indeed a particular deus ex machina, namely, the god of machines and crucibles, that is, the force of nature, recognized and used in the service of a higher egoism; it believes in correcting the world through knowledge, a life led by scientific knowledge, and thus is really in a position to confine the individual man in the narrowest circle of problems which can be solved, inside which he can cheerfully say to life: "I want you. You are worth knowing."

18

It's an eternal phenomenon: the voracious will always finds a way to keep its creatures alive and force them on to further living by an illusion spread over things. One man is fascinated by the Socratic desire for knowledge and the delusion that with it he'll be able to cure the eternal wound of existence. Another is caught up by the seductively beautiful veil of art fluttering before his eyes; yet another by the metaphysical consolation that underneath the hurly-burly of appearances eternal life flows on indestructibly, to say nothing of the more common and almost more powerful illusions which the will holds ready at all times. In general, these three stages of illusion are only for nobly endowed natures, those who feel the weight and difficulty of existence with more profound reluctance and who need to be deceived out of this reluctance by these exquisite stimulants. Everything we call culture emerges from these stimulants: depending on the proportions of the mixture we have a predominantly Socratic or artistic or tragic culture – or if you'll permit historical examples – there is either an Alexandrian or a Hellenic or a Buddhist culture.

Our entire modern world is trapped in the net of Alexandrian culture and recognizes as its ideal the theoretical man, equipped with the highest intellectual powers and working in the service of science, a man for whom Socrates is the prototype and progenitor. All our methods of education originally have this ideal in view. Every other existence has struggled on with difficulty alongside this ideal as a way of life we permit, not as one we intend. For a long time now, it's been almost frightening to sense how an educated person here is found only in the form of the scholar. Even our literary arts have had to develop out of scholarly imitations, and in the main effect of rhyme we recognize still the development of our poetical form out of artificial experiments with what is essentially really a scholarly language, not one native to us.

To a true Greek how incomprehensible must Faust have appeared, that man of modern culture, who is inherently intelligible to us – Faust, who storms dissatisfied through all faculties, his drive for knowledge making him devoted to magic and the devil. We have only to stand him beside Socrates for comparison in order to recognize that modern man is beginning to have a premonition of the limits of that Socratic desire for knowledge and is yearning for a coastline somewhere in the wide and desolate sea of knowledge. When Goethe once remarked to Eckermann, with reference to Napoleon, "Yes, my good man, there is also a productivity in actions," in a delightfully naïve way he was reminding us that the non-theoretical human being is something implausible and astonishing to modern man, so that we had to have the wisdom of a Goethe to find out that such a strange form of existence is comprehensible, even forgivable.

And now we must not conceal from ourselves what lies hidden in the womb of this Socratic culture! An optimism that thinks itself all powerful! Well, people should not be surprised when the fruits of this optimism ripen, when a society that has been thoroughly leavened with this kind of culture, right down to the lowest levels, gradually starts trembling in an extravagant turmoil of desires, when the belief in earthly happiness for everyone, when faith in the possibility of such a universal knowledge culture gradually changes into the threatening demand for such an Alexandrian earthly happiness, into the invocation of a Euripidean deus ex machina!

People should take note: Alexandrian culture requires a slave class in order to be able to exist over time, but with its optimistic view of existence, it denies the necessity for such a class and thus, when the effect of its beautiful words of seduction and reassurance about the "dignity of human beings" and the "dignity of work" has worn off, it gradually moves towards a horrific destruction. There is nothing more frightening than a barbarian slave class which has learned to think of its existence as an injustice and is preparing to take revenge, not only for itself, but for all generations.

In the face of such threatening storms, who dares appeal with sure confidence to our pale and exhausted religions, which themselves in their foundations have degenerated into scholarly religions, so that myth, the essential precondition for all religions, is already everywhere paralyzed – even in this area that optimistic spirit which we have just described as the germ of destruction of our society has gained control.

While the disaster slumbering in the bosom of theoretical culture gradually begins to worry modern man and while he, in his uneasiness, reaches into the treasure of his experience for ways to avert the danger, without any inherent faith in these means, and while he also begins to have a premonition of his own particular consequences, some great and widely gifted natures have, with incredibly careful thought, known how to use the tools of science to set out the boundaries and

relative nature of knowledge itself and, in the process, decisively to deny the claim of science to universal validity and universal goals. With proofs like this, for the first time that delusion which presumes with the help of causality to be able to ground the innermost essence of things has become recognized for what it is.

The immense courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer achieved the most difficult victory, the one over the optimism lying concealed in the essential nature of logic, which is, in turn, the foundation of our culture. While this logic, based on aeternae veritates [eternal truths] which it did not consider open to objection, had believed that all the riddles of the world could be recognized and resolved and had treated space, time, and causality as totally unconditional laws with the most universal validity, Kant showed how these really served only to raise mere appearance, the work of Maja, to the only reality, the highest reality, and to set it in place as the innermost and true essence of things and thus to make true knowledge of this essence impossible, that is, to use an expression of Schopenhauer, to get the dreamer to sleep even more soundly (World as Will and Idea, I, 498).

With this recognition there is introduced a culture which I venture to describe as a tragic culture. Its most important distinguishing feature is that wisdom replaces knowledge as the highest goal, a wisdom which, undeceived by the seductive diversions of science, turns its unswerving gaze towards the all-encompassing picture of the world and, with a sympathetic feeling of love, seeks in that world to grasp eternal suffering as its own suffering. Let's imagine a growing generation with this fearless gaze, this heroic attraction for what is immense; let's imagine the bold step of these dragon slayers, the proud daring with which they turn their backs on all the doctrines of weakness belonging to that optimism, in order to "live resolutely," fully and completely. Would that not require the tragic man of this culture in his self-education for seriousness and terror to desire a new art, the art of metaphysical consolation, to desire tragedy as the Helen which belongs to him and to have to cry out with Faust:

"With my desire's power, should I not call
Into this life the fairest form of all?"

However, now that Socratic culture has been shaken on two sides – once by the fear of its own consequences, which it is definitely beginning to sense, and, in addition, because it is itself no longer convinced of the eternal validity of its foundations with that earlier naïve trust – it can hang onto the sceptre of its infallibility only with trembling hands. So it's a sorry spectacle – how the dance of its thinking dashes longingly after new forms in order to embrace them and then how, like Mephistopheles with the seductive Lamia, it suddenly, with a shudder, lets them go.

That is, in fact, the characteristic mark of that fracture which everyone habitually talks about as the root malady of modern culture, that theoretical man is afraid of his own consequences and, in his dissatisfaction, no longer dares to commit himself to the fearful ice currents of existence. He runs anxiously up and down along the shore. He no longer wants to have anything completely, any totality with all the natural cruelty of things. That's how much the optimistic way of seeing things has mollycoddled him. At the same time he feels how a culture which has been built on the principles of science must collapse when it begins to become illogical, that is, when it begins to run back, away from its own consequences.

Our art reveals this general distress: in vain people use imitation to lean on all the great productive periods and natures; in vain they gather all "world literature" around modern man to bring him consolation and place him in the middle of artistic styles and artists of all ages, so that he may, like Adam with the animals, give them a name. But he remains an eternally hungry man, the "critic" without joy and power, the Alexandrian man, who is basically a librarian and copy editor and goes miserably blind from the dust of books and printing errors.

19

We can designate the innermost form of this Socratic culture most precisely when we call it the culture of opera, for in this area our Socratic culture, with characteristic naiveté, has expressed its wishes and perceptions – something astonishing to us if we bring the genesis of opera and the facts of the development of opera together with the eternal truths of the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

First, I recall the emergence of the stilo rappresentativo [the representational style] and of recitative. Is it credible that this entirely externalized opera music, something incapable of worship, could be accepted and preserved with wildly enthusiastic favour, as if it were the rebirth of all true music, in an age in which Palestrina's inexpressibly awe-inspiring and sacred music had just arisen? On the other hand, who would make the diversion-loving voluptuousness of those Florentine circles or the vanity of its dramatic singers responsible for such a rapidly spreading love of opera? The fact that in the same age, indeed, in the same peoples, alongside the vaulted structure of Palestrina's harmonies, which the entire Christian Middle Ages had developed, there awoke that passion for a half-musical way of speaking – that I can only explain by some tendency beyond art, something also at work in the very nature of recitative.

To the listener who wishes to hear clearly the word under the singing, there corresponds the singer who speaks more than he sings and who intensifies the expressions of pathos in half-singing. Through this intensification of pathos he makes the words easier to understand and overpowers what's left of the musical half. The real danger now threatening him is that at an inopportune moment he may give the music the major emphasis, so that the pathos in the speech and the clarity of the words necessarily disappear. On the other hand, he always feels the urge for musical release and a virtuoso presentation of his voice. Here the "poet" comes to his assistance, the man who knows how to provide him sufficient opportunities for lyrical interjections, repetitions of words and sentences, and so on, places where the singer can now rest in a purely musical element, without considering the words. This alternation of only half-sung speech full of urgent emotion and interjections which are all singing, which lies at the heart of the stilo rappresentativo, this rapidly changing effort at one moment to affect the understanding and imagination of the listener and at another to work on his musical senses, is something so completely unnatural and at the same time so innerly contradictory to the Dionysian and Apollonian artistic drives that we must conclude that the origin of recitative lies outside all artistic instincts.

According to this account, we should define recitative as the mixing of epic and lyric performing, but not at all in an innerly consistent blending, which could never have been attained with such entirely disparate things, but the most external conglutination, in the style of a mosaic, something the like of which has no model whatsoever in the realm of nature and experience. But this was not the opinion of those inventors of recitative. Rather they – along with their age – believed that through that stilo rappresentativo the secret of ancient music had been resolved and that only through it could one explain the tremendous effect of an Orpheus, Amphion, and, indeed, even of Greek tragedy. The new style was valued as the re-awakening of the most effective music – the music of the ancient Greeks. In fact, under the universal and totally popular conception of the Homeric world as the primitive world, people allowed themselves to surrender to the dream that they had now climbed down back once more into the paradisal beginnings of humankind, when music necessarily must have had that superb purity, power, and innocence which the poets knew how to talk about so movingly in their pastoral plays.

Here we see the innermost development of this truly modern style of art, the opera. A powerful need forces itself out in art, but it is a need of an unaesthetic sort: the yearning for the idyllic, the belief in a primordial existence of the artistic and good man. Recitative served as the rediscovered language of that primordial man, and opera as the rediscovered land of that idyllic or heroically good being, who in all his actions at the same time follows a natural artistic drive, who sings at least something in everything he has to say, so that, given the slightest emotional arousal, he can immediately sing out in full voice.

For us now it is unimportant that contemporary humanists used this newly created picture of the paradisal artist to fight against the old church idea of human beings as inherently corrupt and lost, so that opera is to be understood as the opposing dogma of good people, something in which they simultaneously discovered a way of consoling themselves against that pessimism to which the seriously minded people of that time, given the horrifying uncertainties of all social conditions, were attracted most strongly. It's enough for us to recognize how the real magic and thus the origin of this new artistic form lies in the satisfaction of an entirely unaesthetic need, in the optimistic glorification of man as such, in its view of primitive man as naturally good and artistic man. This operatic principle has gradually transformed itself into a threatening and terrible demand, which we, faced with the socialist movement of the present day, can no longer fail to hear. The "good primitive man" wants his rights: what paradisal prospects!

Alongside this point I set another equally clear confirmation of my opinion that opera is constructed on the same principles as our Alexandrian culture. Opera is the birth of theoretical man, of the critical layman, not of the artist – one of the strangest facts in the history of all the arts. It was the demand of completely unmusical listeners that people had to hear the words above all, so that a rebirth of music was only to be expected when some way of singing was discovered according to which the words of the text rule over the counterpoint the way a lord rules his servants. For the words (they said) are nobler than the accompanying harmonic system just as the soul is nobler than the body. In the beginning of opera, the union of music, image, and word was treated according to the amateurish and unmusical crudity of these views. The first experiments with the sense of this aesthetic were launched in distinguished amateur circles in Florence by the poets and singers patronized there.

The man who is artistically impotent produces for himself a form of art precisely because he is the inherently inartistic man. Because he has no sense of the Dionysian depths of music, for his own sake he transforms musical taste into easy to understand verbal and musical rhetoric of the passions in stilo rappresentativo and into the voluptuousness of the art of singing. Because he is incapable of seeing a vision, he presses mechanics and decorative artists into his service. Because he has no idea how to grasp the true essence of the artist, he conjures up right in front of him the "artistic primitive man" to suit his own taste, that is, the man who, when passionate, sings and speaks verse. He dreams himself back in an age in which passion was sufficient to produce songs and poems, as if that feeling has ever been in a position to create something artistic. The precondition of opera is a false belief about the artistic process; it is, in fact, the idyllic faith that in reality every sensitive man is an artist. According to the meaning of this belief, opera is the expression of lay amateurs in art, something which dictates its laws with the cheerful optimism of theoretical man.

If we wanted to bring together into a single conception both of these ideas I have just described in connection with the origin of opera, all we would have left to do is to speak of an idyllic tendency in opera – and the only things we would need to use are Schiller's way of expressing himself and his explanation. He claimed that nature and the ideal are either an object of sorrow, when the former is represented as lost and the latter as unattained or both are an object of joy, when they are represented as real. The first produces the elegy in a narrower sense, and the other produces the idyll in its broadest sense. And right away we must draw attention to the common characteristic of both of these ideas in the genesis of opera – that in them the ideal does not register as unattained and nature does not register as lost.

According to this feeling, there was a primordial time for man when he lay on the heart of nature and, with this state of nature, simultaneously attained the ideal of humanity in paradisal goodness and artistry. We all are said to have descended from these perfect primitive men, indeed, we still were their faithful image – we only had to cast some things away from us in order to recognize ourselves once again as these primitive people, thanks to a voluntary renunciation of superfluous scholarship, of lavish culture.

Through his operatic imitation of Greek tragedy, the educated man of the Renaissance let himself be led back to such a harmony of nature and the ideal, to an idyllic reality. He used this tragedy, as Dante used Virgil, to be brought right up to the gates of paradise, while from this point on he strode even further on his own and passed over from an imitation of the highest Greek art form to a "restoration of all things," to a copy of man's original art world.

What a confident good nature there is in these audacious attempts, right in the bosom of theoretical culture! Something to be explained only by the comforting faith that "man in himself" is the eternally virtuous hero of opera, the eternally piping or singing shepherd, who must always in the end rediscover himself as such, should he find out at some time or other that he has really lost himself for a while – something which is only the fruit of that optimism which here arises out of the depths of the Socratic world view, like a sweetly seductive fragrant column of air.

Hence among the characteristics of opera there is no sense at all of that elegiac pain of eternal loss – there is rather the cheerfulness of an eternal rediscovery, the comfortable joy in an idyllic reality which man can at least imagine for himself at all times. But in doing this, man may perhaps at some point suspect that this imagined reality is nothing other than a fantastically silly indulgence. Anyone able to measure this against the fearful seriousness of true nature and to compare it with the actual primitive scenes of the

beginnings of humanity would have to cry out in disgust – Get rid of that phantom!

Nevertheless, we would be deceiving ourselves if we believed that such a playful being as opera could be chased away simply by a powerful shout, like a ghost. Whoever wants to destroy opera must undertake the struggle against that Alexandrine cheerfulness which expresses its favourite idea so naively in opera; in fact, opera is its real artistic form. But what can we expect for art itself from the effect of a form of art whose origins in general do not lie in the aesthetic realm but which have rather stolen from a half moralistic sphere over into the realm of art and which can deceive people about its hybrid origin only now and then?

On what juices does this parasitic operatic being feed itself, if not from the sap of true art? Are we not to assume that, under the influence of opera's idyllic seductions and its Alexandrine arts of flattering, the highest task of art, the one we should take really seriously – saving the eye from a glimpse into the horror of the night and through the healing balm of illusion rescuing the subject from the spasms brought about by the strivings of the will – would degenerate into a trend to empty and scattered diversion? What happens to the eternal truths of the Dionysian and the Apollonian in such a mixture of styles of the sort I have set down as the essence of the stilo rappresentativo, where the music is considered the servant and the libretto the master, where the music is compared to the body and the libretto to the soul, where the highest goal at best will aim at a descriptive tone painting, as it was earlier with the new Attic dithyramb, where the music is completely alienated from its true office, which is to be a Dionysian world-mirror, so that the only thing left for it is to imitate the essential forms of appearances, like a slave of phenomena, and to arouse superficial entertainment in the play of lines and proportions?

A rigorous examination shows how this fatal influence of opera on music coincides precisely with the entire development of modern music. The optimism lurking in the genesis of opera and in the essence of the culture represented through opera succeeded with alarming speed in stripping music of its Dionysian world meaning and stamping on it a formally playful and entertaining character. This transformation can only be compared to something like the metamorphosis of Aeschylean man into the Alexandrian cheerful man.

If in the explanation given above we have been right to link the disappearance of the Dionysian spirit with an extremely striking but so far unexplained transformation and degeneration of Greek man, what hopes must revive in us when the most certain favourable signs bring us the guarantee of the gradual awakening of the Dionysian spirit in our contemporary world! It is not possible that the divine power of Hercules should remain always impotent in voluptuous bondage to Omphale. Out of the Dionysian foundation of the German spirit a power has arisen which has nothing in common with the most basic assumptions of Socratic culture, something those assumptions cannot explain or excuse. Rather from the point of view of this culture it is experienced as something terrible which cannot be explained, as something overpoweringly hostile – and that is German music, above all as it is to be understood in its forceful orbit from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner.

Even in the best of circumstances what can the Socratic man of our day, greedy for knowledge, begin to make of this daemon rising from the inexhaustible depths? Neither from the lacework or arabesques of operatic melodies nor with the help of the arithmetic abacus of fugue and contrapuntal dialectic will a formula reveal itself in whose triple-powered light people can render that daemon obsequious and compel it to speak. What a spectacle when our aestheticians nowadays, with the fishing net of "beauty" all their own, strike at and try to catch that musical genius roaming about in front of them with incredible life, with movements which will not be judged according to eternal beauty any more than according to notions of the sublime. We should only inspect these patrons of music in person and at close quarters, when they cry out so tirelessly "Beauty! Beauty!" to see whether they look like educated and discriminating darling children of nature or whether they are not rather seeking a deceptively euphemistic form for their own crudity, an aesthetic pretext for their characteristically unfeeling sobriety. Here, for example, I'm thinking of Otto Jahn.

But the liar and hypocrite should beware of German music, for in the midst of all our culture it is precisely the one unalloyed pure and purifying fire spirit out from which and towards which all things move in a double orbit, as in the doctrine of the great Heraclitus of Ephesus: everything which we now call culture, education,

and civilization must at some point appear before the unerring judge Dionysus. Furthermore, let's remember how the spirit of German philosophy in Kant and Schopenhauer, streaming from the same springs, was able to annihilate the contented joy in existence of scholarly Socratism by demonstrating its boundaries, and how with this demonstration an infinitely deeper and more serious consideration of ethical questions and art was introduced, which we can truly describe as Dionysian wisdom conceptually understood.

Where does the mystery of this unity between German music and German philosophy point if not to a new form of existence, about whose meaning we can inform ourselves only by speculating on the basis of analogies with the Greeks? For the Greek model has this immeasurable value for us who stand on the border line between two different forms of existence – that in it are stamped all those transitions and struggles in a classically instructive form, except that we are, as it were, living through the great high points of Greek being in the reverse order. For example, we seem to be moving now out of an Alexandrian period backwards into a period of tragedy.

At the same time, we feel as if the birth of a tragic time period for the German spirit only means a return to itself, a blessed re-discovery of self, after immensely powerful forces from outside had for a long time forced it into servitude under their form, since that spirit, so far as form is concerned, lived in helpless barbarism. And now finally after its return home to the original spring of its being, it can dare to stride in here before all peoples, bold and free, without the guiding reins of Roman civilization. If only it can now understand how to learn all the time from a single people, the Greeks – being capable of learning from them is already a high honour and a remarkable distinction. And when have we needed these most eminent of mentors more than now, when we are experiencing the rebirth of tragedy and are in danger of not knowing where it is coming from or of being able to interpret where it is going?

20

At some point under the gaze of an incorruptible judge we may determine in what ages and in which men up to now the German spirit has struggled most powerfully to learn from the Greeks. And if we can assume with some confidence that this extraordinary praise must be awarded to the noblest cultural struggles of Goethe, Schiller, and Winckelmann, then we would certainly have to add that since that time and the most recent developments of that battle, the attempt to attain a culture and to reach the Greeks by the same route has become incomprehensibly weaker and weaker.

In order to avoid being forced into total despair about the German spirit, shouldn't we conclude from all this that in some important point or other these fighters were not successful in penetrating the Hellenic spirit and creating a lasting bond of love between German and Greek culture? And beyond that, perhaps an unconscious recognition of this failure gives rise in serious people to the enervating doubt whether, after such predecessors, they could go even further than these men had along this cultural path and reach their goal at all. For that reason since that time we've seen judgments about the educational value of the Greeks degenerate in the most disturbing way. We can hear expressions of sympathetic condescension in the most varied encampments of the spirit and of the lack of spirit. In other places a completely ineffectual sweet talk flirts with "Greek harmony," "Greek beauty," and "Greek cheerfulness."

And precisely in the circles which could dignify themselves by drawing tirelessly from the Greek river bed in order to benefit German education – the circles of teachers in the institutes of higher education – people have learned best to come to terms with the Greeks early and in a comfortable manner, often with a sceptical abandoning of the Hellenic ideal and a total reversal of the real purpose of classical studies. In general, anyone in these circles who hasn't completely exhausted himself in the effort to be a dependable corrector of old texts or a microscopic studier of language, like some natural historian may perhaps also seek to acquire Greek antiquity "historically," as well as other antiquities, but in any case following the methods of our present scholarly writing, along with their supercilious expressions.

If, as a result, the real cultural power of our institutions of higher learning has certainly never been lower and weaker than at present, if the "journalist," the paper slave of the day, has won his victory over the professors so far as culture is concerned and the only thing still left for the latter

is the frequently experienced metamorphosis which has them also moving around these days with the speech styles of a journalist, with the "light elegance" of this sphere, like cheerful well-educated butterflies, then how awkward and confusing it must be for people living in such a present and educated in this manner to stare at that phenomenon of the revival of the Dionysian spirit and the rebirth of tragedy, something which may only be understood by some analogy to the most profound principles of the as yet incomprehensible Hellenic genius.

There is no other artistic period in which so-called culture and true art have stood more alienated from and averse to each other than what we witness with our own eyes nowadays. We understand why such a weak culture despises true art, for it fears such art will destroy it. But surely an entire form of culture, i.e., the Socratic-Alexandrian, must have run its full life after being able to culminate in such a delicate and insignificant point as our present culture.

When heroes like Schiller and Goethe couldn't succeed in breaking down that enchanted door which leads to the Hellenic magic mountain, when for all their most courageous struggles they reached no further than that yearning gaze which Goethe's Iphigeneia sent from barbaric Tauris over the sea towards her home, what is left for the imitators of such heroes to hope for, unless from some totally different side, untouched by all the efforts of previous culture, the door might suddenly open on its own – to the accompaniment of the mysterious sound of the reawakened music of tragedy.

Let no one try to detract from our belief in a still imminent rebirth of Hellenic antiquity, for that's the only place where we find our hope for a renewal and reformation of the German spirit through the fiery magic of music. What would we otherwise know to name which amid the desolation and weariness of contemporary culture could awaken some comforting expectation for the future? We look in vain for a single powerfully branching root, for a spot of fertile and healthy soil – but everywhere there is dust, sand, ossification, and decay. Here a desperate, isolated man couldn't choose a better symbol than the knight with Death and the Devil, as Dürer has drawn him for us, the knight in armour with the hard bronze gaze, who knows how to make his way along his terrible path, without wavering at his horrific companions – and yet without any hope, alone with his horse and hound. Such a Dürer knight was our Schopenhauer: he lacked all hope, but he wanted the truth. There is no one like him.

But how suddenly that wilderness of such an exhausted culture as the one I have just sketched out so gloomily changes when the Dionysian magic touches it! A tempest seizes everything worn out, rotten, broken apart, and stunted, wraps it in a red whirling cloud of dust, and lifts it like a vulture up into the air. In our bewilderment, our gaze seeks out what has disappeared, for what we see has risen up as if from oblivion into golden light, so full and green, so richly alive, so immeasurable and full of longing. Tragedy sits in the midst of this superfluity of life, suffering, and joy; with awe-inspiring delight it listens to a distant melancholy song, which tells of the mothers of being whose names are Delusion, Will, and Woe.

Yes, my friends, believe with me in the Dionysian life and in the rebirth of tragedy. The age of the Socratic man is over: crown yourselves with ivy, take the thyrsus stalk in your hand, and don't be amazed when tigers and panthers lie down fawning at your feet. Only now you must dare to be tragic men, for you will be redeemed. You are to lead the Dionysian celebratory procession from India to Greece! Arm yourselves for a hard battle, but have faith in the miracles of your god!

21

Moving back from this tone of exhortation into a mood suitable for contemplation, I repeat that only from the Greeks can we learn what such a miraculously sudden awakening of tragedy can mean for the innermost fundamental life of a people. It is the people of tragic mystery who fight the Persian wars, and again the people whocarried on these wars uses tragedy as an essential potion in their recovery. Who would have supposed that such a people, after being stirred right to their innermost being for several generations by the strongest paroxysms of the Dionysian demon, were still capable of a regular and powerful outpouring of the simplest political feeling, the most natural instinctive feeling for their homeland, the original manly desire to fight?

Nonetheless, if we always sense in that remarkable extension of oneself into one's surroundings associated with Dionysian arousal

how Dionysian release from the shackles of individuality registers at first as a heightened indifference – even apathy and hostility – to the political instincts, on the other hand, Apollo, the nation builder, is also the genius of the principium individuationis [individualizing principle], and a sense of state and homeland cannot survive without an affirmation of the individual personality.

From ecstatic experience there is only one way out for a people, the route to Indian Buddhism, which, with its longing for nothingness, in order to be endurable requires those rare ecstatic states with their ascent above space, time, and individuality. These states, in their turn, demand a philosophy which teaches people to use some idea to overcome the unimaginable dreariness of intermediate states. In cases where the political drives are considered unconditionally valid, it's equally necessary for a people to turn to the path of the most extreme forms of secularization. The most magnificent but also the most terrifying example of this is the Roman empire.

Standing between India and Rome and forced to make a tempting choice, the Greeks succeeded in inventing a third form in classical purity. Of course, they did not make use of it for long, but for that very reason they made it immortal. That fact that the darlings of the gods die early holds in all things, but it's equally certain that then they live among the gods for ever. So people should not demand from the noblest thing of all that it should possess the hard-wearing durability of leather – that crude toughness characteristic of the Roman national impulses, for example, probably does not belong to the necessary predicates of perfection.

But if we ask what remedies made it possible for the Greek in their great period, with the extraordinary strength of their Dionysian and political drives, not to exhaust themselves either with an ecstatic brooding or in a consuming pursuit of world power and worldly honour, but to reach that marvelous mixture – just as a noble wine makes one feel fiery and meditative at the same time – then we must keep in mind the immense power of tragedy, which stimulated the entire people, purifying them and giving them release. We will first sense its highest value when it confronts us, as with the Greeks, as the essence of all prophylactic healing potions, as the mediator between the strongest and inherently most disastrous characteristics of a people.

Tragedy draws the highest ecstatic music into itself, so that, with the Greeks, as with us, it immediately brings music to perfection. But then it places the tragic myth and the tragic hero next to the music, who then, like a powerful Titan, takes the whole Dionysian world on his back and thus relieves us of it. On the other hand with the same tragic myth, in the person of the tragic hero, tragedy knows how to redeem us from the avid pressure for this existence and with a warning hand reminds us of another state of being and a higher pleasure for which the struggling hero, full of foreboding, is preparing himself, not through his victory but through his destruction.

Tragedy places between the universal validity of its music and the listener sensitive to the Dionysian an awe-inspiring parable – the myth – and with that gives rise to an illusion, as if the music is only the production's highest device for bringing life to the plastic world of myth. Trusting in this noble deception, tragedy can now move its limbs in the dithyrambic dance and abandon itself unconsciously to an ecstatic feeling of freedom in which it would not dare to revel without that deception.

The myth protects us from the music, while it, by contrast, immediately gives the music its highest freedom. In return, the music gives back to the tragic myth, as a return gift, an urgent and convincing metaphysical significance, of a kind which words and pictures never could attain without its help. And particularly through the music there comes over the spectator of tragedy that certain presentiment of the highest joy, the road to which leads through destruction and negation, so that he thinks what he hears is like the innermost abyss of things speaking to him out loud.

If in these last sentences I have perhaps tried to provide only a provisional expression of this complex idea, something immediately intelligible to few people, at this very point I cannot refrain from encouraging my friends to a further attempt and from asking them to prepare themselves with a single example of our common experience in order to recognize a general principle.

With this example, I must not refer to those who use the images of the action in the scenes – the words and emotions of active people – in order with their help to come closer to the feeling of the music. For none of them speaks music as a mother tongue, and, for all that help, they proceed no further than the lobbies of musical perception, without ever being able to touch its innermost

shrine. Some of these who take this road, like Gervinus, don't even succeed in reaching the lobby. But I must turn only to those who have an immediate relationship with music and who find in it, as it were, their mother's womb, those who stand bound up with things almost exclusively through an unconscious musical relationship.

To these true musicians I direct the question: Can they imagine a person capable of perceiving the third act of Tristan and Isolde as an immense symphonic movement, getting no help from words and images, without suffocating from a convulsive spreading of all the wings of his soul? A man who, as in this case, has set his ear, so to speak, on the heart chambers of the world's will, who feels in himself the raging desire for existence pouring forth into all the veins of the world as a thundering rainstorm or as the most delicately spraying brook – would such a man not fall apart on the spot? Could he endure hearing in the suffering glass case of human individuality the echo of countless desires – and cries of woe from the "wide space of the world's night," without, in the midst of this shepherd's medley of metaphysics, inexorably flying off to his original home? But what if nonetheless such a work could be perceived as a totality, without the denial of individual existence, what if such a creation could be produced without shattering its creator – where do we get the solution to such a contradiction?

Here between our highest musical excitement and this music the tragic myth and the tragic hero interpose themselves, basically only as a parable of the most universal facts of all, about which only music can speak directly. However, if we felt as purely Dionysian beings, then myth would be entirely ineffectual as a parable and would remain there beside us unnoticed. It would not make us turn our ears away for an instant from listening to the echo of the universalia ante rem [the universal before the fact].

But here the Apollonian power breaks through, preparing for the reintegration of shattered individuality with the healing balm of blissful illusion. Suddenly we think we see only Tristan, motionless and dazed, as he asks himself, "The old melody – what does it awaken for me?" And what earlier struck us as an empty sigh from the centre of being now only says to us something like "the barren, empty sea." And where we imagined we were dying in a convulsive inner working out of all our feelings with only a little linking us to this existence, now we hear and see only the hero mortally wounded and yet not dying, with his cry full of despair, "Longing! Longing! In death still yearning not to die from yearning!" And when earlier, after such an excess and such a huge number of torments consuming us, the jubilation of the horns, almost like an extreme agony, cuts through our hearts, there stands between us and this "jubilation in itself" the celebrating Kurwenal, turned towards the ship carrying Isolde. No matter how powerful the compassion gripping us inside, in a certain sense, nonetheless, this compassion saves us from the primordial suffering of the world, just as the symbolic picture of myth saves us from the immediate look at the highest world idea, just as thoughts and words save us from the unrestrained outpouring of the unconscious will. Because of that marvelous Apollonian deception it seems to us as if the empire of music confronted us as a plastic world, as if only Tristan's and Isolde's destiny had been formed and stamped out in pictures in the most delicate and expressive of all material.

Thus the Apollonian rescues us from Dionysian universality and delights us with individuals. It attaches our aroused feelings of sympathy to them, and with them it satisfies our sense of beauty, our longing for great and awe-inspiring forms. It presents images of life to us and provokes us to a thoughtful grasp of the kernel of life contained in them. With the immense power of imagery, ideas, ethical instruction, and sympathetic arousal, the Apollonian lifts man up out of his ecstatic self-destruction and blinds him to the universality of the Dionysian process, leading him to the delusion that he is watching just one image of the world (for example, Tristan and Isolde) and that the music only helps him see it better and with greater profundity.

What can the skilful healing power of Apollo's magic not achieve, if it can even excite in us this delusion, so that it seems as if the Dionysian is really working to serve the Apollonian, capable of intensifying its effects – in fact, as if the music was essentially an artistic presentation of an Apollonian content?

With that pre-established harmony which reigns between the perfect drama and its music, drama attains an extreme degree of vividness, something which verbal drama cannot approach. In the independently moving melodic lines all the living forms in the scene simplify themselves into

the clarity of curved lines, and the juxtaposition of these lines sounds out to us, sympathizing in the most delicate way with the action as it moves forward. As this happens, the relation of things becomes immediately audible to us in a more sensuously perceptible way, which has nothing abstract about it at all, as we also recognize through it that only in these relations does the essence of a character and of a melodic line clearly reveal itself.

And while the music compels us in this way to see more and more profoundly than ever and the scenic action spreads itself in front of us like a delicate spider's web, our inner view of the world of the stage is infinitely widened and illuminated from within. What could a word poet offer analogous to this – someone who struggles with a very imperfect mechanism in indirect ways to attain with words and ideas that inner expansion of the vivid world of the stage and its inner illumination? Musical tragedy, of course, also uses the word, but at the same time it can set beside it the fundamental basis and origin of that word and reveal to us from inside what that word has become.

But nonetheless we could just as surely claim about this depiction of the action that it is only a marvelous appearance, i.e., that previously mentioned Apollonian delusion, through whose effects we should be relieved of the Dionysian surge and excess. In fact, the relationship between music and drama is fundamentally the reverse – the music is the essential idea of the word, and the drama is only a reflection of this idea, its isolated silhouette.

This identity between the melodic line and the living form, between the harmony and the relations of the characters in that form, is true in an sense opposite to what it might seem to be for us as we look at musical tragedy. We may well stir up the form in the most visible way, enliven and illuminate it from within, but it always remains only an appearance, from which there is no bridge leading to true reality, to the heart of the world. But music speaks out from this heart, and though countless appearances could clothe themselves in the same music, they would never exhaust its essence – they would always be only its external reflection.

And, of course, with the complex relationship between music and drama nothing is explained and everything is confused by the popular and entirely false contrast between the soul and the body. But among our aestheticians it's precisely the unphilosophical crudity of this contrast which seems to have become, for reasons nobody knows, a well known article of faith, while they have learned nothing about the difference between the appearance and the thing-in-itself or, for similarly unknown reasons, don't want to learn anything.

If one result of our analysis might be that the Apollonian in tragedy, thanks to its deception, emerges victorious over the primordial Dionysian elements of music and makes use of these for its own purposes, that is, for the highest dramatic clarity, a very important reservation naturally follows: at the most essential point of all that Apollonian deception is broken up and destroyed. Drama, which, with the help of music, spreads out in front of us with such innerly illuminated clarity in all its movements and forms, as if we were seeing the fabric on the loom while the shuttle moves back and forth, achieves its effect as a totality which lies beyond all the artistic workings of the Apollonian. In the total action of tragedy the Dionysian regains its superiority once more. Tragedy ends with a tone which never could resound from the realm of Apollonian art.

And as that happens, the Apollonian deception reveals itself for what it is, as the veil which, so long as the tragedy is going on, has covered the essentially Dionysian effect. But this Dionysian effect is nonetheless so powerful that at the end it drives the Apollonian drama itself into a sphere where it begins to speak with Dionysian wisdom and where it denies itself and its Apollonian visibility. So we could truly symbolize the complex relationship between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in tragedy with the fraternal bond between both divinities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, but Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus, and with that the highest goal of tragedy and art in general is attained.

22

An attentive friend should remind himself, from his own experience, of the pure and unmixed effect of a truly musical tragedy. I think I have described what this effect is like, attending to both aspects of it, so that he will now know how to clarify his own experience for himself. For he will recall how, confronted with the myth unfolding in front of him, he felt himself raised up to some sort of omniscience, as if now the visual power

of his eyes was not merely a force dealing with surfaces but was capable of penetrating within, as if, with the help of the music, he could see in front him the turbulent feelings of the will, the war of motives, the growing storm of passions as something which is, as it were, sensuously present, like an abundance of living lines and figures in motion, and thus as if he could plunge into the most delicate secrets of unknown emotions.

As he becomes conscious of this highest intensification of his instincts which aim for clarity and transfiguration, nonetheless he feels with equal certainty that this long series of Apollonian artistic effects does not produce that delightful indifference of will-less contemplation which the sculptor and the epic poet – that is, the genuine Apollonian artist – bring out in him with their works of art, that is, the justification of the world of the individual attained in that contemplation, which is the peak and essence of Apollonian art. He looks at the transfigured world of the stage and yet denies it.

He sees the tragic hero in front of him in his epic clarity and beauty and, nonetheless, takes pleasure in his destruction. He understands the scenic action to its innermost core, and yet joyfully flies off into the incomprehensible. He feels the actions of the hero as justified and is, nonetheless, still more uplifted when these actions destroy the one who initiated them. He shudders at the suffering which the hero is about to encounter and, nonetheless, because of it has a premonition of a higher, much more overpowering joy. He perceives more things and more profoundly than ever before and yet wishes he were blind.

Where would we be able to derive this miraculous division of the self, this collapse of the Apollonian climax, if not from Dionysian magic, which, while it apparently excites the Apollonian feelings to their highest point, nevertheless can still force this exuberance of Apollonian art into its service? The tragic myth can only be understood as a symbolic picture of Dionysian wisdom by means of Apollonian art. It leads the world of appearances to its limits where it denies itself and once again seeks to fly back into the bosom of the true and single reality, at which point it seems, like Isolde, to sing its metaphysical swan song.

"In the surging torrents
of seas of my desires,
in resounding tones
of fragrant waves,
in the blowing
All of the world's breath –
to drown, to sink down
to lose consciousness –
the highest joy."

So we remember the experiences of the truly aesthetic listener, the tragic artist himself, as he, like a voluptuous divinity of individualism, creates his forms – in which sense his work can scarcely be understood as an "imitation of nature" – and as his immense Dionysian drive then devours this entire world of appearances in order to allow him, through its destruction, to have a premonition of the original and highest artistic joy in the primordial One.

Of course, our aestheticians don't know what to write about this return journey to our original home, about the fraternal bond of the brother gods of art in tragedy, any more than they do about the Apollonian or the Dionysian excitement of the listener, while they never weary of characterizing as the essential feature of the tragic the struggle of the hero with fate, the victory of a moral world order, or the purging of the emotions achieved by tragedy. Such tireless efforts lead me to the thought that in general they may be men incapable of aesthetic excitement, so that when they hear a tragedy perhaps they think of themselves only as moral beings.

Since Aristotle, there has not yet been an explanation of the tragic effect from which one might be able to infer aesthetic conditions or the aesthetic capability of the listener. Sometimes pity and fear are supposed to be pushed by the serious action to an discharge which brings relief. At other times, we are supposed to feel enthusiastic and elevated because of the victory of good and noble principles, by the sacrifice of the hero, taking that as a service to a moral world order.

I have no doubt that for countless men that and only that is precisely the effect of tragedy. But this reveals equally clearly that all these people, together with their aesthetic interpreters, have experienced nothing of tragedy as the highest art. That pathological purgation, the catharsis of Aristotle, which the philologues are uncertain whether to count a medical or a moral phenomenon, brings to mind a remarkable idea of Goethe's. "Without a living pathological interest," he says, "I have also never succeeded in working on any kind of tragic situation, and therefore I

prefer to avoid it rather than seek it out. Could it perhaps be the case that among the merits of the ancients the highest degree of the pathetic was also only aesthetic play for them, while with us the truth of nature must be there as well in order for such a work to be produced?"

After our glorious experiences we can now answer yes to this profound question – after we have experienced with wonder precisely this musical tragedy, how truly the highest degree of the pathetic can be, for all that, only an aesthetic game. For that reason, we're justified in claiming that only now can the primordial phenomenon of the tragic be described with some success. Anyone who nowadays still provides explanations in terms of those surrogate effects from spheres beyond aesthetics and doesn't sense that he has risen above the pathological and moralistic processes may well despair of his aesthetic nature. For that condition we recommend as an innocent substitute the interpretation of Shakespeare the way Gervinus does it with the diligent search for "poetic justice."

So with the rebirth of tragedy the aesthetic listener is also born again, in whose place up to this point a strange quid pro quo habitually sat in the theatre space, with half moral and half scholarly demands – the "critic." In his sphere so far everything has been only synthetic and whitewashed with the appearance of life. The performing artist in fact didn't really know what he could begin to do with a listener who behaved so critically, and therefore he, together with dramatist or opera composer who inspired him, peered anxiously for the last remnants of life in this discriminating, barren creature incapable of enjoying itself.

But up to this point the general public has consisted of this sort of "critic." Through education and the press, the student, the school child, indeed even the most harmless female creature has been prepared, without being aware of it, to perceive a work of art in a similar manner. The more noble natures among the artists, faced with such a public, counted on exciting moral and religious forces, and the call for "a moral world view" stepped in vicariously, where, in fact, a powerful artistic magic should have entranced the real listener. Alternatively, dramatists with a pronounced and at least exciting proclivity for contemporary political and social issues brought out such clear productions that the listener could forget his critical exhaustion and let himself go with feelings like patriotism or militaristic moments, or in front of the speaker's desk in parliament or with judicial sentences for crimes and vices. And that necessarily led to an alienation from true artistic purposes and directly to a culture of attitudinizing.

But here there stepped in, what in every artificial art up to now has intervened, a ragingly quick deprivation of that very attitudinizing, so that, for example, the view that the theatre should be used as an institution for the moral education of a people, something taken serious in Schiller's day, is already counted among the incredible antiquities of an education which has been superceded. As the critic came to rule in the theatre and concert and the journalist in the schools and the press in society, art degenerated into an object of entertainment of the basest sort, and the aesthetic critic was used as a way of binding together in a vain, scattered, selfish, and, beyond this, pitifully unoriginal society, of which we can get some sense in Schopenhauer's parable of the porcupines, so there has never been a time when there has been so much chatter about art and when people think so little of it. But can't we still associate with someone who is in a position to entertain himself with Beethoven and Shakespeare? Everyone may answer this question according to his own feelings – with his answer he will at any rate demonstrate what he imagines by the word "culture," provided he seeks to answer the question at all and is not already struck dumb with astonishment.

By contrast, someone with a nobler and more naturally refined ability – even if he also has gradually turned into a critical barbarian in the manner described above – could say something about an unexpected and entirely incomprehsible effect of the sort which something like a happily successful production of Lohengrin had on him, except perhaps he didn't have a hand which could advise him and clearly lead him, so that that incomprehensibly varied and totally incomparable sensation which so shook him at the time remained a single example and, after a short period of illumination, died out, like a mysterious star. That was the moment he had a presentiment of what an aesthetic listener is.

23

Anyone who wants an accurate test for himself to see how closely related he is to the truly aesthetic listener or how much he belongs with the Socratic-critical community could sincerely ask himself about the feelings with which he

receives some miracle presented on stage. In that situation, for example, does he feel offended in his historical sense, which organizes itself on strict psychological causality, or does he, in a spirit of generosity, as it were, make a concession to the miracle as something comprehensible in childhood but foreign to him, or does he suffer anything else at all in that process?

For in doing this he will be able to measure how far, in general, he is capable of understanding the myth, the concentrated image of the world, which, as an abbreviation of appearance, cannot work without the miracle. However, it's likely that almost everyone in a strict test would feel himself so thoroughly corrupted by the critical-historical spirit of our culture that he could make the previous existence of the myth credible only with something scholarly, by compromising with some abstractions. However, without myth that culture forfeits its healthy creative natural power: only a horizon reorganized through myth completes the unity of an entire cultural movement.

Through myth all the powers of illusion and of Apollonian dream are first rescued from their random wandering around. The images of myth must be the unseen, omnipresent demonic sentries under whose care the young soul matures and by whose signs a man interprets his life and struggles for himself. Even the state knows no more powerful unwritten laws than the mythical foundation which guarantees its connection to religion, its growth out of mythic ideas.

Alongside that let's now place abstract people, those who are not led by myths, as well as abstract education, abstract customs, abstract law, the abstract state. Let's remember the disorderly roaming of artistic fantasy which is not restrained by any secret myth. Let's imagine a culture which has no fixed and sacred primordial seat but which is condemned to exhaust all possibilities and to live on a meagre diet from all other cultures – and there we have the present, the result of that Socratism whose aim is to destroy myth.

And now the man without a myth stands there, eternally hungry, in the midst of all past ages, rummaging around and digging as he looks for roots, even if he has to shovel for them in the most remote ancient times. What is revealed in the immense historical need of this dissatisfied modern culture, the gathering up of countless other cultures, the consuming desire to know, if not the loss of myth, the loss of the mythic homeland, of the mythic maternal womb?

Let's ask ourselves whether the feverish and eerie inner excitements of this culture is something other than a starving man's greedy snatch and grab for food – and who would still want to give such a culture anything, when nothing which it gobbles down satisfies it and when, at its touch, the most powerful and healthiest nourishment usually changes into "history and criticism."

We would also have to experience painful despair over our German being, if it is already inextricably intermixed in a similar way with its culture, or, indeed, if they have become a single unit, as we can observe, to our horror, with civilized France. What for a long time constituted the great merit of France and the cause of its huge superiority – that very unity of being in people and culture – should make us, when we look at it, praise our luck and give thanks that such a questionable culture has had nothing in common up to this point with the noble core of our people's character.

Instead of that, all our hopes are reaching out yearningly towards the perception that under his restless cultural life jumping around here and there and these cultural convulsions lies hidden a glorious, innerly healthy, and age-old power, which naturally only begins to stir into powerful motion at tremendous moments and then goes on dreaming once again about a future awakening. Out of this abyss the German Reformation arose. In its choral music there rang out for the first time the future style of German music. Luther's choral works sounded as profound, courageous, spiritual, as exhuberantly good and tender as the first Dionysian call rising up out of the thickly growing bushes at the approach of spring. In answer to it came the competing echo of that solemn procession of Dionysian dreamers, whom we have to thank for German music and whom we will thank for the rebirth of the German myth!

I know that now I have to take the sympathetic friend who is following me to a lofty place for lonely contemplation, where he will have only a few travelling companions. By way of encouragement I call out to him that we have to keep hold of those leaders who illuminate the way for us, the Greeks. Up to now in order to purify our aesthetic awareness, we have borrowed from them both of those images of the gods, each of whom rules a specific artistic realm, and by considering Greek tragedy, we came to an awareness of their mutual contact and intensification.

To us the downfall of Greek tragedy must seem to have occurred through a remarkable tearing apart of both of these primordial artistic drives. And this event corresponded to a degeneration and transformation of the character of the Greek people – something which demands from us some serious reflection about how necessarily and closely art and people, myth and custom, tragedy and the state are fundamentally intertwined.

That downfall of tragedy was at the same time the downfall of myth. Up to that point the Greeks were instinctively compelled to tie everything they lived through immediately to their myths – in fact, to understand that experience only through this link. By doing that, even the most recent present moment had to appear to them at once sub species aeterni [under the eye of eternity] and thus, in a certain sense, to be timeless. In this stream of the timeless, however, the state and art both plunged equally, in order to find in it rest from the weight and the greed of the moment. And a people (as well as a person, by the way) is only worth as much as it can stamp upon its experiences the mark of the eternal, for in that way it is, as it were, relieved of the burden of the world and demonstrates its unconscious inner conviction of the relativity of time and of the True, that is, of the metaphysical meaning of life.

Something quite different from this happens when a people begins to understand itself historically and to smash up the mythic bastions standing around it. It is customary for a decisive secularization, a breach with the unconscious metaphysics of its earlier existence, with all the ethical consequences, to be tied in with this process. Greek art and especially Greek tragedy above all checked the destruction of myth. People had to destroy them in order to be able to live detached from their home soil, unrestrained in the wildness of thought, custom, and action.

But now this metaphysical drive still tries to create, even in a toned down form, a transfiguration for itself, in the Socratism of science which pushes toward life. But on the lower steps this very drive led only to a feverish search, which gradually lost itself in a pandemonium of myths and superstitions from all over the place all piled up together. For all that, the Hellene still sat in the middle this pile with an unquenched heart, until he understood to mask that fever, like Graeculus, with Greek cheerfulness and Greek negligence or to plunge completely into some stupefying oriental superstition or other.

In the most obvious way, since the reawakening of Alexandrian-Roman antiquity in the fifteenth century after a long and difficult to describe interval, we have come closer to this condition. Up on the heights this same abundant desire for knowledge, the same dissatisfied happiness in discovery, the same immense secularization, alongside a homeless wandering around, a greedy thronging at foreign tables, a reckless idolizing of the present or a lifeless numbed turning away – with everything sub specie saeculi [under the eye of the secular age], of the "present age."

These same symptoms lead us to suspect the same lack at the heart of this culture – the destruction of myth. It seems hardly possible that transplanting a foreign myth would enjoy any lasting success, without irreparably damaging the tree in the transplant. Perhaps it is at some point strong and healthy enough to slice out this foreign element with a fearful struggle, but usually it must proliferate its diseased condition, sick and faded.

We have such a high regard for the pure and powerful core of the German being that it is precisely there we dare to expect from it that elimination of powerfully planted foreign elements and consider it possible that the German spirit will come back into an awareness of itself on its own. Perhaps some people will think that this spirit would have start its struggle with the elimination of the Romantic But at that point he has to remember an external preparation and encouragement in the victorious courage and bloody glory of the recent war but search for the inner necessity in the competitive striving always to be worthy of the noble pioneers on this road, including Luther just as much as our great artists and poets.

But let him never believe that he can fight such a battle without his house gods, without his mythic homeland, without a "bringing back" of all German things! And if the German in his hesitation should look around him for a leader who will take him back again to his long lost home land, whose roads and pathways he hardly knows any more, let him only listen to the sweet enticing call of the Dionysian bird hovering above him seeking to show him the way.

24

Among the characteristic artistic effects of musical tragedy we had to stress an Apollonian illusion through which we are supposedly

rescued from immediate unity of being with the Dionysian music, while our musical excitement can discharge itself in an Apollonian sphere, in a visible middle world which interposed itself. By doing this we though we had noticed how, through this discharge, that this middle world of the scenic action, the drama in general, to a certain degree became visible and comprehensible from within, in a way which is unattainable in all other Apollonian art. Hence, it was here, where the Apollonian is energized and raised aloft, as it were, through the spirit of the music, we had to recognize the highest intensification of its power and, therefore, in the fraternal bond of Apollo and Dionysus the highest point of both Apollonian and Dionysian artistic aims.

Of course, the projected Apollonian image with this inner illumination through music does not achieve the effect characteristic of the weaker degrees of Apollonian art – what epic or animated stone are capable of, compelling the contemplating eye to that calm delight in the world of the individual. In spite of a higher animation and clarity, that effect will not permit itself to be attained.

We looked at drama and with a penetrating gaze forced our way into the inner moving world of its motives – and nonetheless for us it was as if only an allegorical picture passed before us, whose most profound meaning we thought we could almost guess and which we wanted to pull aside, like a curtain, in order to look at the primordial image behind it. The brightest clarity of the image did not satisfy us. For this seemed to hide just as much as it revealed. And while, with its allegorical-like revelation, it seemed to promise to rip aside the veil, to disclose the mysterious background, once again that penetrating light illuminating everything held the eye in its spell and held it from penetrating any more deeply.

Anyone who has not had the experience of having to watch and, at the same time, of yearning to go above and beyond watching will have difficulty imagining how definitely and clearly these two processes exist together and are felt alongside each other as one observes the tragic myth. However, the truly aesthetic spectators will confirm for me that among the peculiar effects of tragedy this co-existence may be the most remarkable.

If we now translate this phenomenon going on in the aesthetic spectator into an analogous process in the tragic artist, we will have understood the genesis of the tragic myth. He shares with the Apollonian sphere of art the full joy in appearances and in watching – at the same time he denies this joy and has an even higher satisfaction in the destruction of the visible world of appearances.

The content of the tragic myth is at first an epic event with the glorification of the struggling hero. But what is the origin of that inherently mysterious feature, the fact that the suffering in the fate of the hero, the most painful victories, the most agonizing opposition of motives, in short, the exemplification of that wisdom of Silenus, or, expressing it aesthetically, of the ugly and dissonant, in so many countless forms, is presented with such fondness, always renewed – and precisely in the richest and youngest age of a people? Do we not perceive in all this a higher pleasure?

For the fact that in life things are really so tragic would at least account for the development of an art form – if art is not only an imitation of natural reality but a metaphysical supplement to that reality, set beside it in order to overcome it. And the tragic myth, in so far as it belongs to art at all, also participates fully in this general purpose of art to provide metaphysical transfiguration. But what does it transfigure, when it leads out the world of appearance in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the "Reality" of this world of appearances, for it says directly to us: "Look here! Look right here! This is your life! Tis is the hour hand on the clock of your existence!"

And does the myth show us this life in order to transfigure it for us? If not, in what does the aesthetic joy consist with which we also allow these images to pass in front of us? I ask about aesthetic delight and know full well that many of these images can in addition now and then still produce a moral pleasure, for example, in the form of pity or a moral triumph. But whoever wants to derive the effect of the tragic merely from these moral origins – as, of course, has been customary in aesthetics for far too long – should not think that he has then done anything for art, which above all must demand purity in its realm. For an explanation of the tragic myth the very first demand is that he seek that joy characteristic of it in the purely aesthetic sphere, without reaching over into the territory of pity, fear, and the morally sublime. How can the ugly and dissonant, the content of the tragic myth, excite an aesthetic delight?

Here it is necessary for us to vault with a bold leap into a metaphysics of art, in which I repeat an earlier sentence – that existence and the world appear justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. It's in this sense that the tragic myth has to convince us that even the ugly and dissonant are an artistic game, which the will, in the eternal abundance of its joy, plays with itself. But there's a direct way to make this ur-phenomenon of Dionysian art, so difficult to comprehend, completely understandable and to enable one to grasp it immediately – through the miraculous meaning of musical dissonance, the way the music, set next to the world, is the only thing that can give an idea of what it means to understand a justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. The joy which the tragic myth produces has the same homeland as the delightful sensation of dissonance in music. The Dionysian, together with its primordial joy felt even in pain, is the common birth womb of music and the tragic myth.

Thus, shouldn't we have made that difficult problem of the tragic effect really much easier now that we have called on the relation of musical dissonance to help us? For now we understand what it means in tragedy to want to keep looking and at the same time to yearn for something beyond what we see. We would have to characterize this condition in relation to the artistic use of dissonance precisely as the fact that we want to keep listening and at the same time yearn to get beyond what we hear.

That striving for the infinite, the wing beat of longing, associated with the highest delight in clearly perceived reality, reminds us that in both states we must recognize a Dionysian phenomenon, which always reveals to us all over again the playful cracking apart and destruction of the world of the individual as the discharge of primordial delight, in a manner similar to the one in which gloomy Heraclitus compares the force constructing the world to a child who playfully sets stones here and there, builds sand piles, and then knocks them down again.

And thus in order to assess the Dionysian capability of a people correctly, we have to think not just about their music; we must also to think about their tragic myth as the second feature of that capacity. Given this closest of relationships between music and myth, now we can in a similar way assume that a degeneration or deprivation of one of them will be linked to a decline in the other, if a weakening of myth in general manifests itself in a weakening of the Dionysian capability.

But concerning both of these, a look at the development of the German being should leave us in no doubt: in the opera as well as in the abstract character of our myth- deprived existence, in an art which has sunk down to mere entertainment as well as in a life guided by concepts, that inartistic and equally life-draining nature of Socratic optimism stands revealed.

For our consolation, however, there are indications that in spite of everything the German spirit rests and dreams in magnificent health, its profundity and Dionysian power undamaged, like a knight sunk down in slumber in an inaccessible abyss. And from this abyss, the Dionysian song rises up to us in order to make us understand that this German knight is also still dreaming his age-old Dionysian myth in solemn blissful visions. Let no one believe that the German spirit has lost for ever its mythic homeland, when it still understands so clearly the voice of the birds which tell of that homeland. One day it will find itself awake in all the morning freshness of an immense sleep. Th itself will not be able to block its way. My friends, you who have faith in Dionysian music, you also know what tragedy means to us. In it we have the tragic myth, reborn from music – and in it you must hope for everything and forget what is most distressing! The most painful thing, however, for all of us is this – the long degradation under which the German genius, alienated from house and home, has lived in service to that crafty dwarf. You understand my words – as you also will understand my hopes as I conclude.

25

Music and tragic myth are equally an expression of the Dionysian capacity of a people and are inseparable from each other. Both derive from an artistic realm that lies beyond the Apollonian. Both transfigure a region in whose joyful chords dissonance as well as the terrible image of world fade delightfully away. Both play with the sting of joylessness, trusting in the extreme power of their magical arts. Through this play both justify the existence of even the "worst of worlds." Here the Dionysian shows itself, measured against the Apollonian, as the eternal and primordial artistic force, which summons the entire world of appearances into existence.

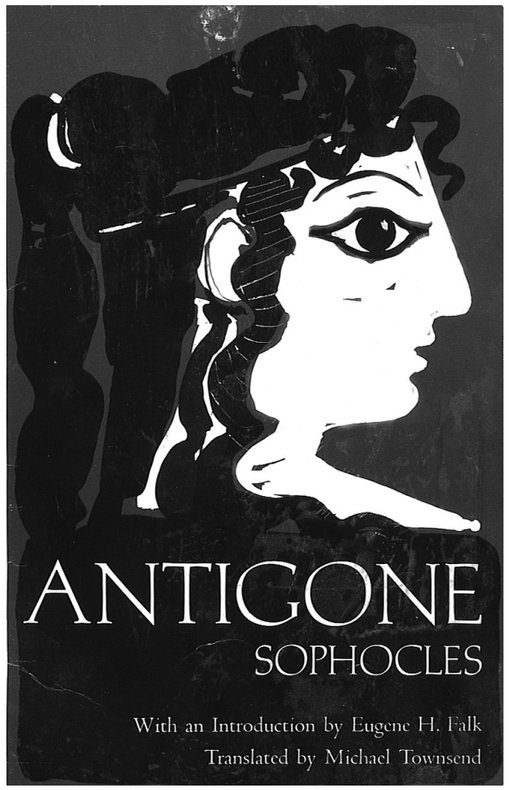
In its midst a new transfiguring illusion becomes necessary in order to keep alive the living world of the individual. Could we imagine some human development of dissonance – and what is a man other than that? – then this dissonance, in order to capable of life, would need a marvelous illusion, which covered it with a veil of beauty over its essential being. This is the true artistic purpose of Apollo, in whose name we put together all those countless illusions of beautiful appearances which render existence at every moment in general worth living and push us to experience the next moment.

But in this process, from that basis for all existence, the Dionysian bed rock of the world, only as much can come into the consciousness of the human individual as can be overcome once more by that Apollonian power of transfiguration, so that both of these artistic drives are compelled to display their powers in a strictly mutual proportion, in accordance with the law of eternal justice. Where Dionysian power rises up as impetuously as we are seeing it rise, there Apollo must already have come down to us, hidden in a cloud. The next generation may well see the richest his beautiful effects.

However, the fact that this effect is necessary each man will experience most surely through his intuition, if he once, even in a dream, feels himself set back into the life of the ancient Greeks. As he wanders under high Ionic colonnades, glancing upwards to a horizon marked off with pure and noble lines, with reflections of his transfigured form beside him in shining marble, around him people solemnly striding or moving delicately, with harmoniously sounding lutes and a speech of rhythmic gestures – faced with this constant stream of beauty, would he not have to extend his hand to Apollo and cry out: "Blessed Hellenic people! How great Dionysus must be among you, if the Delphic god thinks such magic necessary to heal your dithyrambic madness!" To a person in such a mood as this, however, an old Athenian, looking at him with the noble eye of Aeschylus, might reply: "But, you strange foreigner, how much must these people have suffered in order to be able to become so beautiful! But now follow me to the tragedy and sacrifice with me in the temple of both divinities."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)

Melpomene - Muse of Tragedy



Sophocles, *Antigone* (441 BC)

Sophocles

ANTIGONE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Creon, King of Thebes
Hæmon, son of Creon
Teiresias, a seer
Guard
First Messenger
Second Messenger
Eurydice, wife of Creon
Antigone, Ismene, daughters of Oedipus
Chorus of Theban Elders

SCENE—Thebes, *in front of the Palace*.

Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE

ANTIGONE:
Ismene, mine own sister, dearest one;
Is there, of all the ills of OEdipus,
One left that Zeus will fail to bring on us,
While still we live? for nothing is there sad
Or full of woe, or base, or fraught with shame,
But I have seen it in thy woes and mine.
And now, what new decree is this they tell,
Our ruler has enjoined on all the state?
Know'st thou? hast heard? or is it hid from thee,
The doom of foes that comes upon thy friends?

ISMENE:
No tidings of our friends, Antigone,
Painful or pleasant since that hour have come
When we, two sisters, lost our brothers twain,
In one day dying by each other's hand.
And since in this last night the Argive host
Has left the field, I nothing further know,
Nor brightening fortune, nor increasing gloom.

ANTIGONE:
That knew I well, and therefore sent for thee
Beyond the gates, that thou mayst hear alone.

ISMENE
What meanest thou? It is but all too clear
Thou broodest darkly o'er some tale of woe.

ANTIGONE:
And does not Creon treat our brothers twain
One with the rites of burial, one with shame?
Eteocles, so say they, he interred
Fitly, with wonted rites, as one held meet
To pass with honour to the gloom below.
But for the corpse of Polynices, slain
So piteously, they say, he has proclaimed
To all the citizens, that none should give
His body burial, or bewail his fate,
But leave it still unsepulchred, unwept,
A prize full rich for birds that scent afar
Their sweet repast. So Creon bids, they say,
Creon the good, commanding thee and me,
Yes, me, I say, and now is coming here,
To make it clear to those who knew it not,
And counts the matter not a trivial thing;
But whoso does the things that he forbids,
For him, there waits within the city's walls
The death of stoning. Thus, then, stands thy case;
And quickly thou wilt show, if thou art born
Of noble nature, or degenerate liv'st,
Base child of honoured parents.

ISMENE:
How could I,
O daring in thy mood, in this our plight,
Or doing or undoing, aught avail?

ANTIGONE:
Wilt thou with me share risk and toil? Look to it.

ISMENE:
What risk is this? What purpose fills thy mind?

ANTIGONE:
Wilt thou with me go forth to help the dead?

ISMENE:
And dost thou mean to give him sepulture,
When all have been forbidden?

ANTIGONE:
He is still
My brother; yes, and thine, though thou, it seems,
Wouldst fain he were not. I desert him not.

ISMENE:
O daring one, when Creon bids thee not!

ANTIGONE:
What right has he to keep me from mine own?

ISMENE:
Ah me! remember, sister, how our sire
Perished, with hate o'erwhelmed and infamy,
From evils that he brought upon himself,
And with his own hand robbed himself of sight,
And how his wife and mother, both in one,
With twist and cordage, cast away her life;
And thirdly, how our brothers in one day
In suicidal conflict wrought the doom,
Each of the other. And we twain are left;
And think, how much more wretchedly than all
We twain shall perish, if, against the law,
We brave our sovereign's edict and his power.
For this we need remember, we were born
Women; as such, not made to strive with men.
And next, that they who reign surpass in strength,
And we must bow to this, and worse than this.
I, then, entreating those that dwell below,
To judge me leniently, as forced to yield,
Will hearken to our rulers. Over-zeal
In act or word but little wisdom shows.

ANTIGONE:
I would not ask thee. No! if thou shouldst wish
To do it, and wouldst gladly join with me.
Do what thou wilt, I go to bury him;
And good it were, this having done, to die.
Loved I shall be with him whom I have loved,
Guilty of holiest crime. More time have I
In which to win the favour of the dead,
Than that of those who live; for I shall rest
For ever there. But thou, if thus thou please,
Count as dishonoured what the Gods approve.

ISMENE:
I do them no dishonour, but I find
Myself too weak to war against the state.

ANTIGONE:
Make what excuse thou wilt, I go to rear
A grave above the brother whom I love.

ISMENE:
Ah, wretched me! how much I fear for thee.

ANTIGONE:
Fear not for me. Thine own fate guide aright.

ISMENE:
At any rate, disclose this deed to none:
Keep it close hidden. I will hide it too.

ANTIGONE:
Speak out! I bid thee. Silent, thou wilt be
More hateful to me than if thou shouldst tell
My deed to all men.

ISMENE:
Fiery is thy mood,
Although thy deeds might chill the very blood.

ANTIGONE:
I know I please the souls I seek to please.

ISMENE:
If thou canst do it; but thy passion craves
For things impossible.

ANITGONE:
I'll cease to strive
When strength shall fail me.

ISMENE:
Even from the first,
It is not meet to seek what may not be.

ANITGONE:
If thou speak thus, my hatred wilt thou gain,
And rightly wilt be hated of the dead.
Leave me and my ill counsel to endure
This dreadful doom. I shall not suffer aught
So evil as a death dishonourable.

ISMENE:
Go, then, if so thou wilt. Of this be sure,
Wild as thou art, thy friends must love thee still.
Exit

Enter Chorus

CHORUS:

Strophe I
Ray of the glorious sun,
Brightest of all that ever shone on Thebes,
Thebes with her seven high gates,
Thou didst appear that day,
Eye of the golden dawn,
O'er Dirkè's streams advancing,
Driving with quickened curb,
In haste of headlong flight,

The warrior who, in panoply of proof,
From Argos came, with shield as white as snow;
Who came to this our land,
Roused by the strife of tongues
That Polynices stirred;
Shrieking his shrill sharp cry,
The eagle hovered round,
With snow-white wing bedecked,
Begirt with myriad arms,
And flowing horsehair crests.

Antistrophe I
He stood above our towers,
Circling, with blood-stained spears,
The portals of our gates;
He went, before he filled
His jaws with blood of men,
Before Hephæstus with his pitchy flame
Had seized our crown of towers.
So loud the battle din that Ares loves,
Was raised around his rear,
A conflict hard and stiff,
E'en for his dragon foe.
For breath of haughty speech
Zeus hateth evermore exceedingly;
And seeing them advance,
Exulting in the clang of golden arms,
With brandished fire he hurls them headlong down,
In act, upon the topmost battlement
Rushing, with eager step,
To shout out, 'Victory!'

Strophe II
Crashing to earth he fell,
Who came, with madman's haste,
Drunken, but not with wine,
And swept o'er us with blasts,
The whirlwind blasts of hate.
Thus on one side they fare,
And mighty Ares, bounding in his strength,
Dashing now here, now there,
Elsewhere brought other fate.
For seven chief warriors at the seven gates met,
Equals with equals matched,
To Zeus, the Lord of War,
Left tribute, arms of bronze;
All but the hateful ones
Who, from one father and one mother sprung,
Stood wielding, hand to hand,
Their doubly pointed spears;
They had their doom of death,
In common, shared by both.

Antistrophe II
But now, since Victory, of mightiest name,
Hath come to Thebes, of many chariots proud,
Joying and giving joy,
After these wars just past,
Learn ye forgetfulness,
And all night long, with dance and voice of hymns
Let us go round to all the shrines of Gods,
While Bacchus, making Thebes resound with shouts,
Begins the strain of joy;
But, lo! the sovereign of this land of ours,
CREON, Menoekeus' son,
He, whom strange change and chances from the God
Have nobly raised to power,
Comes to us, steering on some new device;
For, lo! he hath convened,
By herald's loud command,
This council of the elders of our land.

Enter CREON

CREON:
My Friends, for what concerns our commonwealth,
The Gods who vexed it with the billowing storms
Have righted it again; but I have sent,
By special summons, calling you to come
Apart from all the others, This, in part,
As knowing ye did all along uphold
The might of Laius' throne, in part again,
Because when OEdipus our country ruled,
And, when he perished, then towards his sons
Ye still were faithful in your steadfast mind.
And since they fell, as by a double death,
Both on the selfsame day with murderous blow,
Smiting and being smitten, now I hold
Their thrones and all their power of sov'reignty
By nearness of my kindred to the dead.
And hard it is to learn what each man is,
In heart and mind and judgment, till one gains
Experience in the exercise of power.
For me, whoe'er is called to guide a state,
And does not catch at counsels wise and good,
But holds his peace through any fear of man,
I deem him basest of all men that are,
Of all that ever have been; and whoe'er
As worthier than his country counts his friend,
I utterly despise him. I myself,
Zeus be my witness, who beholdeth all,
Will not keep silence, seeing danger come,
Instead of safety, to my subjects true.
Nor could I take as friend my country's foe;
For this I know, that there our safety lies,
And sailing in her while she holds her course,

We gather friends around us. By these rules
And such as these will I maintain the state.
And now I come, with edicts close allied
To these in spirit, for my subjects all,
Concerning those two sons of OEdipus.
Eteocles, who died in deeds of might
Illustrious, fighting for our fatherland,
To honour him with sepulture, all rites
Duly performed that to the noblest dead
Of right belong. Not so his brother; him
I speak of, Polynices, who, returned
From exile, sought with fire and sword to waste
His father's city and the shrines of Gods,
Yea, sought to glut his rage with blood of men,
And lead them captives to the bondslave's doom;
Him I decree that none should dare entomb,
That none should utter wail or loud lament,
But leave his corpse unburied, by the dogs
And vultures mangled, foul to look upon.
Such is my purpose. Ne'er, if I can help,
Shall the vile share the honours of the just;
But whoso shows himself my country's friend,
Living or dead, from me shall honour gain.

CHORUS:
This is thy pleasure, O Menoekeus' son,
For him who hated, him who loved our state;
And thou hast power to make what laws thou wilt,
Both for the dead and all of us who live.

CREON:
Be ye, then, guardians of the things I speak.

CHORUS:
Commit this task to one of younger years.

CREON:
The watchmen are appointed for the corpse.

CHORUS:
What duty, then, enjoin'st thou on another?

CREON:
Not to consent with those that disobey.

CHORUS:
None are so foolish as to seek for death.

CREON:
And that shall be his doom; but love of gain
Hath oft with false hopes lured men to their death.

Enter Guard

GUARD:
I will not say, O king, that I am come
Panting with speed and plying nimble feet,
For I had many halting-points of thought,
Backwards and forwards turning, round and round;
For now my mind would give me sage advice:
"Poor wretch, and wilt thou go and bear the blame?"
Or—"Dost thou tarry now? Shall Creon know
These things from others? How wilt thou escape?"
Resolving thus, I came in haste, yet slow,
And thus a short way finds itself prolonged,
But, last of all, to come to thee prevailed.
And though I tell of naught, thou shalt hear all;
For this one hope I cling to steadfastly,
That I shall suffer nothing but my fate.

CREON:
What is it, then, that causes such dismay?

GUARD:
First, for mine own share in it, this I say,
I did not do it, do not know who did,
Nor should I rightly come to ill for it.

CREON:
Thou tak'st good aim and fencest up thy tale
All round and round. 'Twould seem thou hast some news.

GUARD:
Yea, news of fear engenders long delay.

CREON
Tell thou thy tale, and then depart in peace.

GUARD:
And speak I will. The corpse ... Some one has been
But now and buried it, a little dust
O'er the skin scattering, with the wonted rites.

CREON:
What say'st thou? Who has dared this deed of guilt?

GUARD:
I know not. Neither was there stroke of spade,
Nor earth cast up by mattock. All the soil
Was dry and hard, no track of chariot wheel;
But he who did it went and left no sign.
But when the first day's watchman showed it us,
The sight caused wonder and sore grief to all,
For he had disappeared. No tomb, indeed,
Was over him, but dust all lightly strown,
As by some hand that shunned defiling guilt;

And no work was there of a beast of prey
Or dog devouring. Evil words arose
Among us, guard to guard imputing blame,
Which might have come to blows, for none was there
To check its course, and each to each appeared
The man whose hand had done it. As for proof,
That there was none, and so he 'scaped our ken.
And we were ready in our hands to take
Bars of hot iron, and to walk through fire,
And call the Gods to witness none of us
Had done the deed, nor knew who counselled it,
Nor who had wrought it. Then at last, when naught
Was gained by all our searching, some one says
What made us bend our gaze upon the ground
In fear and trembling; for we neither saw
How to oppose it, nor, accepting it,
How we might prosper in it. And his speech
Was this, that all our tale should go to thee,
Not hushed up anywise. This gained the day;
And me, ill-starred, the lot condemns to win
This precious prize. So here I come to thee
Against my will; and surely do I trow
Thou dost not wish to see me. Still 'tis true
That no man loves the messenger of ill.

CHORUS:
For me, my prince, my mind some time has thought
That this perchance has some divine intent.

CREON:
Cease thou, before thou fillest me with wrath,
Lest thou be found a dastard and a fool.
For what thou say'st is most intolerable,
That for this corpse the providence of Gods
Has any care. What! have they buried him,
As to their patron paying honours high,
Who came to waste their columned shrines with fire,
To desecrate their offerings and their lands,
And all their wonted customs? Dost thou see
The Gods approving men of evil deeds?
It is not so; but men of rebel mood,
Lifting their head in secret long ago,
Have stirred this thing against me. Never yet
Had they their neck beneath the yoke, content
To own me as their ruler. They, I know,
Have bribed these men to let the deed be done.
No thing in use by man, for power of ill,
Can equal money. This lays cities low,
This drives men forth from quiet dwelling-place,
This warps and changes minds of worthiest stamp,
To turn to deeds of baseness, teaching men
All shifts of cunning, and to know the guilt
Of every impious deed. But they who, hired,
Have wrought this crime, have laboured to their cost,
Or soon or late to pay the penalty.
But if Zeus still claims any awe from me,
Know this, and with an oath I tell it thee,
Unless ye find the very man whose hand
Has wrought this burial, and before mine eyes
Present him captive, death shall not suffice,
Till first, impaled still living, ye shall show
The story of this outrage, that henceforth,
Knowing what gain is lawful, ye may grasp
At that, and learn it is not meet to love
Gain from all quarters. By base profit won,
You will see more destroyed than prospering.

GUARD:
May I, then speak? Or shall I turn and go?

CREON:
Dost thou not see how vexing are thy words?

GUARD:
Is it thine ears they trouble, or thy soul?

CREON:
Why dost thou gauge my trouble where it is?

GUARD:
The doer grieves thy heart, but I thine ears.

CREON:
Pshaw! what a babbler, born to prate, art thou.

GUARD:
And therefore not the man to do this deed.

CREON:
Yes, that too; selling e'en thy soul for pay.

GUARD:
Ah me!
How fearful 'tis, in thinking, false to think.

CREON:
Prate about thinking; but unless ye show
To me the doers, ye shall say ere long
That evil gains still work their punishment.

Exit

GUARD:
God send we find him! Should we find him not,
As well may be, for this must chance decide,
You will not see me coming here again;

For now, being safe beyond all hope of mine,
Beyond all thought, I owe the Gods much thanks.

Exit

CHORUS:

Strophe I
Many the forms of life,
Fearful and strange to see,
But man supreme stands out,
For strangeness and for fear.
He, with the wintry gales,
O'er the foam-crested sea,
'Mid billows surging round,
Tracketh his way across:
Earth, of all Gods, from ancient days, the first,
Mightiest and undecayed,
He, with his circling plough,
Wears ever year by year.

Antistrophe I
The thoughtless tribe of birds,
The beasts that roam the fields,
The finny brood of ocean's depths,
He takes them all in nets of knotted mesh,
Man, wonderful in skill.
And by his arts he holds in sway
The wild beasts on the mountain's height;
And brings the neck-encircling yoke
On horse with shaggy mane,
Or bull that walks untamed upon the hills.

Strophe II
And speech, and thought as swift as wind,
And tempered mood for higher life of states,
These he has learnt, and how to flee
The stormy sleet of frost unkind,
The tempest thunderbolts of Zeus.
So all-preparing, unprepared
He meeteth naught the coming days may bring;
Only from Hades, still
He fails to find a refuge at the last,
Though skill of art may teach him to escape
From depths of fell disease incurable.

Antistrophe II
So, gifted with a wondrous might,
Above all fancy's dreams, with skill to plan,
Now unto evil, now to good,
He wends his way. Now holding fast the laws,
His country's sacred rights,
That rest upon the oath of Gods on high,
High in the state he stands.
An outlaw and an exile he who loves
The thing that is not good,
In wilful pride of soul:
Ne'er may he sit beside my hearth,
Ne'er may my thoughts be like to his,
Who worketh deeds like this.

Enter Guards, *bringing in* ANTIGONE

As to this portent which the Gods have sent,
I stand in doubt. Can I, who know her, say
That this is not the maid Antigone?
O wretched one of wretched father born,
What means this? Surely 'tis not that they bring
Thee as a rebel 'gainst the king's decree,
And taken in the folly of thine act?

GUARD:
Yes! She it was by whom the deed was done.
We found her burying. Where is Creon, pray?

CHORUS:
Forth from his palace comes he just in time.

Enter CREON

CREON:
What chance is this with which my coming fits?

GUARD:
Men, O my king, should pledge themselves to naught;
For cool reflection makes their purpose void.
I hardly thought to venture here again,
Cowed by thy threats, which then fell thick on me;
But since no joy is like the sweet delight
Which comes beyond, above, against our hopes,
I come, although I swore the contrary,
Bringing this maiden, whom in act we found
Decking the grave. No need for lots was now;
The prize was mine, no other claimed a share.
And now, O king, take her, and as thou wilt,
Judge and convict her. I can claim a right
To wash my hands of all this troublous coil.

CREON:
How and where was it that ye seized and brought her?

GUARD:
She was in act of burying. Now thou knowest
All that I have to tell.

CREON:
And dost thou know
And rightly weigh the tale thou tellest me?

GUARD:
I saw her burying that selfsame corpse
Thou bad'st us not to bury. Speak I clear?

CREON:
How was she seen, detected, prisoner made?

GUARD:
The matter passed as follows: When we came,
With all those dreadful threats of thine upon us,
Sweeping away the dust which, lightly spread,
Covered the corpse, and laying stript and bare
The tained carcase, on the hill we sat
To windward, shunning the infected air,
Each stirring up his fellow with strong words,
If any shirked his duty. This went on
Some time, until the glowing orb of day
Stood in mid-heaven, and the scorching heat
Fell on us. Then a sudden whirlwind rose,
A scourge from heaven, raising squalls on earth,
And filled the plain, the leafage stripping bare
Of all the forest, and the air's vast space
Was thick and troubled, and we closed our eyes
Until the plague the Gods had sent was past;
And when it ceased, a weary time being gone,
The girl was seen, and with a bitter cry,
Shrill as a bird's, she wails, when it beholds
Its nest all emptied of its infant brood;
So she, when she beholds the corpse all stript,
Groaned loud with many moanings. And she called
Fierce curses down on those who did the deed,
And in her hand she brings some sandlike dust,
And from a well-chased ewer, all of bronze,
She pours the three libations o'er the dead.
And we, beholding, started up forthwith,
And run her down, in nothing terrified.
And then we charged her with the former deed,
As well as this. And nothing she denied.
But this to me both bitter is and sweet,
For to escape one's-self from ill is sweet,
But to bring friends to trouble, this is hard
And bitter. Yet my nature bids me count
Above all these things safety for myself.

CREON:
to ANTIGONE
And thou, then, bending to the ground thy head,
Confessest thou, or dost deny the deed?

ANTIGONE:
I own I did it. I will not deny.

CREON:
to GUARD
Go thou thy way, where'er thy will may choose,
Freed from a weighty charge.
Exit GUARD

to ANTIGONE
And now for thee,
Say in few words, not lengthening out thy speech,
Didst thou not know the edicts which forbade
The things thou ownest?

ANTIGONE:
Right well I knew them all.
How could I not? Full clear and plain were they.

CREON:
Didst thou, then, dare to disobey these laws?

ANTIGONE:
Yes, for it was not Zeus who gave them forth,
Nor Justice, dwelling with the Gods below,
Who traced these laws for all the sons of men;
Nor did I deem thy edicts strong enough,
Coming from mortal man, to set at naught
The unwritten laws of God that know not change.
They are not of to-day nor yesterday,
But live for ever, nor can man assign
When first they sprang to being. Not through fear
Of any man's resolve was I prepared
Before the Gods to bear the penalty
Of sinning against these. That I should die
I knew (how should I not?), though thy decree
Had never spoken. And, before my time
If I should die, I reckon this a gain;
For whoso lives, as I, in many woes,
How can it be but death shall bring him gain?
And so for me to bear this doom of thine
Has nothing painful. But, if I had left
My mother's son unburied on his death,
I should have given them pain. But as things are,
Pain I feel none. And should I seem to thee
To have done a foolish deed, 'tis simply this,—
I bear the charge of folly from a fool.

CHORUS:
The maiden's stubborn will, of stubborn sire
The offspring shows itself. She knows not yet
To yield to evils.

CREON:
Know, then, minds too stiff
Most often stumble, and the rigid steel
Baked in the furnace, made exceeding hard,
Thou seest most often split and broken lie;
And I have known the steeds of fiery mood
With a small curb subdued. It is not meet
That one who lives in bondage to his neighbours
Should boast too loudly. Wanton outrage then
She learnt when first these laws of mine she crossed,
But, having done it, this is yet again
A second outrage over it to boast,
And laugh at having done it. Surely, then,
She is the man, not I, if all unscathed
Such deeds of might are hers. But be she child
Of mine own sister, nearest kin of all
That Zeus o'erlooks within our palace court,
She and her sister shall not 'scape their doom
Most foul and shameful; for I charge her, too,
With having planned this deed of sepulture.
Go ye and call her. 'Twas but now within
I saw her raving, losing self-command.
And still the mind of those who in the dark
Plan deeds of evil is the first to fail,
And so convicts itself of secret guilt.
But most I hate when one found out in guilt
Will seek to glaze and brave it to the end.

ANTIGONE:
And dost thou seek aught else beyond my death?

CREON:
Naught else for me. That gaining, I gain all.

ANTIGONE:
Wilt thou delay? Of all thy words not one
Pleases me now, nor aye is like to please,
And so all mine must grate upon thine ears.
And yet how could I higher glory gain
Than giving my true brother all the rites
Of solemn burial? These who hear would say
It pleases them, did not their fear of thee
Close up their lips. This power has sovereignty,
That it can do and say whate'er it will.

CREON:
Of all the race of Cadmus thou alone
Look'st thus upon the deed.

ANTIGONE:
They see it too
As I do, but in fear of thee they keep
Their tongue between their teeth.

CREON:
And dost thou feel
No shame to plan thy schemes apart from these?

ANTIGONE:
There is no baseness in the act which shows
Our reverence for our kindred.

CREON:
Was he not
Thy brother also, who against him fought?

ANTIGONE:
He was my brother, of one mother born,
And of the selfsame father.

CREON:
Why, then, pay
Thine impious honours to the carcase there?

ANTIGONE:
The dead below will not accept thy words.

CREON:
Yes, if thou equal honours pay to him,
And that most impious monster.

ANTIGONE:
'Twas no slave
That perished, but my brother.

CREON:
Yes, in act
To waste this land, while he in its defence
Stood fighting bravely.

ANTIGONE:
Not the less does death
Crave equal rites for all.

CREON:
But not that good
And evil share alike?

ANTIGONE:
And yet who knows
If in that world these things are counted good?

CREON:
Our foe, I tell thee, ne'er becomes our friend,
Not even when he dies.

ANTIGONE:
My bent is fixed,
I tell thee, not for hatred, but for love.

CREON:
Go, then, below. And if thou must have love,
Love those thou find'st there. While I live, at least,
A woman shall not rule.

Enter ISMENE

CHORUS:
And, lo! Ismene at the gate
Comes shedding tears of sisterly regard,
And o'er her brow a gathering cloud
Mars the deep roseate blush,
Bedewing her fair cheek.

CREON:
to ISMENE
And thou who, creeping as a viper creeps,
Didst drain my life in secret, and I knew not
That I was rearing two accursèd ones,
Subverters of my throne: come, tell me, then,
Dost thou confess thou took'st thy part in it?
Or wilt thou swear thou didst not know of it?

ISMENE:
I did the deed. Since she will have it so,
I share the guilt; I bear an equal blame.

ANTIGONE:
This, Justice will not suffer, since, in truth,
Thou wouldst have none of it. And I, for one,
Shared it not with thee.

ISMENE:
I am not ashamed
To count myself companion in thy woes.

ANTIGONE:
Whose was the deed, Death knows, and those below.
I do not love a friend who loves in words.

ISMENE:
Do not, my sister, put me to such shame
As not to let me share thy death with thee,
And with thee pay due reverence to the dead.

ANTIGONE:
Share not my death, nor make thine own this deed
Thou hadst no hand in. Let my death suffice.

ISMENE:
And what to me is life, bereaved of thee?

ANTIGONE:
Ask Creon there. To him thy tender care
Is given so largely.

ISMENE:
Why wilt thou torture me,
In nothing bettered by it?

ANTIGONE:
Yes—at thee,
E'en while I laugh, I laugh with pain of heart.

ISMENE:
But now, at least, how may I profit thee?

ANTIGONE:
Save thou thyself. I grudge not thy escape.

ISMENE:
Ah, woe is me! and must I miss thy fate?

ANTIGONE:
Thou mad'st thy choice to live, and I to die.

ISMENE:
'Tis not through want of any words of mine.

ANTIGONE:
To these thou seemest, doubtless, to be wise;
I to those others.

ISMENE:
Yet our fault is one.

ANTIGONE:
Take courage. Thou wilt live. My soul long since
Has given itself to Death, that to the dead
I might bring help.

CREON:
Of these two maidens here,
The one, I say, hath lost her mind but now,
The other ever since her life began.

ISMENE:
Yea, O my king. No mind that ever lived
Stands firm in evil days, but still it goes,
Beside itself, astray.

CREON:
So then did thine
When thou didst choose thy evil deeds to do,
With those already evil.

ISMENE:
How could I.
Alone, apart from her, endure to live?

CREON:
Speak not of her. She stands no longer here.

ISMENE:
And wilt thou slay thy son's betrothed bride?

CREON:
Full many a field there is which he may plough.

ISMENE:
But none like that prepared for him and her.

CREON:
Wives that are vile, I love not for my son.

ANTIGONE:
Ah, dearest Hæmon, how thy father shames thee!

CREON:
Thou art too vexing, thou, and these thy words,
On marriage ever harping.

ISMENE:
Wilt thou rob
Thine own dear son of her whom he has loved?

CREON:
'Tis Death who breaks the marriage contract off.

ISMENE:
Her doom is fixed, it seems, then. She must die.

CREON:
So thou dost think, and I. No more delay,
Ye slaves. Our women henceforth must be kept
As women—suffered not to roam abroad;
For even boldest natures shrink in fear
When they behold the end of life draw nigh.

Exeunt Guards with ANTIGONE
and ISMENE.

CHORUS:

Strophe I
Blessed are those whose life has known no woe!
For unto those whose house
The Gods have shaken, nothing fails of curse
Or woe, that creepeth on,
To generations, far,
As when a wave, where Thracian blasts blow strong
On that tempestuous shore,
Up surges from the depths beneath the sea,
And from the deep abyss
Rolls the black wind-vexed sand,
And every jutting peak that drives it back
Re-echoes with the roar.

Antistrophe I
I see the ancient doom
That fell upon the seed of Labdacus,
Who perished long ago,
Still falling, woes on woes;
That generation cannot rescue this;
Some God still urges on,
And will not be appeased.
So now there rose a gleam
Over the last weak shoots
That sprang from out the race of OEdipus;
And thus the blood-stained sword
Of those that reign below
Cuts off relentlessly
Madness of speech, and fury of the soul.

Strophe II
Thy power, O Zeus, what haughtiness of man
Could ever hold in check?
Which neither sleep, that maketh all things old,
Nor the long months of Gods that wax not faint,
Can for a moment seize.
But still as Lord supreme,
Through time that grows not old,
Thou dwellest in thy sheen of radiancy
On far Olympus' height.
Through all the future and the coming years,
As through all time that's past,
One law holds ever good,
That nothing comes to life of man on earth,
Unscathed throughout by woe.

Antistrophe II
To many, hope may come, in wanderings wild,
A solace and a joy;
To many, shows of fickle-hearted love;
But still it creepeth on,

On him who knows it not,
Until he brings his foot
Within the scorching flame.
Wisely from one of old
The far-famed saying came
That evil ever seems to be as good
To those whose thoughts of heart
God leadeth unto woe,
And without woe, but shortest time he spends.
And here comes Hæmon, youngest of thy sons.
Comes he bewailing sore
The fate of her who should have been his wife,
His bride Antigone,
Sore grieving at the failure of his joys?

Enter HÆMON

CREON:
Soon we shall know much more than seers can tell.
Surely thou dost not come, my son, to rage
Against thy father, hearing his decree,
Fixing her doom who should have been thy bride;
Or are we still, whate'er we do, beloved?

HÆMON:
My father, I am thine. Do thou direct
With thy wise counsels, I will follow them.
No marriage weighs one moment in the scales
With me, while thou art prospering in thy reign.

CREON:
This thought, my son, should dwell within thy breast,
That all things stand below a father's will:
For this men pray that they may rear and keep
Obedient offspring by their hearths and homes,
That they may both requite their father's foes,
And pay with him like honours to his friend.
But he who reareth sons that profit not,
What could one say of him but this, that he
Breeds his own sorrow, laughter to his foes?
Lose not thy reason, then, my son, o'ercome
By pleasure, for a woman's sake, but know,
A cold embrace is that to have at home
A worthless wife, the partner of thy bed.
What ulcerous sore is worse than one we love
Who proves all worthless? No! with loathing scorn,
As hateful to thee, let her go and wed
A spouse in Hades. Taken in the act
I found her, her alone of all the state,
Rebellious. And I will not make myself
False to the state. She dies. So let her call
On Zeus, the lord of kindred. If I rear
Of mine own stock things foul and orderless,
I shall have work enough with those without.
For he who in the life of home is good
Will still be seen as just in things of state;
While he who breaks or goes beyond the laws,
Or thinks to bid the powers that be obey,
He must not hope to gather praise from me.
No! we must follow whom the state appoints
In things or just and lowly, or, may be,
The opposite of these. Of such a man
I should be sure that he would govern well,
And know well to be governed, and would stand,
In war's wild storm, on his appointed post,
A just and good defender. Anarchy
Is our worst evil, brings our commonwealth
To utter ruin, lays whole houses low,
In battle strife hurls men in shameful flight;
But they who walk uprightly, these shall find
Obedience saves most men. Sure help should come
To what our rulers order; least of all
Ought we to bow before a woman's sway.
Far better, if it must be so, to fall
By a man's hand, than thus to bear reproach,
By woman conquered.

CHORUS:
Unto us, O king,
Unless our years have robbed us of our wit,
Thou seemest to say wisely what thou say'st.

HÆMON:
The Gods, my father, have bestowed on man
His reason, noblest of all earthly gifts;
Nor dare I say nor prove that what thou speak'st
Is aught but right. And yet another's thoughts
May have some reason. I am wont to watch
What each man says or does, or blames in thee
(For dread thy face to one of low estate),
In words thou wouldst not much rejoice to hear.
But I can hear the things in darkness said,
How the whole city wails this maiden's fate,
As one "who of all women worthiest praise,
For noblest deed must die the foulest death.
She who, her brother fallen in the fray,
Would neither leave unburied, nor expose
To carrion dogs, or any bird of prey,
May she not claim the meed of golden crown?"
Such is the whisper that in secret runs
All darkling. And for me, my father, naught
Is dearer than thy welfare. What can be
A nobler form of honour for the son
Than a sire's glory, or for sire than son's?
I pray thee, then, wear not one mood alone,
That what thou say'st is right, and naught but that;

For he who thinks that he alone is wise,
His mind and speech above what others boast,
Such men when searched are mostly empty found.
But for a man to learn, though he be wise,
Yea, to learn much, and know the time to yield,
Brings no disgrace. When winter floods the streams,
Thou seest the trees that bend before the storm,
Save their last twigs, while those that will not yield
Perish with root and branch. And when one hauls
Too tight the mainsail sheet, and will not slack,
He has to end his voyage with deck o'erturned.
Do thou, then, yield. Permit thyself to change.
Young though I be, if any prudent thought
Be with me, I at least will dare assert
The higher worth of one who, come what will,
Is full of knowledge. If that may not be
(For nature is not wont to take that bent),
'Tis good to learn from those who counsel well.

CHORUS:
My king! 'tis fit that thou shouldst learn from him,
If he speaks words in season; and, in turn,
That thou [*to* HÆMON] shouldst learn of him,
for both speak well.

CREON:
Shall we at our age stoop to learn from him,
Such as he is, our lesson?

HÆMON:
'Twere not wrong.
And if I be but young, not age but deeds
Thou shouldst regard.

CREON:
Fine deeds, I trow, to pay
Such honour to the lawless.

HÆMON:
'Tis not I
Would bid you waste your honour on the base.

CREON:
And has she not been seized with that disease?

HÆMON:
The men of Thebes with one accord say, No.

CREON:
And will my subjects tell me how to rule?

HÆMON:
Dost thou not see that these words fall from thee
As from some beardless boy?

CREON:
And who, then, else
But me should rule this land?

HÆMON:
That is no state
Which hangs on one man's will.

CREON:
The state, I pray,
It is not reckoned his who governs it?

HÆMON:
Brave rule! Alone, and o'er an empty land!

CREON:
Here, as it seems, is one who still will fight,
A woman's friend.

HÆMON:
If thou a woman be,
For all my care I lavish upon thee.

CREON:
Basest of base, who with thy father still
Wilt hold debate!

HÆMON:
For, lo! I see thee still
Guilty of wrong.

CREON:
And am I guilty, then,
Claiming due reverence for my sovereignty?

HÆMON:
Thou show'st no reverence, trampling on the laws
The Gods hold sacred.

CREON:
O thou sin-stained soul,
A woman's victim.

HÆMON:
Yet thou wilt not find
In me the slave of baseness.

CREON:
All thy speech
Still hangs on her.

HÆMON:
Yes, and on thee, myself,
And the great Gods below.

CREON:
Of this be sure,
Thou shalt not wed her in the land of life.

HÆMON:
She, then, must die, and in her death will slay
Another than herself.

CREON:
And dost thou dare
To come thus threatening?

HÆMON:
Is it then a threat
To speak to erring judgment?

CREON:
To thy cost
Thou shalt learn wisdom, having none thyself.

HÆMON:
If thou wert not my father, I would say
Thou wert not wise.

CREON:
Thou woman's slave, I say,
Prate on no longer.

HÆMON:
Dost thou wish to speak,
And, speaking, wilt not listen? Is it so?

CREON:
No, by Olympus! Thou shalt not go free
To flout me with reproaches. Lead her out
Whom my soul hates, that she may die forthwith
Before mine eyes, and near her bridegroom here.

HÆMON:
No! Think it not! Near me she shall not die,
And thou shalt never see my face alive,
So mad art thou with all that would be friends.
Exit

CHORUS:
The man has gone, O king, in hasty mood.
A mind distressed in youth is hard to bear.

CREON:
Let him do what he will, and bear himself
Too high for mortal state, he shall not free
Those maidens from their doom!

CHORUS:
And dost thou mean
To slay them both?

CREON:
Not her who touched it not.

CHORUS:
There thou say'st well: and with what kind of death
Mean'st thou to kill her?

CREON:
Where the desert path
Is loneliest, there, alive, in rocky cave
Will I immure her, just so much of food
Before her set as may appease the Gods,
And save the city from the guilt of blood;
And there, invoking Hades, whom alone
Of all the Gods she worships, she, perchance,
Shall gain escape from death, or else shall know
That all her worship is but labour lost.
Exit

CHORUS:
Strophe
O Love, in every battle victor owned;
Love, now assailing wealth and lordly state,
Now on a girl's soft cheek,
Slumbering the livelong night;
Now wandering o'er the sea,
And now in shepherd's folds;
The Undying Ones have no escape from thee,
Nor men whose lives are measured as a day;
And who has thee is mad.

Antistrophe
Thou makest vile the purpose of the just,
To his own fatal harm;
Thou stirrest up this fierce and deadly strife,
Of men of nearest kin;
The glowing eyes of bride beloved and fair
Reign, crowned with victory,
And dwell on high among the powers that rule,
Equal with holiest laws;
For Aphrodite, she whom none subdues,
Sports in her might divine.
I, even I, am borne
Beyond the bounds of right;

I look on this, and cannot stay
The fountain of my tears.
For, lo! I see her, see Antigone
Wind her sad, lonely way
To that dread chamber where is room for all.

ANTIGONE:
Yes! O ye men of this my fatherland,
Ye see me on my way,
Life's last long journey, gazing on the sun,
His last rays watching, now and nevermore;
Alone he leads me, who has room for all,
Hades, the Lord of Death,
To Acheron's dark shore,
With neither part nor lot in marriage rites,
No marriage hymn resounding in my ears,
But Acheron shall claim me as his bride.

CHORUS:
And hast thou not all honour, worthiest praise,
Who goest to the home that hides the dead,
Not smitten by the sickness that decays,
Nor by the sword's sharp edge,
But of thine own free will, in fullest life,
To Hades tak'st thy way?

ANTIGONE:
I heard of old her pitiable end,
Where Sipylus rears high its lofty crag,
The Phrygian daughter of a stranger land,
Whom Tantalus begot;
Whom growth of rugged rock,
Clinging as ivy clings,
Subdued, and made its own:
And now, so runs the tale,
There, as she melts in shower,
The snow abideth aye,
And still bedews yon cliffs that lie below
Those brows that ever weep.
With fate like hers doth Fortune bring me low.

CHORUS:
Godlike in nature, godlike, too, in birth,
Was she of whom thou tell'st,
And we are mortals, born of mortal seed.
And, lo! for one who liveth but to die,
To gain like doom with those of heavenly race
Is great and strange to hear.

ANTIGONE:
Ye mock me, then. Alas! Why wait ye not?
By all our fathers' Gods, I ask of you,
Why wait ye not till I have passed away,
But flout me while I live?
O city that I love, O men that dwell,
That city's wealthiest lords,
O Dirkè, fairest fount,
O grove of Thebes, that boasts her chariot host,
I take you all to witness, look and see,
How, with no friends to weep,
By what stern laws condemned,
I go to that strong dungeon of the tomb,
For burial new and strange.
Oh, miserable me!
Whom neither mortal men nor spirits own,
Nor those that live, nor those that fall asleep.

CHORUS:
Forward and forward still to farthest verge
Of daring hast thou gone,
And now, O child, thou fallest heavily
Where Right erects her throne;
Surely thou payest to the uttermost
Thy father's debt of guilt.

ANTIGONE:
Ah! thou hast touched the quick of all my grief,
The thrice-told tale of all my father's woe,
The fate which dogs us all,
The race of Labdacus of ancient fame.
Woe for the curses dire
Of that defiled bed,
With foulest incest stained,
Whence I myself have sprung, most miserable.
And now, I go to them,
To sojourn in the grave,
Bound by a curse, unwed;
Ah, brother, thou didst find
Thy marriage fraught with ill,
And in thy death hast smitten down my life.

CHORUS:
Acts reverent and devout
May claim devotion's name,
But power, in one who cares to keep his power,
May never be defied;
And thee thy stubborn mood,
Self-chosen, layeth low.

ANTIGONE:
Unwept, without a friend,
Unwed, and whelmed in woe,
I journey on the road that open lies.
No more shall it be mine (O misery!)
To look upon the holy eye of day,
And yet, of all my friends,

Not one bewails my fate,
No kindly tear is shed.

Enter CREON

CREON:
And know ye not, if men can vantage gain
By songs and wailings at the hour of death,
That they will never stop? Lead, lead her on,
And, as I said, without delay immure
In yon cavernous tomb, and then depart.
Leave her, or lone and desolate to die,
Or, living, in the tomb to find her home.
Our hands are clean in all that touches her;
But she no more shall sojourn here with us.

ANTIGONE:
turning towards the cavern
O tomb, my bridal chamber, vaulted home,
Guarded right well for ever, where I go
To join mine own, of whom, of all that die,
As most in number Persephassa owns;
And I, of all the last and lowest, wend
My way below, life's little span unfilled.
And yet I go, and feed myself with hopes
That I shall meet them, by my father loved,
Dear to my mother, well-beloved of thee,
Thou dearest brother: I, with these my hands,
Washed each dear corpse, arrayed you, poured
the stream,
In rites of burial. And in care for thee,
Thy body, Polynices, honouring,
I gain this recompense. And yet 'twas well;
I had not done it had I come to be
A mother with her children,—had not dared,
Though 'twere a husband dead that mouldered there,
Against my country's will to bear this toil,
And dost thou ask what law constrained me thus?
I answer, had I lost a husband dear,
I might have had another; other sons
By other spouse, if one were lost to me;
But when my father and my mother sleep
In Hades, then no brother more can come.
And therefore, giving thee the foremost place,
I seemed in Creon's eyes, O brother dear,
To sin in boldest daring. So himself,
He leads me, having taken me by force,
Cut off from marriage bed and marriage feast,
Untasting wife's true joy, or mother's bliss,
With infant at her breast, but all forlorn,
Bereaved of friends, in utter misery,
Alive, I tread the chambers of the dead.
What law of Heaven have I transgressed against?
What use for me, ill-starred one, still to look
To any God for succour, or to call
On any friend for aid? For holiest deed
I bear this charge of rank unholiness.
If acts like these the Gods on high approve,
We, taught by suffering, own that we have sinned;
But if they sin [*looking at* CREON],
I pray they suffer not
Worse evils than the wrongs they do to me.

CHORUS:
Still do the same wild blasts
Vex her poor storm-tossed soul.

CREON:
Therefore shall these her guards
Weep sore for this delay.

ANTIGONE:
Ah me! this word of thine
Tells of death drawing nigh.

CREON:
I cannot bid thee hope
That other fate is thine.

ANTIGONE:
O citadel of Thebes, my native land,
Ye Gods of old renown,
I go, and linger not.
Behold me. O ye senators of Thebes,
The last, love scion of the kingly race,
What things I suffer, and from whom they come,
Revering still where reverence most is due.
Guards lead ANTIGONE *away*.

CHORUS:

Strophe I
So Danæ's form endured of old,
In brazen palace hid,
To lose the light of heaven,
And in her tomblike chamber was enclosed,
And yet high honour came to her, O child,
And on her flowed the golden shower of Zeus.
But great and dread the might of Destiny:
Nor tempest-storm, nor war,
Nor tower, nor dark-hulled ships
That sweep the sea, escape.

Antistrophe I
Bitter and sharp in mood,
The son of Dryas, king

Of yon Edonian tribes,
By Dionysus' hands,
Was shut in prison cave,
And so his frenzy wild and soul o'erbold
Waste slowly evermore.
And he was taught that he, with ribald tongue
In what wild frenzy, had attacked the Gods.
For fain had he the Mænad throng brought low,
And that bright flashing fire,
And roused the wrath of Muses sweet in song.

Strophe II
And by Kyanean waters' double sea
Are shores of Bosphorus, and Thracian isle,
As Salmydessus known, inhospitable,
Where Ares, God of all the region round,
Saw the accursed wound
That smote with blindness Phineus' twin-born sons
By a fierce stepdame's hand,—
Dark wound, upon the dark-doomed eyeballs struck,
Not with the stroke of sword,
But blood-stained hands, on point of spindle sharp.

Antistrophe II
And they in misery, miserable fate
Lamenting, waste away,
Born of a mother wedded to a curse.
And she who claimed descent
From men of ancient fame,
The old Erechteid race,
Daughter of Boreas, in far distant caves
Amid her father's woods,
Was reared, a child of Gods,
Swift moving as the steed, o'er lofty crag,
And yet, my child, on her
Bore down the Destinies,
Whose years are infinite.

Enter TEIRESIAS, *guided by a Boy.*

TEIRESIAS:
Princes of Thebes, we come as travellers joined,
One seeing for both, for still the blind must use
A guide's assistance to direct his steps.

CREON:
And what new thing, Teiresias, brings thee here?

TEIRESIAS:
That I will tell thee, and do thou obey
The seer who speaks.

CREON:
Of old I was not wont
To differ from thy judgment.

TEIRESIAS:
Therefore, well
And safely dost thou steer our good ship's course.

CREON:
I, from experience, bear my witness still
Of good derived from thee.

TEIRESIAS:
Bethink thee, then,
Thou walkest now upon a razor's edge.

CREON:
What means this? Lo! I shudder at thy speech.

TEIRESIAS:
Soon shalt thou know, as I unfold the signs
Of my dread art. For sitting, as of old,
Upon my ancient seat of augury,
Where every bird has access, lo! I hear
Strange cry of winged creatures, shouting shrill,
In clamour sharp and savage, and I knew
That they were tearing each the other's breast
With bloody talons, for their whirring wings
Made that quite clear; and straightway I, in fear,
Made trial of the sacrifice that lay
On fiery altar. But the living flame
Shone not from out the offering; then there oozed
Upon the ashes, trickling from the bones,
A moisture, and it bubbled, and it spat,
And, lo! the gall was scattered to the air,
And forth from out the fat that wrapped them round,
The thigh joints fell. Such omens of decay
From strange mysterious rites I learnt from him,
This boy, who now stands here, for he is still
A guide to me, as I to others am.
And all this evil falls upon the state,
From out thy counsels; for our altars all,
Our sacred hearths, are full of food for dogs
And birds unclean, the flesh of that poor wretch
Who fell, the son of OEdipus. And so
The Gods no longer hear our solemn prayers,
Nor own the flame that burns the sacrifice;
Nor do the birds give cry of omen good,
But feed on carrion of a human corpse.
Think thou on this, my son: to err, indeed,
Is common unto all, but having erred,
He is no longer reckless or unblest,
Who, having fallen into evil, seeks

For healing, nor continues still unmoved.
Self-will must bear the guilt of stubbornness:
Yield to the dead, and outrage not a corpse.
What gain is it a fallen foe to slay?
Good counsel give I, planning good for thee;
And of all joys the sweetest is to learn
From one who speaketh well, should that bring gain.

CREON:
Old man, as archers aiming at their mark,
So ye shoot forth your venomed darts at me;
I know your augur's skill, and by your arts
Long since am tricked and sold. Yes, gain your gains,
Get precious bronze from Sardis, Indian gold,
That corpse ye shall not hide in any tomb.
Not though the eagles, birds of Zeus, should bear
Their carrion morsels to their master's throne,
Not even fearing this pollution dire,
Will I consent to burial. Well I know
That man is powerless to pollute the Gods.
But many fall, Teiresias, dotard old,
A shameful fall, who gloze their shameful words,
For lucre's sake, with surface show of good.

TEIRESIAS:
Ah, me! Does no man know, does none consider....

CREON:
Consider what? What trite poor saw is this?

TEIRESIAS:
How far good counsel heaped up wealth excels?

CREON:
By just so far methinks the greatest hurt
Is sheer unwisdom.

TEIRESIAS:
Thou, at least, hast grown
From head to foot all full of that disease.

CREON:
Loath am I with a prophet evil words
To bandy to and fro.

TEIRESIAS:
And yet thou dost so,
Saying that I utter speech that is not true.

CREON:
The race of seers is ever fond of gold.

TEIRESIAS:
And that of tyrants loves the gain that comes
Of filthy lucre.

CREON:
Art thou ignorant, then,
That what thou say'st, thou speak'st of those that rule?

TEIRESIAS:
I know it. 'Twas from me thou hadst the state,
By me preserved.

CREON:
Wise art thou as a seer,
But too much given to wrong and injury.

TEIRESIAS:
Thou wilt provoke me in my wrath to speak
Of things best left unspoken.

CREON:
Speak them out!
Only take heed thou speak them not for gain.

TEIRESIAS:
And dost thou, then, already judge me thus?

CREON:
Know that my judgment is not bought and sold.

TEIRESIAS:
Know, then, and know it well, that thou shalt see
Not many winding circuits of the sun,
Before thou giv'st a quittance for the dead,
A corpse by thee begotten; for that thou
Hast trampled to the ground what stood on high,
And foully placed within a charnel-house
A living soul. And now thou keep'st from them,
The Gods below, the corpse of one unblest,
Unwept, unhallowed. Neither part nor lot
Hast thou in them, nor have the Gods who rule
The worlds above, but at thy hands they meet
This outrage. And for this they wait for thee,
The sure though slow avengers of the grave,
The dread Erinyes of the Gods above,
In these same evils to be snared and caught.
Search well if I say this as one who sells
His soul for money. Yet a little while,
And in thy house men's wailing, women's cry,
Shall make it plain. And every city stirs
Itself in arms against thee, owning those
Whose limbs the dogs have buried, or fierce wolves,

Or winged birds have brought the accursèd taint
To city's altar-hearth. Doom like to this,
Sure darting as an arrow to its mark,
I launch at thee (for thou dost grieve me sore),
An archer aiming at the very heart,
And thou shalt not escape its fiery sting.
And now, O boy, lead thou me home again,
And let him vent his spleen on younger men,
And learn to keep his tongue more orderly,
With better thoughts than this his present mood.
Exit

CHORUS:
The man has gone, O king, predicting woe,
And well we know, since first our raven hair
Was mixed with gray, that never yet his words
Were uttered to our state and failed of truth.

CREON:
I know it too, 'tis that that troubles me.
To yield is hard, but, holding out, to smite
One's soul with sorrow, this is harder still.

CHORUS:
Much need is there, O Creon, at this hour,
Of wisest counsel.

CREON:
What, then, should I do?
Tell me and I will hearken.

CHORUS:
Go thou first,
Release the maiden from her cavern tomb,
And give a grave to him who lies exposed.

CREON:
Is this thy counsel? Dost thou bid me yield?

CHORUS:
Without delay, O king, for, lo! they come,
The God's swift-footed ministers of ill,
And in an instant lay the wicked low.

CREON:
Ah, me! 'tis hard; and yet I bend my will
To do thy bidding. With necessity
We must not fight at such o'erwhelming odds.

CHORUS:
Go, then, and act! Commit it not to others.

CREON:
E'en as I am I'll go. Come, come, my men,
Present or absent, come, and in your hands
Bring axes. Come to yonder eminence,
And I, since now my judgment leans that way,
Who myself bound her, now myself will loose.
Too much I fear lest it should wisest prove
To end my life, maintaining ancient laws.
Exit

CHORUS:

Strophe I
O thou of many names,
Of that Cadmeian maid
The glory and the joy,
Child of loud-thundering Zeus,
Who watchest over fair Italia,
And reign'st o'er all the bays that open wide,
Which Deo claims on fair Eleusis' coast:
Bacchus, who dwell'st in Thebes,
The mother city of thy Bacchant train,
Among Ismenus' stream that glideth on,
And with the dragon's brood;

Antistrophe I
Thee, o'er the double peak of yonder height,
The flashing blaze beholds,
Where nymphs of Corycus
Go forth in Bacchic dance,
And by Castalia's stream;
And thee the ivied slopes of Nysa's hills,
And vine-clad promontory,
While words of more than mortal melody
Shout out the well-known name,
Send forth, the guardian lord
Of all the streets of Thebes.

Strophe II
Above all cities thou,
With her, thy mother, whom the thunder slew,
Dost look on it with love;
And now, since all the city bendeth low
Beneath the sullen plague,
Come thou with cleansing tread
O'er the Parnassian slopes,
Or o'er the moaning straits.
Antistrophe II
O thou, who lead'st the band
Of stars still breathing fire,
Lord of the hymns that echo in the night,
Offspring of highest Zeus,
Appear, we pray thee, with thy Naxian train,

Of Thyian maidens, frenzied, passionate,
Who all night long, in maddening chorus, sing
Thy praise, their lord, Iacchus.

Enter Messenger

MESSENGER:
Ye men of Cadmus and Amphion's house,
I know no life of mortal man which I
Would either praise or blame. It is but chance
That raiseth up, and chance that bringeth low,
The man who lives in good or evil plight,
And none foretells a man's appointed lot.
For Creon, in my judgment, men might watch
With envy and with wonder, having saved
This land of Cadmus from the bands of foes;
And, having ruled with fullest sovereignty,
He lived and prospered, joyous in a race
Of goodly offspring. Now, all this is gone;
For when men lose the joys that sweeten life,
I cannot count this living, rather deem
As of a breathing corpse. His heaped-up stores
Of wealth are large; so be it, and he lives
With all a sovereign's state, and yet, if joy
Be absent, all the rest I count as naught,
And would not weigh them against pleasure's charm,
More than a vapour's shadow.

CHORUS:
What is this?
What new disaster tell'st thou of our chiefs?

MESSENGER:
Dead are they, and the living cause their death.

CHORUS:
Who slays, and who is slaughtered? Tell thy tale.

MESSENGER:
Hæmon is dead. His own hand sheds his blood.

CHORUS:
Was it father's hand that struck the blow,
Or his own arm?

MESSENGER:
He by himself alone,
Yet in his wrath he charged his father with it.

CHORUS:
O prophet! true, most true, those words of thine.

MESSENGER:
Since thus it stands, we may as well debate
Of other things in council.

CHORUS:
Lo! there comes
The wife of Creon, sad Eurydice.
She from the house is come, or hearing speech
About her son, or else by chance.

Enter EURYDICE

EURYDICE:
My friends,
I on my way without, as suppliant bound
To pay my vows at Pallas' shrine, have heard
Your words, and so I chanced to slip the bolt
Of the half-opened door, when, lo! a sound
Falls on my ears of evil near at hand,
And terror-struck I fell in deadly swoon
Back in my handmaids' arms; yet tell it me,
Tell the tale once again, for I shall hear,
By long experience disciplined to grief.

MESSENGER:
Dear lady, I will tell thee: I was by,
And will not leave one word of truth untold.
Why should we smooth and gloze, when all too soon
We should be found as liars? Truth is still
The best and wisest. Lo! I went with him,
Thy husband, in attendance, to the height
Of yonder plain, where still all ruthlessly
The corpse of Polynices tombless lay,
Mangled by dogs. And, having prayed to her,
The Goddess of all pathways, and to Pluto,
To look with favour on them, him they washed
With holy water; and what yet was left
We burnt in branches freshly cut, and heaped
A high raised grave from out the soil around,
And then we entered on the stone-paved home,
Death's marriage-chamber for the ill-starred maid.
And some one hears, while standing yet afar,
Shrill voice of wailing near the bridal bower,
By funeral rites unhallowed, and he comes
And tells my master, Creon. On his ears,
Advancing nearer, falls a shriek confused
Of bitter sorrow, and with grieving loud,
He utters one sad cry: "Me miserable!
And am I, then, a prophet? Do I wend
This day the dreariest way of all my life?
My son's voice greets me. Go, my servants, go,
Quickly draw near, and standing by the tomb,
Search ye and see; and where the joined stones

Still leave an opening, look ye in, and say
If I hear Hæmon's voice, or if my soul
Is cheated by the Gods." And then we searched,
As he, our master, in his frenzy, bade us;
And, in the furthest corner of the vault,
We saw her hanging by a twisted cord
Of linen threads entwined, and him we found
Clasping her form in passionate embrace,
And mourning o'er the doom that robbed him of her,
His father's deed, and that his marriage bed,
So full of sorrow. When he saw him there,
Groaning again in bitterness of heart,
He goes to him, and calls in wailing voice,
"Ah! wretched me! what dost thou! Hast thou lost
Thy reason? In what evil sinkest thou?
Come forth, my child, on bended knee I ask thee."
And then the boy, with fierce, wild gleaming eyes,
Glared at him, spat upon his face, and draws,
Still answering naught, the sharp two-edged sword.
Missing his aim (his father from the blow
Turning aside), in anger with himself,
The poor ill-doomed one, even as he was,
Fell on his sword, and drove it through his breast,
Full half its length, and clasping, yet alive,
The maiden's arm, still soft, he there breathes out
In broken gasps, upon her fair white cheek,
A rain of blood. And so at last they lie,
Dead bridegroom with dead bride, and he has gained
His marriage rites in Hades' darksome home,
And left to all men witness terrible,
That man's worst ill is stubbornness of heart.
Exit EURYDICE

CHORUS:
What dost thou make of this? She turns again,
And not one word, or good or ill, will speak.

MESSENGER:
I, too, am full of wonder. Yet with hopes
I feed myself, she will not think it meet,
Hearing her son's woes, openly to wail
Before her subjects, but beneath her roof
Will think it best to bear her private griefs.
Too trained a judgment has she so to err.

CHORUS:
I know not. To my mind, or silence hard,
Or vain wild cries, are signs of bitter woe.

MESSENGER:
Soon we shall know, within the house advancing,
If, in the passion of her heart, she hides
A secret purpose. Truly dost thou speak;
There is a terror in that silence hard.

CHORUS:
seeing CREON *approaching with the corpse of* HÆMON *in his arms*
And, lo! the king himself comes on,
And in his hands he bears a record clear,
No woe (if I may speak) by others caused,
Himself the great offender.
Enter CREON *bearing* HÆMON*'s body*

CREON:
Woe! for the sins of souls of evil mood,
Strong, mighty to destroy;
O ye who look on those of kindred race,
The slayers and the slain,
Woe for mine own rash plans that prosper not;
Woe for thee, son; but new in life's career,
And by a new fate dying.
Woe! woe!
Thou diest, thou art gone,
Not by thine evil counsel, but by mine.

CHORUS:
Ah me! Too late thou seem'st to see the right.

CREON:
Ah me!
I learn the grievous lesson. On my head,
God, pressing sore, hath smitten me and vexed,
In ways most rough and terrible (ah me!),
Shattering the joy, and trampling underfoot.
Woe! woe! We toil for that which profits not.
Enter Second Messenger

SEC. MESSENGER:
My master! thou, as one who hast full store,
One source of sorrow bearest in thine arms,
And others in thy house, too soon, it seems,
Thou need'st must come and see.

CREON:
And what remains
Worse evil than the evils that we bear?

SEC. MESSENGER:
Thy wife is dead. Thy dead son's mother true,
Ill starred one, smitten with a deadly blow,
But some few moments since.

CREON:
O agony?
Thou house of Death, that none may purify,

Why dost thou thus destroy me?
O thou who comest, bringing in thy train
Woes horrible to tell,
Thou tramplest on a man already slain.
What say'st thou? What new tidings bring'st to me?
Ah me! ah me!
Is it that over all the slaughter wrought
My own wife's death has come to crown it all?

CHORUS:
It is but all too clear! No longer now
Does yon recess conceal her.

The gates open and show the dead body of EURYDICE.

CREON:
Woe is me!
This second stroke I gaze on, miserable,
What fate, yea, what still lies in wait for me?
Here in my arms I bear what was my son;
And there, O misery! look upon the dead.
Ah, wretched mother! ah, my son! my son!

SEC. MESSENGER:
Sore wounded, she around the altar clung,
And closed her darkening eyelids, and bewailed
The honoured bed of Megareus, who died
Long since, and then again that corpse thou hast;
And last of all she cried a bitter cry
Against thy deeds, the murderer of thy son.

CREON:
Woe! woe! alas!
I shudder in my fear: Will no one strike
A deadly blow with sharp two-edgèd sword?
Fearful my fate, alas!
And with a fearful woe full sore beset.

SEC. MESSENGER:
She in her death charged thee with being the cause
Of all their sorrows, his and hers alike.

CREON:
And in what way struck she the murderous blow?

SEC. MESSENGER:
With her own hand below her heart she stabbed,
Hearing her son's most pitiable fate.

CREON:
Ah me! The fault is mine. On no one else,
Of all that live, the fearful guilt can come;
I, even I, did slay thee, wretched one,
I; yes, I say it clearly. Come, ye guards,
Lead me forth quickly; lead me out of sight,
More crushed to nothing than the dead unborn.

CHORUS:
Thou counsellest gain, if gain there be in ills,
For present evils then are easiest borne
When shortest lived.

CREON:
Oh, come thou, then, come thou,
Last of my sorrows, that shall bring to me
Best boon, my life's last day. Come, then, oh, come
That nevermore I look upon the light.

CHORUS:
These things are in the future. What is near,
That we must do. O'er what is yet to come
They watch, to whom that work of right belongs.

CREON:
I did but pray for what I most desire.

CHORUS:
Pray thou for nothing more. For mortal man
There is no issue from a doom decreed.

CREON:
looking at the two corpses
Lead me, then, forth,
vain shadow that I am,
Who slew thee, O my son, unwittingly,
And thee, too—(O my sorrow)—and I know not
Which way to look. All near at hand is turned
Aside to evil; and upon my head
There falls a doom far worse than I can bear.

CHORUS:
Man's highest blessedness
In wisdom chiefly stands;
And in the things that touch upon the Gods,
'Tis best in word of deed
To shun unholy pride;
Great words of boasting bring great punishments;
And so to gray-haired age
Comes wisdom at the last.

Sophocles, *Antigone* (441 BC)

Richard Strauss, *Elektra* (1909)

Michael Kennedy,
PROGRAM NOTE,
Metropolitan Opera

It's easy to understand why Richard Strauss was reluctant to compose Elektra as his next opera after the 1905 Salome–he had to create music for another obsessed woman. Not this time a teenage girl with sexual cravings that turn to a savage and bloody act of spite when they are spurned, but a mature woman who for years has been plotting revenge against her mother and her mother's lover for the murder of her father. Strauss originally wanted to wait until the dust had settled from Salome, feeling uncomfortable to tackle two similar subjects in a row. He suggested to Hugo von Hofmannsthal that they should collaborate on Semiramis or Cesare Borgia or a Renaissance subject. But the poet, whose Elektra had premiered two years before Salome, was certain it would make a good operatic subject and pointed out that the Jewish princess and the Greek princess didn't really have that much in common.

Hofmannsthal wrote his play, adapted from Sophocles, in three weeks in August 1903 when he was 29. It had been in his mind for some time, as he mentioned to director Max Reinhardt and actress Gertrude Eysoldt when they all met at writer Hermann Bahr's house in May of that year. Reinhardt was immediately enthusiastic and promised a production at the Kleines Theater, Berlin, that fall, with Eysoldt in the title role. (It was she, incidentally, whom Strauss had seen as Salome in 1902 in Reinhardt's German-language production of Oscar Wilde's play.)

Perhaps because he wrote it so fast and under a certain amount of pressure, Hofmannsthal was never wholly satisfied with Elektra. Nevertheless, when Reinhardt produced it on October 30, 1903, it was a huge success. Its turbulent extremes of emotion stunned its first audiences, who were also aware of its modernity as "psycho-drama." Psychological ideas were much in the air in Vienna at the start of the 20th century and Hofmannsthal was well aware of them. It has often been said that Elektra owes a good deal to Freud, though the strongest influence was almost certainly Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Strauss, who worked in Berlin as the imperial court conductor of the opera, saw Hofmannsthal's play at the Deutsches Theater, where there were three performances between October 21 and November 7,1905. Shortly afterwards, he contacted Hofmannsthal to express interest in converting the play into an opera. As in the case of Salome, Strauss's copy of Elektra, which he used to cut the text, contains musical annotations in the margin, where certain lines and situations had already suggested music to him. Strauss adapted the play's text to a manageable libretto size himself, while Hofmannsthal contributed, at the composer's request, eight lines to the recognition scene, when Elektra belatedly realizes that the stranger who has entered the courtyard is her brother Orest. Hofmannsthal also wrote new text for the final duet between Elektra and her sister, Chrysothemis.

Usually a fast worker when he began to compose a subject in earnest, Strauss took an uncharacteristically long time over Elektra. By mid-July 1906 he had composed the first two scenes and by the end of the year had written enough to play parts of it to Hofmannsthal. During 1907 he was so busy with conducting assignments that progress was slow. By the fall he had reached the recognition scene, but then he experienced a creative block. He abandoned the scene for nearly nine months and began to score the completed sections. He did not resume composition until June 1908, and the full score was completed in September. The premiere was set for January 25, 1909, in Dresden. After the "scandalous" success of Salome, the event was keenly and commercially anticipated. A critic reported that "the shop windows were full of Elektra boots, spoons, and beer mugs."

The "Freudian" aspects of Elektra have sometimes been overstated. The heroine doesn't have a case history of hysteria, which involves suppression of the trauma that caused the hysteria. Elektra has done anything but suppress the thought of Agamemnon's murder. On the contrary, every evening at the hour it happened she recalls it in detail, like a ritual, and renews her vow of revenge: she and her brother and sister, Orest and Chrysothemis, will kill Klytamnestra and Aegisth and, afterwards, will "dance around [Agamemnon's] grave. I will raise my knees high, step by step ... " Loyalty, or fidelity, is Elektra's primary motivation. This was a favorite notion of

Hofmannsthal, rather than Freud, and it can be traced in his other collaborations with Strauss, notably in Ariadne auf Naxos and Arabella. When it comes to the crunch, Elektra is as ineffectual as Hamlet. For seven years she has been hiding the axe with which Agamemnon was killed, to give it to Orest upon his return to use on their mother. Yet when he comes, she forgets to do so. Her dance of triumph after Orest has entered the palace of Mycenae to accomplish what she has failed to do becomes her dance of death.

The character in Elektra that connects more closely to Freudian theories is Klytamnestra. She has suppressed the memory of the vile deed. "First it was to come, then it was past. In between I did nothing," she says. Now she is tormented by nightmares and asks Elektra for a remedy–"There are rites. There must be proper rites for everything ... I will find out whose blood must flow so that I can sleep again." This Klytamnestra is an entirely 20th-century, postFreudian creation. In Sophocles's play she is nota major figure; she justifies killing Agamemnon because he had killed her first daughter, Iphigenia. Hofmannsthal suppresses this in order to create a monster of depravity, on whom Strauss later lavished the music of Expressionism.

It has often been said that with Elektra, Strauss carried harmony to the limits of the tonal system, and that he then drew back from the abyss that opened at his feet and retreated into the rococo world of Der Rosenkavalier. This overlooks the daring use of poly tonality in Salome. It also obscures the fact that Elektra is a tonal opera with a structure remarkable for its symmetry. Almost the whole work is influenced by the tension between C minor and C major, a tension unresolved until the end when Chrysothemis is hammering on the palace door.

A keen listener will detect many anticipations of Der Rosenkavalier in Elektra (which ends with a gigantic slow waltz!). The idea that a great gulf separates these two operas, or that Strauss "changed style" is not supported by the musical evidence. He remained the same composer, drawing, according to need, on several stylistic features of his musical personality. Elektra also resembles its successor in that it contains three magnificent roles for female voices: Elektra, who seems like a tragic, psychologically charged Valkyrie, a superb part for a dramatic soprano; Chrysothemis, all radiance and tenderness; and Klytamnestra, whose "nightmares" aria contains the most advanced music in the opera, as she makes our flesh creep when she sings of her bone marrow melting and of "something" crawling over her as she tries to sleep.

As if anticipating the answer to the "words vs. music" debate of his final opera, Capriccio, Strauss ends Elektra with the orchestra expressing a joy that no words can convey. One feels that the whole work has been building to this last of a series of climaxes. It is the final justification for "the tremendous increase in musical tension to the very end" that attracted him to the subject in the first place. Hofmannsthal was right to cajole him into composing Elektra, for it differs fundamentally from Salome. Wilde's play invited a looser, more diverse structural approach. Hofmannsthal's is more concisely organized, Elektra herself being at the center with an unswerving driving force: revenge. Salome is exotic; Elektra is granite, symphonic in form, in many ways a more traditional opera than Salome, closer at times to a "numbers" opera, with set arias and ensembles. But it also opened the way for the psychological treatment of operatic characters, such as Berg's Lulu, Shostakovich's Katerina Ismailova, and Britten's Peter Grimes. As for Strauss, the next time he ventured into Greek mythology, in Ariadne auf Naxos, he entangled it with commedia dell'arte and exchanged his huge orchestra for one of 37 players. No one could call that retreating or even standing still. After all, there could be only one Elektra.

Michael Kennedy, *Program Note, Metropolitan Opera* (2009)

Orson Welles, *Othello* (1952)

Hilton Edwards and Michael MacLiammoir

FILMING OTHELLO:
A conversation with
Orson Welles

HILTON EDWARDS:
I have a feeling that in OTHELLO, it was the question of the black man, and the white woman. Although we know that the Moors were really Arabs...

ORSON WELLES:
Yes, but they were blackamoors.

HILTON EDWARDS: To my mind, it was a black man in Shakespeare's mind, and the white woman...

ORSON WELLES:
Does Shakespeare give us the ordinary jealous husband? No, he gives us an extraordinary outsider. In other words, he gives us a foreigner, a glamorous and strange savage, however he's played.

MICHAEL MacLIAMMOIR:
You were too young, and I was too old.

ORSON WELLES:
Oh no. You weren't old at all. You weren't 28 years old, which is what Shakespeare says Iago is. It doesn't matter at all. The age of Othello, I'll admit that's a fault of the film. It's a fault of my performance. I should have been older when I made the film. I would have known more about the part, and I should have seemed older, I should have played it older. I think it's true that Othello's in general, should play Othello as older than they usually do, because age is indicated in the text, and it distances Othello and Desdemona, and anything that does that – age, race, culture – any of those things are very important to the film. But Iago, if I let the fact that you weren't precisely Shakespeare's age for the role be a consideration, I would have denied myself an extraordinary performance. That isn't flattery, it's the truth. We come to Iago's character, and the whole question of what Coledridge called `the motiveless malignancy of Iago'. We played him, (I had that idea) as impotent. It was really not so much a key for the audience as a clue for our performance. A way to justify a certain reading of the role.
HILTON EDWARDS:
There's nothing in the script to contradict your theory...

ORSON WELLES:
Therefore we're free to do it. That's the great thing about Shakespeare.

HILTON EDWARDS:
I have a theory, that Iago was evil for it's own sake. The way we see a cat catching a mouse, or a cat playing with a rabbit.

ORSON WELLES:
What looks evil to us, but it's nothing to them.

HILTON EDWARDS:
It comes quite naturally. That's what's so terrifying.

ORSON WELLES:
What you are saying is, it is possible to have an unmotivated villain. We don't need Dr. Freud at all. There is such a thing as a natural born villain.

HILTON EDWARDS:
He has a natural love of evil, a pleasure in it. We have Othello being made jealous of Cassio. Now who is he made jealous by? He's being made jealous, by a jealous man. Iago who is jealous of Othello, being in a superior position to him, and being a black man, where he's a white Venetian. He's also jealous of Cassio. There's no question about that. Cassio is given the superior position, and in Cyprus he sees to it that Cassio is stripped of his Lieutenancy. To me the great thing is jealousy, jealousy, jealousy.

ORSON WELLES:
How does that apply to Brabantio, the part you played.

HILTON EDWARDS:
I think Brabantio is jealous of anybody who should be loved by his daughter more than he. I get the impression of a whole community which is poisoned by a bee sting of jealousy, in varying degrees, to everyone of them. This is why I would say, the main theme of OTHELLO is jealousy, which motivates all the action, throughout the play.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
Iago is the mystery of that play, but you know many people say, `Iago, I haven't met him'. Three times in my life I've met him.

ORSON WELLES:
Your lucky if you've only met him twice. One real life Iago is enough in any one life. We've all met several of them. I guess we are all agreed that this noble play, this noble tragedy is essentially concerned with the most ignoble of all passions. Isn't that what jealousy is?

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
The most humiliating, the most agonizing and the most piteous (of passions). I think it's self-pity, it's a disease.

ORSON WELLES:
Do you really think that in this permissive age we're going to do away with jealousy? I don't think so. Why do we laugh at jealousy?

HILTON EDWARDS:
You do, I don't.

ORSON WELLES:
I don't either, but people do.

HILTON EDWARDS:
Ah, but who are people? (laughter).

ORSON WELLES:
Those are harsh words, sir. Thank God for fun.

HILTON EDWARDS:
(Actors) don't think as (people) do, or we wouldn't be up on the stage, painting our faces pretending we were somebody else. It's the longing to be somebody else, that drives us up on the stage. You don't laugh at jealousy?

ORSON WELLES:
I don't even laugh at seasickness.

HILTON EDWARDS:
Jealousy in my mind, is not a comic reaction, it's a tragic one.

ORSON WELLES:
And it's never been treated as a tragic subject in dramatic literature. I would say the reason for that, is because all the literature we know about, has been written under patriarchal male dominated society, for males, in which the final decision in all matters belongs to the male. What can it matter, the problems of a woman, if she is jealous or not...

HILTON EDWARDS:
Therefore, I feel sympathetic with the public attitude of laughing at the trouble.

ORSON WELLES:
Because the public is partly female, and the public sees the essential comedy in the situation of jealousy.

HILTON EDWARDS:
Because of other females?

ORSON WELLES:
Yes, because women when they are jealous, (and we just asked one now, between takes), say, `yes, I would be jealous, but I would translate it immediately into hate'. Othello is a perfect male type, he kills Desdemona adoring her. Now isn't that male. Isn't that enormously masculine, to murder this girl, adoring her. No woman would do that. She would forgive the man, or forget his crime, or kill him, but she would never kill him loving him. That is the hypocrisy, the poetry, and the absurdity of the male condition.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
Jean Cocteau said, `whereas a blind man is a tragic figure, on the stage, the deaf man is a comic one.' But you meet a blind man, and meet a deaf man, and the deaf man is much more tragic in real life.

ORSON WELLES:
Of course he is.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
He's cut away entirely, he can see everybody, but he can't communicate.

ORSON WELLES:
It proves the point very well. It shows that the point of absurdity, which is the difference between comedy and tragedy, and the question of jealousy, between the woman's and the man's attitude, is in itself, without any logic, whatever. As long as the woman is any form of slave, her role in drama is always going to be very limited. I'm not speaking about whether she should have it or not.

HILTON EDWARDS:
She has all the best parts, in plays about lovers. It is the women's part. There is nothing more fascinating to play, or gets more sympathy from the audience, because the man is responsible for the pleasure in physical lovemaking. She is not. That's Othello's own view – what made him jealous of Desdemona. He was poisoned by Iago, but he had an overwhelming passion for the beauty and purity of this girl. He denies the fact that he's going to be made jealous by these little gossips, the poison that Iago is dropping.

ORSON WELLES:
Haven't you put your finger on the whole thing? We're dealing with a puritan. Over and over again, Othello speaks of her virtue. Not that she's fair, but it's her virtue. That's very much a puritan preoccupation. Shakespeare understood that preoccupation, he was anything but one, but he understood them, after all they're the people who eventually closed his theater. The puritan strain runs through the English character from the early days, and that kind of Englishness is in the Moor's character. That preoccupation with purity, as an abstract idea.

HILTON EDWARDS:
Another thing he can't give her, is what the 19th century theater always forgot. In her, Desdemona – who is one of the most interesting characters in the whole wonderful, terrible play – is that she is not the little pious, obedient girl as she is conceived of in the 19th century. Not at all, she is anything but. She's a Venetian girl, who would walk out with a negro, and marry him.

ORSON WELLES:
Certainly Desdemona is no cringing blonde. She's not a born loser, and if she dies a loser, it's no fault of hers. What about another nuance, and perhaps something else entirely, close to jealousy, but different. What about envy? What Iago feels towards Othello is envy of his position. So envy is what? Something you wish you could have, and jealousy is something you fear you are losing.

HILTON EDWARDS:
I think I heard you express it once as, `envy was a desire of having, and jealousy is the pain or fear of losing'.

ORSON WELLES:
You can be jealous for no reason. Isn't there a kind of self-love involved in jealousy.

HILTON EDWARDS: I think there is self-love involved in every human emotion. We're all ignoble savages, whether we're black or white, or Moorish or Blackamoor, or Spanish or Venetian. Self-love is the beginning and the end of the human tragedy, I think.

ORSON WELLES:
I agree entirely.

HILTON EDWARDS:
You do agree? Then I must be wrong (laughter). I can think of two people I envy. I envy Michael his languages, and I envy you your capacity for, as you described it to me many years ago about another actor, you said, "he had a wonderful capacity for displacing air." Believe you me, no greater cubic capacity of air has ever been displaced by any human being, as is being displaced by you at this moment (laughter).

ORSON WELLES:
You said something of the sort to me, when I auditioned for you 300 years ago at the Gate Theater. That I was a bloody bad actor.

HILTON EDWARDS:
I always knew you were a potentially (good actor).
ORSON WELLES: If you're a politician, you're in Congress and you wish you were in the White House, that's envy. If you think the President is making love to your wife, that's jealousy. I was just going back in my mind to that business of Othello's age, and wondering how many mistakes, how many other mis-interpretations I was guilty of, that you were too nice to mention during the shooting.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
There was never one direction you gave me which I disagreed with personally, never one.

ORSON WELLES:
Oh, that's very nice.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
Never one single one, except, "take the cloak and go!"

ORSON WELLES:
Oh yes, I think I better explain. That's a family joke. There was a scene in which you were supposed to take up your cloak and go.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
And I disagreed passionately. I wanted to make the most of that.

ORSON WELLES:
Yes, whenever I wanted to simplify the action or the business, whatever it was, to eliminate superfluous declaration, I'd just repeat that privately famous line.

MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR:
"Will you take the cloak and go." That's all you had to do, you said.

ORSON WELLES:
You did it, and very nicely too. Let's drink to that. Here our luncheon party comes to an end. We didn't run out of food or wine, and we certainly didn't run out of talk. We just ran out of film. Why I wonder, does MacLiammor say that Iago is a mystery? What he means is that, Shakespeareans often call him that. What worries them and all of us, is the mystery of evil itself. There's a tendency today to deny the existence of evil, not to believe in it, to call evil a sickness. You'll say, I suppose, that our notion of playing Iago as sexually impotent is a very modern sort of trick. Well if it is a trick, and I hope it isn't, at least we didn't impose it very heavily on the film itself. Now I do believe quite fervently in the existence of evil. Certainly Shakespeare did, and just as certainly Iago is the embodiment of evil, more so even than Richard III, whose actions were evil, but who was motivated by ambition. Iago has no ambition. He hates Cassio, for having been given a military title, that he might have had, but he would have hated him anyway. His envy, all of his brand of jealousy is an excuse. Of Cassio he says, `there is a daily duty in his life, which makes me ugly.' You see, Iago is a slave. He has the heart of a slave, he has the special cunning and all the artful hypocrisy of the slave who revels in the condition of slavery. Dostoyevsky says, `the secret consciousness of power is more insupportably delicious, than open domination'. Iago says, `we cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot be truly followed'. The irony is satanic.
The whole key to his character, and another key, comes again from Iago himself. He says, `I am not what I am'. All the other people in the story are people with feelings. Iago is the intellect. He is pure intellect, and as Emerson says, `pure intellect is the pure devil. Pure and cold'. Iago's is the terrible alliance of pure intellect and hate. This is the irony. The worst of all Hell's, says Dante's Inferno, is the Hell of ice. Iago, of course, is incapable of love. He's forever proclaiming his love for Othello, to Othello. Othello believes him, he is after all, honest Iago. Those words, honest Iago are heard often. The word honest is heard even more often. Everybody speaks in the play, describing Iago as honest. Desdemona does, Cassio does, Othello does, and Iago does, interminably. The point is, Othello believing Iago is honest, believes his blameless wife is dishonest. It's the supreme irony. I think it's easy enough to understand, when you think about it. After all, Desdemona comes from the gilded, pleasure loving, luxurious world of Venetian aristocracy, about which Othello knows absolutely nothing, except that it's morals are notoriously loose. He is a professional army man, after all. A stranger to a society of high-born,

high-spirited noblewomen. He's married one of them, and they're just married. Now that much is very important. He scarcely knows her at all. He never comes to know her. She dies in his hands a stranger. Othello knows, or thinks he knows Iago, very well and before anything remember, Iago is honest. His slandering of Desdemona is done with great subtlety. There is nothing, apparently to gain by it. So there really isn't any reason, to speak of Othello, as some critics do, as childishly gullible. No, Desdemona, for Othello is the bride in a romance. A dream who he has scarcely had time to discover is flesh and blood, before Iago has poisoned, and begun to work to turn his dream into a nightmare. Iago is a trusted officer in Othello's army, a companion under arms. Othello the soldier is monumentally male. His story is monumentally a male tragedy. Small wonder that the doubt falls where it usually does in life. Not on the slanderer, but on the innocent object of the slander. There is certainly a simplicity about Othello, but in trusting Iago, he does no more than anyone else in the story. They all trust him, as we have seen. No, the commander of the armed forces of the great Venetian Republicis no stupid child. He is no Venetian sophisticate, either. I think he must feel something close to awe, in his love of Desdemona, the Senator's daughter, who fled from the palace in the dead of night, to marry a black man. Black Othello, the outsider, the mercenary, the foreigner, and the older man, must feel a certain insecurity when he contemplates this curious conquest of his. He had married her, as if by a miracle, but can he keep her? Might she not turn away from him, as suddenly as she ran away with him? Last winter they invited me to Boston, for a special showing of the film OTHELLO, and the audience stayed on after the screening. (Welles runs the question and answer session on his movieola)
A movie has to have a great opening. It must command attention. The opening of OTHELLO is written for an audience that is just getting quiet. Like all openings in a play, because you don't want to ever open a play at the top of your bent. But a movie should open at the top of it's bent, it must, because this damn thing (points to the screen) is dead. The only living thing are the people sitting out here. It's a projected image, and you cannot bring the thing alive unless you seize the people at the beginning. The riderless horse has to come in. The funeral of Othello and the lynching of Iago, is the riderless horse. It's as simple as that.

HILTON EDWARDS:
Why did you make Roderigo's dog a terrier? The reason I ask is because the terrier is a symbol of marital fidelity.

ORSON WELLES:
This is the kind of question I love, because if I had known about the question before, I would have been able to pretend that I indeed used a terrier as a graphic symbol of marital infidelity. Oh, fidelity. That's just what I said. But since I didn't have notice of this question, I haven't got time to con you. I'll have to tell you the truth. The terrier was not a terrier. It was a tenerife, which is a very rare kind of dog, it is a lapdog used by the dandies in all the Carpaccio paintings, and Carpaccio was the source of the costumes and the general esthetic of the movie.

HILTON EDWARDS:
In Laurence Olivier's production of OTHELLO, he seemed to stress the vanity of the man, much more than in your production. Would you comment on that?

ORSON WELLES:
You see, the themes of OTHELLO were set down first by Shakespeare, and of course there's a difference in every OTHELLO, depending on who makes the film, or theatrical production. There are so many ways of doing it, there isn't one right way of doing it. If I could make OTHELLO again – first of all I have done it in the theater since then, and I did it completely differently, both as an actor and a director. We took an entirely new line on everything, because that's the great opportunity that you have. The minute you have a great piece of material, like a Shakespearean play, or any other thing of that kind, you are free to make almost anything you want with it. You can go in so many directions and still be true to the essential job.

HILTON EDWARDS:
The role of Iago seemed somewhat straightforward, largely motivated by envy, while

in some of your other movies, like THE LADY FROM SHANGHAI, the motive of Arthur Bannister (Everett Sloane) seems much more obscure.

ORSON WELLES:
Nobody ever works in a big organization, whether it's military, or business, or theatrical or anything else, without running into a few Iago's. Now, there are all kinds of ways of doing it. When Olivier did Iago with Ralph Richardson, years ago, they did it as a homosexual relationship. When Othello fell into his fit, Iago kissed him passionately on the lips. I don't know how that worked, but I know that they did it. There are many different efforts. In the case of this film, I took the line that Iago was impotent, and that his malice was the malice of impotence.

HILTON EDWARDS:
You took the set design from your Harlem theater production of the voodoo MACBETH, when you made MACBETH into a movie.

ORSON WELLES:
How do you know that?

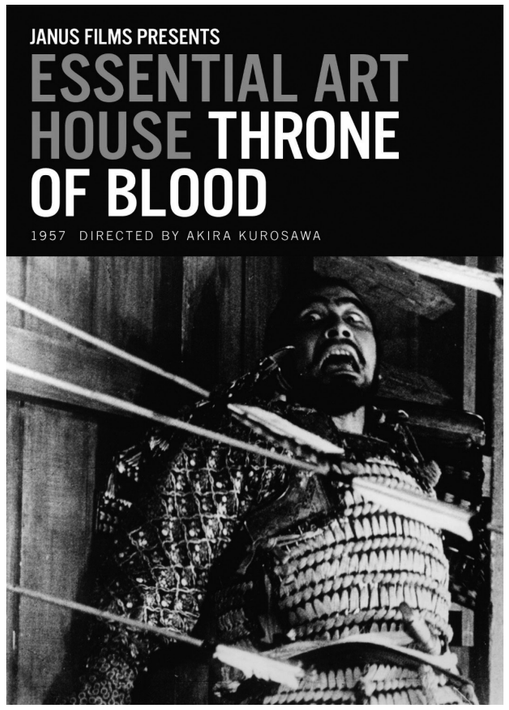
HILTON EDWARDS:
Because I taught a course on your films a few years ago. Why didn't you repeat the effort of trying to make a film quickly, tackling, as you said, difficult projects in a short amount of time?

ORSON WELLES:
The point is that MACBETH was made in a very short time. It was only 19 days in principal photography, with two days more for inserts and things like that. It was a real quickie. The basic set had the same plan which I had used in the black MACBETH, which I had done in Harlem, in the theater, some years before. It wasn't the same set, but it had the same basic plan, because we were in a great rush. The reason I didn't repeat it, was because I was gambling on MACBETH being a great success, but at the time the American critical press was very bad for MACBETH. The European press was very good.

HILTON EDWARDS:
When you've got the film shot, and your putting the film together, what is the question that is going through your mind? What makes you select one scene over another?

ORSON WELLES:
I have done a great deal of that editing, while I am filming. I visualize the editing, while I am filming. When I change that idea, it is a deliberate change. It is a difference that is bigger than I'd like to admit, and I do admit it, because actors teach you so much. The scenery, the smell of a thing, when you come on a set in the morning, whether it's OTHELLO, or a modern story. If you have a master plan for what your going to do, exactly where the camera is going to be, exactly what the scene is supposed to state, if you are locked into that, you are depriving yourself of the divine accidents of moviemaking. Everywhere there are beautiful accidents. The actors say something in a different way than you ever dream it could be said. She looks differently, there's a smell in the air, there's a look that changes the whole resonance of what you expected. Then, there are the true accidents, and my definition of a film director is the man who presides over accidents, but doesn't make them.
I'm going to stop just here, not only because our time is almost up, but because at this point in the discussion, the Boston film buffs veered away from the subject of OTHELLO. If I've evaded any of their questions, or any of yours, it's not by design. Maybe I should have read into the record some of the things the critics have said against OTHELLO. You might have found that informative. I would have found it depressing. I'm very much afraid that under the banner of fair play, and the interest of what's called a balanced judgment, I couldn't have resisted reading you some of the good stuff as well. Anyway it's an argument that still goes on and on. I spared you both sides of it, and I don't know if I was mistaken. Maybe an anthology of critical reviews might have been rewarding, but after all this is supposed to be my voice on the subject, so that's what you've had. I've tried to be as candid as I can. You won't have expected me to be objective. I started by calling this a conversation, but I'm afraid what you've had is mostly a scrambled, disjointed series of notes. I've been coming at our subject from every conceivable direction of the compass, and I might have put a better shape to this if I had relentlessly pursued a single theme, but that would have neglected all the other themes. I just don't know. In trying to say too much, I may have said too little. Of course, my film did not do justice to the play. It is my film and it is Shakespeare's play. No film, indeed no stage production could ever do true justice to that play. No actor ever did full justice to the part. I ask myself now, if I've done justice here in my own movie. I don't mean in the value I may sometimes rather coyly have placed upon it. I just mean this discussion. Now, let's try to sum it up. First, how the picture was made. That story you remember. An Italian producer dreaming of Verdi's OTELLO, and neglecting to mention that he was about to go into bankruptcy, stranded our whole company in a small town off the coast of Africa. With a little money of my own, all I had and absolutely no costumes whatsoever, we improvised our way for awhile, then stopped for awhile and I had to go to work as an actor in other films, in order to earn enough to continue with my own. That went on and on, and repeated itself several times, and it meant that OTHELLO was made so to speak, on the installment plan. This and other circumstances did impose a method and style of shooting, which was contrary to what had been carefully planned. For a description of the finished result, I brought you those critical appreciations, that correspond fairly closely to my own ideas. Some thoughts on the interpretation have come from a couple of the leading actors, with some additions of my own. All judgments having been avoided, I leave you with this confession. This hasn't been as easy as I might have wished. Their are too many regrets, there are too many things I wish I could have done over again. If it wasn't a memory, if it was a project for the future, talking about OTHELLO would have been nothing but delight. After all, promises are more fun than explanations. In all my heart, I wish that I wasn't looking back on OTHELLO, but looking forward to it. That OTHELLO would be one hell of a picture. Goodnight.

H. Edwards and M. MacLiammoir, *Filming Othello: A conversation with Orson Welles* (1978)



Akira Kurosawa, *Throne of Blood* (1957)

Robert N. Watson

THRONE OF BLOOD

In 1955, the great Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa and his colleagues began work on an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, transposing from medieval Scotland to medieval Japan the tale of a heroic warrior tricked into a violent and ultimately futile usurpation by supernatural prophecies and an ambitious wife. Kurosawa had aspired to undertake this project for many years, but his initial effort was delayed by the release of Orson Welles's 1948 version – which, with its low-budget Halloween atmospherics and its abortive attempt to mimic medieval Scottish pronunciation, was neither a critical nor a commercial success.

Kurosawa's version has emerged as a classic both in the world of Shakespeare performances (screened and discussed in countless secondary and university literature courses every year) and in the world of cinema (it was the inaugural screening of the National Film Theatre in London, and was handsomely reissued by Criterion in 2003). The greatness of *Throne of Blood* – titled Kumonosu-jō (蜘蛛巣城), which would be better translated as 'Spider's Web Castle' – was not immediately noticed in Japan. It proved only mildly profitable for the Toho movie studio, which was hoping to catch a share of the booming market for samurai films (in the *jidai-geki* genre of historical period pieces) while keeping the international art-cinema audience won by Kurosawa's *Rashomon/ Rashōmon* in 1950; and it only tied for fourth place in *Kinema Junpō*'s influential ranking of the year's best movies in Japan. But – in contrast to the tepid domestic response, a contrast that has fuelled charges that Kurosawa abandons Japanese authenticity to please foreign audiences – the impact in the West was remarkable. Although initially laughed off by Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times* as an 'odd amalgamation of cultural contrasts' that inadvertently 'hits the occidental funnybone', Kurosawa's adaptation quickly commanded high and wide respect. The then-vast readership of *Time* magazine was told that *Throne of Blood* was 'the most brilliant and original attempt ever made to put Shakespeare in pictures', an effort for which Kurosawa 'must be numbered with Sergei Eisenstein and D. W. Griffith among the supreme creators of cinema'. Among notably distinguished directors of the Shakespearean stage and international film, Sir Peter Hall called *Throne of Blood* 'perhaps the most successful Shakespeare film ever made', and Grigori Kozintsev (who made the justly famous Russian *King Lear/Korol Lir* [1971]) called it 'the finest of Shakespearean movies'. The renowned film theorist Noël Burch, who also wrote what is still probably the most important western study of Japanese film, lauded *Throne of Blood* as 'indisputably Kurosawa's finest achievement'. T. S. Eliot reportedly identified *Throne of Blood* as his favourite movie – or perhaps just as his favourite Shakespeare movie, or at least as presenting his favourite Lady Macbeth. Harold Bloom's best-selling study of Shakespeare has praised it as 'the most successful film version of *Macbeth*', and many scholars of Renaissance literature concur. I certainly do: if a friend had not overcome my adolescent reluctance to attend a midnight college film-club screening of a battered print of some old, subtitled, samuraithemed, black-and-white Japanese retelling of *Macbeth*, I probably would not be a Shakespeare professor today.

How could a masterpiece as dependent on its intensely poetic language as *Macbeth* survive so well its translation into a verbally sparse Japanese film? Although some of Kurosawa's collaborators have said they did not even read Shakespeare's play in preparing their screenplay, the director clearly sought out visual parallels to Shakespeare's specific language, and drew on some large moral and existential ideas that Shakespeare articulates. The dominant theme of this film is the futile struggle of the self against nature. Kurosawa implicitly condemns the doomed battle of human pride and desire against an indifferent universe of overpowering scope, weight and persistence, but also mourns the suffering of the great human spirit tricked into waging that battle. The struggle to pull free of the spider's web is foolish to undertake, but – and here we may see Kurosawa's controversial humanistic investment in the individual – at moments heroic, and perhaps inevitable.

That may seem a remarkably universalising moral, from the perspective of twenty-first-century cultural studies that instead emphasise local and material phenomena. But Kurosawa's film (like Frazer's comparative anthropology, which was still hugely influential in the mid-

twentieth century) is clearly interested in highlighting analogies: in this case, analogies between British and Japanese medieval history, and between Shakespeare as an epitome of high western civilisation and Noh drama as an epitome of high Japanese civilisation. The film thus asserts a truth about our condition that transcends historical boundaries. The opening chorus told audiences in 1957 that 'what once was so is now still true', and that the spirit of the doomed warrior 'is walking still'. The film then proves how broadly the moral of this story can be applied.

This theme of the vain struggle of reflexive human will against time and space is certainly present also in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as I have argued at considerable length elsewhere although I suspect my reading of Shakespeare's work was itself shaped by that compelling early encounter with Kurosawa's adaptation. But in *Macbeth*, that pessimistic nihilism is mitigated (characteristically of Shakespeare) by a contrary suggestion of a more positive determinism that harmonises with human values, as divine Providence defends virtuous linear royal inheritance through the medium of natural order. Kurosawa pays less attention to that optimistic view: he undermines the benign aspects of both supernatural and monarchical control, and consistently employs the visual aspects of his medium to reinforce a message that (depending on the cultural position of the viewer) invites a Buddhist or nihilist interpretation.

Kurosawa's film adaptation thus shifts from Shakespeare's theological and psychological exploration of the nature of evil towards a dark meditation on existential entrapment that is latent in *Macbeth*. What at first appears to be a version of *mugen* Noh theatre – a supernatural tale outside of time – collapses back into the *genzai* Noh of ordinary existence; as with the portents in Act 4 of *Macbeth*, the real betrayal is that the truth is literal, material and reductive, not that it is otherworldly. Some commentators see Spider's Web Forest as 'not so much a natural as a *supernatural* labyrinth', but for creatures aware of their own mortality, nature itself is a force no less terrifying and overwhelming than evil deities. Some spiders inject poison, but others simply wait for their captives to waste away in the webbing. The recalcitrance of natural order against human will, depicted mostly as a blessing in Shakespeare's tragedy, becomes in Kurosawa's version an almost – but not quite – demonic assault on our desires for control and transcendence, desires which prove to be nearly as stupid and tireless as the biosphere that defeats them.

One commentator accuses *Throne of Blood* of imposing a 'simplification of the moral framework' of Shakespeare's tragedy through 'the replacement of the Western concern for the individual soul by the rigid social ethic of feudal Japan, which encouraged obedience within a well-defined framework of social and political obligations'. Perhaps, however, the film instead achieves its deepest complexities by keeping those cultural values in tension – a tension reflected even by the contrast between the wildness of the forest on the one hand, and the well-defined framework of the human dwellings and their clean rectilinear designs on the other. That tension is reinforced by the juxtaposition, in the style of the film's performances and storytelling, of modern western psychological realism on the one hand, and on the other hand the traditional Noh masks and movements towards which Kurosawa guided his performers. Kurosawa was attacked not only for naively believing in the possibility of individual human freedom, but also for not being 'humanistic' enough on that topic: 'There are other film-makers who have a clearer regard for the individual in Japanese society, the individual free from the constraints of a feudal relationship.' But, as in *Macbeth*, the deeper tragedy in *Throne of Blood* depends on recognising that complete individual freedom is no less dangerous an illusion than complete control by higher powers.

This tension would have been important in the Sengoku period depicted in this film (as well as in *Seven Samurai/Shichinin no samurai* [1954] and *The Hidden Fortress/Kakushi-toride no san-akunin* [1958], made shortly before and after *Throne of Blood*). Roughly the century preceding the birth of Shakespeare and half a world away, this was an era agonised by warring samurai factions and multiple phases of gekokujō: the overthrow of leaders by their supposed subordinates. Kurosawa commented that most people in Japan as well as the West misunderstood 'what a Samurai is' – or at least, what it was when 'a peasant could still become a warrior', before the codifications of behaviour that the Tokugawa shogunate initiated during the seventeenth century. The tension between traditional authority and individual self-assertion would have been extremely important both during the years *Macbeth* was produced (because of the late- Renaissance upheaval of socio-economic

order and the uncertain launch of the Stuart dynasty in England), and during the production of *Throne of Blood*. As Erin Suzuki has helpfully explained, imperial defeat in World War II broke down 'the tradition-bound dictates of Japanese culture' and introduced a western emphasis on 'the revolutionary concept of the "individual self"':

"As Japanese society suddenly found itself coming to terms with these new ideas of the self and the radical potential of individualism, the young intellectuals of the Meiji Era felt a particular affinity with the early Renaissance writings of Shakespeare, which were written during and in response to an era faced with a similar conflict between a traditional past based upon hierarchical group identification and potentially dangerous new ideas about the individual self that threatened to destabilize and undermine the existing social structure. Early Japanese stagings of Western plays attempted to negotiate this ambiguous territory, particularly as the productions of Western drama required some adjustment to fit into Japanese theatrical conventions. The idea of dramatic realism, as opposed to the intentionally formal artifice of traditional Japanese theater, was from the first closely aligned with the idea of Western art and the cult of the individual."

So it is hardly surprising that Throne of Blood – made in the mid-Shōwa period when 'Meiji ideals of public dedication and selfsacrificing service had to accommodate a new ethic of success that honored the individual' – would be part of what Stephen Prince calls Kurosawa's 'series of inquiries on the place and the possibilities of the autonomous self within a culture whose social relations stress group ties and obligations'.

This context is what I believe rival Japanese directors in the 1960s and film critics thereafter wrongly overlook in complaining that 'with evidence readily at hand of democratic protest in modern Japan, of real spaces where farmers or fishermen could confront or defy the policies of the state, Kurosawa chose instead in his work to retreat to the past and to mythical spaces'. As so often, the force of the artwork derives exactly from its ability to evoke from the past an apt cautionary tale for the present, without any explicit political programme. In the dynamics even of the filmic technique in these opening scenes, it takes the deeds of Washizu – the Macbeth figure, played by Kurosawa's perennial leading man, Toshiro Mifune – to restore motion to the Great Lord Tsuzuki's seated body and bring affect into his stoic visage. Washizu is usually followed by a moving camera, whereas Tsuzuki is always shown in static compositions. Emperor Hirohito's failure would have been coded in the passivity of the Great Lord in the face of imminent defeat, and the force of modern western consumerism would have been visible in the blind hunger of Washizu, who does not yet quite recognise the deadly labyrinth into which it might be leading him. Nor can Washizu quite understand, right up to his dying moment, how he was caught (as tragic heroes so often are) between the commands of two contradictory cultural imperatives.

Thus – without losing an element of transhistorical human truth highlighted by the correspondences with Shakespeare – 'the nihilistic vision of *Throne of Blood* represents a particular stage of liberal disillusionment in a Japan caught between the hard-earned lessons of its militaristic past and the unfulfilled promise of a democratic future'. As Kurosawa states in his autobiography,

"The Japanese see self-assertion as immoral and self-sacrifice as the sensible course to take in life. We were accustomed to this teaching and never thought to question it. I felt that without the establishment of the self as a positive value there could be no freedom and no democracy. My first film in the postwar era, Waga seishun ni kui nashi (No Regrets for Our Youth) takes the problem of self as its theme."

Kurosawa was nicknamed 'the Emperor' by many who worked with him, and it was as much complaint as compliment; he seems to have been constitutionally incapable of relinquishing control, incapable of the tranquil resignation to the transience of his world that characterises the films of his great countryman Ozu. Yet Kurosawa also warned, especially through *Rashomon*, that 'Egoism is a sin the human being carries with him from birth; it is the most difficult to redeem.' The liberation of personal desire risked replicating, at the level of the individual, the imperial appetites that had so recently led Japan into an ocean of bloodshed that resulted only in the national devastation epitomised by Hiroshima and Nagasaki – their ground as razed and ash-black as the site of the former Spider's Web Castle on the volcanic soil of Mount Fuji.

The very fact that the film begins with a retrospective chorus initiates the disturbing theme of scripted fate; yet we all must know, even if we resist considering it, that the distant future is sure to offer a similarly dismissive retrospect on any of our lives. Forcing us to recognise this tragic scripting brings into focus the reflexive denial (of fatedness and futility) most viewers share with Washizu. Yet within that dark world, there is beauty, as the composition of many shots reminds us. And within this dark tale, Kurosawa provides brighter moments that show there is room for laughter, loyalty, hearty male companionship, domestic pleasures and hope for the renewal of life. Central to the film's ethical argument, I believe, is the implication that recognising the inevitability of death need not entail the poisonous fate Washizu is tricked into choosing for himself.

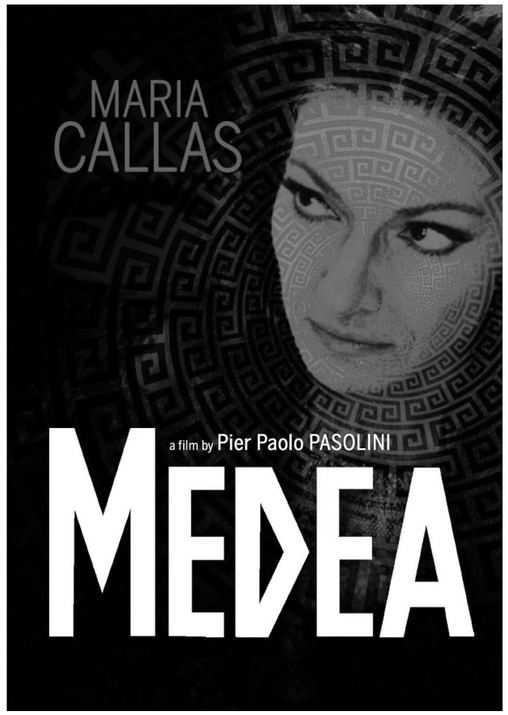
Two years before *Throne of Blood* – during the same period of intense anxiety about nuclear annihilation – Ingmar Bergman's great *The Seventh Seal/Det sjunde inseglet* (1957) similarly balanced the knight's grim chess game with Death against the sweet domestic hopefulness of Jof and Mia, which the knight is able to protect by dauntlessly playing out a losing position. Watanabe, the protagonist of Kurosawa's wonderful *Ikiru* (1952) – the title means 'To live' – knows he is soon to die. But the film warns that submission to the hierarchical bureaucratic rituals of Japanese life in which Watanabe has wasted decades – in effect, forbidding the self to be fully alive – is not a valid answer to human mortality. Nor is the lurid indulgence of the self in the sexual titillations, drunkenness and consumerism that are his first line of resistance when he learns he is terminally ill. Instead, he finally achieves a selfless assertion of self: an insistence on personal vision and morality that serves the larger project of human nurture and joy, represented here by the protective mothers he guides tirelessly through the bureaucratic maze as they seek to have a pond of toxic waste converted into a park, and by the children who eventually fill that park with exuberant life and laughter.

The paradoxes of fate and free will were especially acute in an English society making the transition from medieval feudalism to Renaissance individualism; Kurosawa may thus have seen much the same artistic opportunity in this story that Shakespeare did. Ironically, Washizu's attempts to function as a free agent of personal desire are what draw him into a fate predicted by traditional Buddhist warnings. And, as in Macbeth, the fundamental force resisting that human project of freedom is the seemingly benevolent order of nature itself, in all its patience and complexity.

Human beings still tend to endorse the idea of a morally intelligent Creation, in which we must obey the dictates of nature; and yet we must all (as Asaji, the Lady Macbeth figure, convinces her husband) make war on nature in order to survive. Trees must be turned into houses, vessels and fire. Even feathers must be turned into weapons (to aid the flight of arrows), and livestock into food. The philosopher Pico della Mirandola saw these needs as proof that God authorised us to exercise free will. Renaissance Christians were then offered this sovereignty in a new technological form by Francis Bacon's empirical science, and in a new economic form by the shift from serfdom to wage-labour. Yet John Calvin's theology of predestination, which had recently become dominant in England, fiercely admonished these same Christians to accept that they ultimately had no such freedom at all.

No wonder, then, that Kurosawa recognised and welcomed, in the Macbeth story, an occasion for 'setting the ritualised gesture of traditional Noh theater and the static frame – popular in early Japanese cinema – in tension with the realistic cinematic conventions popular in western film, which he uses to represent the idea of transparent free will and human agency'. Like many other great works of art, *Throne of Blood* is a profoundly ambivalent exploration of human morality that is at once intensely localised and transhistorical – and is deeply self-conscious about its medium. It empties the world of false and toxic meanings, and when that emptying seems to leave nothing to sustain human morale, its aesthetic graces make the lack of meaning seem itself meaningful. As in the catharsis that Aristotle recognised as the work of tragedy, the despondency of *Throne of Blood* seems morally charged; not itself a nothingness, but a call on our self-overcoming, our moral heroism, even in the blank face of doom.

Robert N. Watson *Throne of Blood, BFI Film Classics* (2014)



Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Medea* (1969)

Janet L. Borgerson

MANAGING DESIRE: Heretical Transformation in Pasolini's Medea

In this essay, I theorize desire's role in the construction of heretical subjectivity through an exploration of Italian poet, theorist, and film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinematic interpretation of Medea. Pasolini's film and sound techniques, in conjunction with his ideological agenda, move Medea's tragic narrative beyond the accusatory tone of familiar tropes into a theoretical tale of semoiticized social structures and the flow of human capita. What Pasolini provides is less a strategy for managing heretical desire and more an attitude of action and waiting, of silence and communication, but always in the wake of desire.

Act I
1. The two sides
As yet there's no language. These words,
therefore, must be shown: what is war? War
happens when one side fights another side.
Side One (still no speaking): Nothing given to or
understandable by humans. The appearances of
nothing in the world: In geographical terms, the
desert. In psychological terms, those who are not
rational, logical or understandable to humans:
the witches. In epistemological terms: not
knowing. In verbal terms: prophecy. In temporal
terms: only the future is reality ...
Side Two: Something: We English who are
honorable and just. In geographical terms: our
stronghold is our empire, ... In psychological
terms: reality is only and exactly that which
appears. We are not liars. In epistemological
terms: we understand reality, therefore define
good and evil. In verbal terms: simple declarative
sentences. In temporal terms: the past
which we are naming or history is the present.

2. The two sides have identified themselves.
Now war can begin ...
from Kathy Acker, *My Death, My Life* by Pier
Paolo Pasolini Chapter 2, "*Teenage Macbeth*"
And the Chorus conjures,

Flow backward to your sources, sacred rivers,
And let the world's great order be reversed.
It is the thoughts of men that are deceitful,
Their pledges that are loose ...
Women are paid their due.
No more shall evil sounding fame be theirs.
Euripides, *Medea*

Medea's name provokes. Deep in the past of ancient Greece, in the realm between the human and the gods, Medea committed treacherous acts against family and country. In seeking revenge upon her unfaithful husband—Jason, the un-heroic hero of the *Argo*— Medea murdered their two sons. Her departure, in an unearthly chariot, often concludes events of the well-known story. Though her own life's adventures did not end here, Medea's relation to her children frames her reputation and dominates the interpretation of her actions. Yet, in an effort to understand the management of heretical transformation, a site of apparently unmappable potential, a different interpretation is needed. Kathy Acker's fictional play *My Death, My Life* suggests that an interrogation of epistemologically and ontologically normative assumptions might achieve new meanings beyond identities derived from hegemonic ideological systems and understandings (Acker 1989).

Moreover, recall Euripides' assertion that "no more shall evil sounding fame be theirs" (Euripides 1963). Something is awry with the historical memory around Medea. Not all versions of Medea's story relate the vengeful killings (Warner 1994, p.11). In those versions that do, alternative interpretations of Medea's actions emerge. In Lars von Trier's film version of Carl Theodor Dreyer's screenplay, *Medea*, the oldest son recognizes that the course and order of the universe requires that he and his brother die. He helps his mother hang, first his younger brother, then himself.

Italian poet and film maker Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote and directed a version of *Medea*, released in 1969. Pasolini was influenced by the plays of Euripides and Seneca, the account by Apollonius of Rhodes, as well as anthropological-religious studies by Mircea Eliade; linguistic theory; and his own anti-capitalist/anti-consumerist beliefs. Sandwiched between two films that are often claimed to be

Pasolini "masterpieces"— *Porcile* and *Appunti per un'Orestiade Africana—Medea* is often shrugged off, not only as a so-called "flawed film," but as a "failure" (see e.g. Bondanella 2001 or Viano 1993). In this essay, I theorize desire's role in the construction of heretical subjectivity through an exploration of Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinematic interpretation of *Medea*.

In the late 1960s Pasolini was drawn to the "language of cinema" and what he saw as its close relationship to a more primitive language—often a kind of silence where the flow of images express meaning (Pasolini 1988). In an attempt to build a cinematic form that could not be reduced to a consumable narrative, Pasolini pushed his images beyond the narrative function, to create excess possibilities of meaning (Rumble 1996). Pasolini would often try to convey—via the image—a set of feelings or a vision not related to the narrative (Deleuze 1997). This excess "expenditure" performed a heretical function of refusing to contribute to an integrated system and provide an efficient return that Batille has argued is characteristic of classical economic theories, as opposed to theories of general economy (Bataille 1985).

Pasolini uses *Medea*—often silent—as a vehicle for his theory. At the structural level of the film's linear progression, editing of image and sound exemplifies Pasolini's philosophical hypothesis on the roles of dream-logic, cyclical time and silence. Pasolini's cinematic and sound techniques, in conjunction with his ideological agenda, move Medea's tragic narrative beyond the accusatory tone of familiar tropes into a theoretical tale of social structures and the flow of human capital.

At the heart of *Medea*, Pasolini foregrounds a prophetic poem/song. The song tells a tale, expressing a cosmology and a historical sweep that defy an individualistic interpretation of Jason's and Medea's roles. Pasolini's film requires that we question the almost universal assumption that Medea did something wrong. Philosopher Lewis Gordon (1998, p. 172) writes that certain perspectives "enable tragedy to raise meta-ethical insights into the human condition that are not always afforded by ethics proper". Tragedy, in its heretical function, disrupts ethical expectations, forcing an interrogation of meanings, judgments and everyday logics.

GIVING ALTERNATIVE MEANINGS TO SACRIFICE

Pasolini scholar Naomi Greene emphasizes "universal" psychological conflicts explicitly adopted by Pasolini in the making of his film, Oedipo Re. She focuses on the "disastrous" expression of sexual desire to explain what she refers to as the downfall of Medea: "Medea's terrible fate is, clearly, sealed from the very first moment that she sees Jason and is seized by desire ... In this she incarnates the forbidden and fateful sexuality that drives all the characters of the mythic quartet" (Greene 1990, p. 162).

Greene maintains that in the film's initial ritual human sacrifice scene "[Medea's] role as high priestess is but a prelude to her own tragedy—the young man's death foreshadows her own terrible end" (Greene 1990, p. 167). Greene's own use of Mircea Eliade, however, suggests that Pasolini's Medea has performed a different role:

> "Every sacrifice repeats the initial sacrifice and coincides with it ... And the same holds true for all repetitions, i.e. all imitations of archetypes; through such imitations, man is projected into the mythical epoch in which the archetypes were first revealed. Thus we perceive a second aspect of primitive ontology: insofar as an act (or an object) acquires a certain reality through the repetition of certain pragmatic gestures, and it acquires it through that alone, there is an implicit abolition of profane time, of duration, of "history"; and he who reproduces the exemplary gesture thus finds himself transported into the mythical epoch in which its revelation took place" (Eliade in Greene 1990, p. 167).

Pasolini's Medea is the priestess—the one whose actions relate directly to the archetypal moment—the prophet, and ultimately, the poet-heretic. After the sacrificial boy is hacked into distributable portions, his larger remains are burned on a pile of stick-bundles. As the smoke rises from the fire, Medea operates a kind of spinning wheel that fans the smoke out over the fertile fields. These are her first words: "Give life to the seed and be reborn with the seed." Out of the smoky fields from hiding places behind bushes and trees their "faces covered with masks" come the reborn. The resurrection carnival begins. Medea's acts of violence throughout the film refer back to this initial sacrifice—keyed in part by the repetition of the same dissonant, clanging music.

Geographical specificity in this film establishes a cultural specificity providing the viewer with a lexicon to understand Pasolini's elaborately filmed rituals. The historical Medea is to be found in Anatolia near the Black Sea, and Pasolini has chosen to be geographically accurate in the location of Medea's home village, Colchis. In many of his other films, specifically rooted stories are relocated to areas of Pasolini's choosing. He places scenes from the *Decameron* in Southern Italy, and *Oedipus Re* in Morocco, not Greece or Egypt.

Pasolini became familiar with Anatolia and its inhabitants and their religions while researching a film he had hoped to do on Saint Paul, also in the late Sixties (Greene 1990, p. 178). Anatolia is the land of Ephesus where Paul the Christian confronted the great site of goddess worship. Early on, the Sun Goddess was worshipped here. Later the people took up worship of the Goddess and prophet Kybele which involved "... ritual and legend ... of the son/lover, whose death was enacted annually" (Stone p. 185). Kybele's rites often included ritual fulfillment of sexual desire. Ephesus held the shrine of Artemis (Diana) and was "a holy site first founded by Amazons" (Stone p. 187). Anatolia is fundamentally connected with the Amazons—with whom several Greek heroes did battle. Hecate also resided here as queen of the witches and ancient magic, and upon whose altar Jason and Medea swore their oath of eternal fidelity.

Specific ancient legends and rituals of Kybele, or Sibyl—the great prophet—possibly intended for the film on Saint Paul, become powerful images in Medea. These sources suggest clues for interpreting difficult moments in the film. One version of the death of Kybele's son/lover describes how:

> "Attis, in fear of being unfaithful to the Mighty Mother, cut the maleness from his own body, thus bleeding to death beneath an evergreen tree ... Kybele had found the lifeless body and wrapped it in woolen mourning bands, taking the emasculated body and the tree upon whose roots the lad had fallen ... each year at the time of his tragic death she performed the rituals of mourning." (Stone, p. 200)

Among the rituals associated with this death was the "smearing of sacrificial blood upon altars and trees". Pasolini makes direct reference to this practice in an early scene. He shows the population of Colchis accepting portions of a sacrificed boy's organs and blood, then rubbing the blood on their fertile trees and green plants, or burying pieces in the ground.

More profoundly, the Kybele ritual gives clearer meaning to the scene in which the men from Colchis ride out to track the stolen Golden Fleece. They are effectively detained from the chase by having to collect pieces of Medea's brother who she has dismembered with a primitive ax. The riders come upon a huge and flourishing tree alone in the barren hills. Significantly, the banging, chanting music during this sequence is the same as that of the initial sacrifice scene. We see the tree in the distance as the men ride toward it, then a close up, its leaves blowing in the wind, reflecting sunlight. The camera turns to the king in his elaborate leather armor looking out from his face coverings. There is a pause that ends as he abruptly covers his eyes. The sight is too much for him to bear; the dead is his son. The tree becomes a symbol of blood spilled in sacrifice. The killing of Medea's brother is not simply expedient murder. The film's foreshadowing of the brother's death as a sacrifice supports this claim. Pasolini marks a relation between the brother and the sacrificial boy as they exchange intimate and highly sensual glances and smiles just prior to the ritual. Later, when the brother pulls the Golden Fleece from its altar at Medea's command the skin falls onto his shoulders and cloaks him in the sacrificed animal.

Similarly, each of the scenes that leads to the killing of Medea's sons moves in a slowed down, ritualistic pace. Each son is bathed and dressed in a white robe. Medea holds them tenderly, the sacrificial knife visible near her. A fire burns itself out as Orpheus, in an adjacent room, sings then dozes off. There is no sense of struggle. Once dead, the boys lie on an altar until Medea takes them to the roof, awaiting the fiery chariot that will carry them all away. Although Medea's motive for killing her sons is often reduced to jealousy, Euripides makes clear Medea's concern about the boys' fate once she is banished from the city. She believes they will be banished, as well, left to wander, be enslaved or murdered far from sacred ground without hope of claiming a place among the gods. Medea's role as prophet, Amazondescendant, granddaughter of the Sun, and High Priestess transforms otherwise murderous or violent actions into reflections of the sacred.

THE PROPHECY

We need not look only to the meaning of geography and myth "outside" the film for help in contextualizing Medea and giving light to her actions. The long song/poem/prophecy that appears near the beginning of Pasolini's *Medea* describes the ritual cycle from the end of an era—or history—to resurrection. Of his work on archaic or "barbaric" cycles of time, Eliade says, "their formulas, all these instruments of regeneration tend toward the same end: to annual past time, to abolish history ["end of a particular historical cycle", "end of the world"] by a continuous return in *llo tempore*, by the repetition of the cosmogonic act" (Eliade 1971, p. 81). Medea was further placed at the center of this cycle as she presided over the crucifixion/resurrection ritual at the beginning of the film.

Seemingly foretold in the form of a heroic epic, the prophecy contains the story of Jason's coming and the desecrating effect he will have upon the civilization and land of Colchis. As well, the prophecy tells of the struggle of Medea, the "maiden", and her civilization. This narrative of the death and rebirth cycle forms the foundation for Pasolini's Medea and expresses the determined, integrated system from which Medea attempts to break free:

(scenes of women in daily work, making bread, lips moving as though singing though not in sync with the "words" of the women's voices)
The sky was the boundary of our kingdom
but Jason will come and he will pierce the sky
and bring an end to our kingdom
He will laugh while we cry
(women working in the fields, lips moving)
for the name of blasphemy is on his lips
and where he passes will turn barren
He will bring an end to our kingdom
(men in white "robes" seated at long table, Medea, etc at the far end, static)
and the blood shed because of him will erase forever
the sacred blood of god
(silence: clay vases and pots hung in and around the base of a tree.)
(outside; Medea, head covered)
We know the vineyard
(she looks up, troubled)
but not the sea
We know the fields of peas and garlic
but not the sea
(Media again)
and Jason comes from the sea
he comes from the sea
(she looks down)
(silence: panorama of mountains and valleys)
(women—in black in a very dark space, bright white boulders at borders of the frame—"sorting" red fibers or yarn)
The sun will turn black as a horsehair sack
and the moon will retreat to the shadow
(close-up from the ground behind a women in a black skirt sorting white yarn, other women sitting at camera level, lips moving)
The wind will blow without making a sound
("inside" against a tan wall a woman in black using her hands to sort yarn near a loom)
We will fall like dead upon the ground
and when we open our eyes again we will see things
forever abandoned by god
(the outside of an earthen or cave "home", looking through an interior partial doorway, Medea's head and shoulders lying on an elevated bed, pan through inside to others sleeping)
while we pray
we will fall to the ground like epileptics
(close-up of woman's sleeping face; brother's head and neck close-up)
and when we rise again
(close-up Medea's sleeping face, hair down)
we will no longer know god
(her eyes snap open, awake)
(silence; outside shot down at group of men surrounded by wild rock formations and valley beyond. Medea outside a doorway)
(women in black seated on benches along interior walls, smiling, mouths moving though not in sync with the now male voices)
Jason will not know the dead come back
with faces covered with masks
like rats from their nests
But Jason will be handsome and bold
(from behind her, Medea seated outside against cave houses, a "youthful" turn of her head)
and he will be pleasing to maidens as a god
(she stands, goes into the space where the women sit on benches; light behind her in the doorway, women look up)
(Medea's spoken words):
"Prepare me. I want to pray in the temple."

WHERE PROPHESY COMES FROM

For Colchis and Medea, this song is a mythical tale held among the people like a collective consciousness, repeated over and over (we imagine) in the daily life of working in the fields, preparing meals, and weaving seen in the scenes that accompany the haunting voices that are translated into subtitled words. The "words" of the song are not in a spoken language the audience is expected to understand. The Colchian's mouths are obviously not producing the words—women are shown "singing" while male voices are heard. The prophecy accompanies the melody, as though meaning is interwoven and present without fixed words. The sense in which the prophetic song in fact refers to Jason may only be an instantiation of this worldview that yearly awaits the end so that all may begin again anew. Hence, their prophecy/song/poem is not *about* Jason, but comes from an archetype of death and rebirth through which the particular may take any form.

"The sky was our boundary ... is poetry, prophesy, and song with words that carry no specific meaning—words used as sounds woven into the memory of a culture. The meaning is comprehensible as a collection of daily life scenes. Through a song with words that fail to denote, yet still mean, that direct our attention to heretical meaning that emerges, is not given—as we might imagine occurs in dream and prophesy and poetry-we are made aware of a moment that Medea's culture has been awaiting since the day the prophesy became song (perhaps the day the Golden Fleece arrived in their land). They have been waiting for a moment in history, a moment given meaning because they await it, because they have envisioned it again and again in the song. The song is a tale of their lives, a tale of how the end of history will come.

For Jason, prophecy is constructed of words. The words are reliable—tales of the past, "historical" events, genealogies, future possibilities, personal motives and emotions. As a child, Jason receives these tales from the mythical centaur/teacher who explains to him his mythical lineage. Later, a human teacher, the transformed centaur (both, Jason is told, are within himself) explains the death and rebirth of the seed, the perpetual resurrection, which no longer "has significance"—no longer signifies. The teacher gives Jason his quest that will take him to a land "where the use of reason is very different from our own ... life is very realistic for only those who are mythical are realistic". The adult and soon to be adulterous Jason's question upon confronting his old teacher is strikingly different than Medea's reaction to revelation. Jason asks, confused, "Is this a vision?"

Jason receives his history lesson and we become aware of his "upbringing," or personal history, that he has been hearing stories since he was a small child. Pasolini cuts to Medea readying for the ritual ceremony that conforms to Eliade's "barbaric" ritual of the abolition of history. Medea's childhood is an absolute mystery.We do not see her as a young girl climbing the hills or witnessing the same ritual. We do not meet her teachers. Medea's power is not bestowed or given; her lesson is not learned or remembered. Her body and her position do not suggest change or progress.

CONCLUSIONS: MANAGING HERETICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Pasolini directs a dream interwoven with a conscious life story. The dream is silence. The dream holds power. The story is words, and the words shift and eventually betray. *Medea* explores the power of dreams, or revelation, born of desire, to direct action, to direct possibility, to correct a wrong, to settle a point of respect, honor, or blasphemy. *Medea* is the moment of the seed returning to the earth to "bring forth life", the end of history before the cycle begins again. Jason's coming brings an end to the anticipation, and all that follows cycles to rebirth.

Medea serves as an allegory of a linguistic community in which an individual makes an attempt, a heretical attempt, to mean something beyond what the archetype or paradigm makes available to her. The archetype—as an initial mythical act to which all meaningful acts refer—transforms into the structure of language that predetermines meaning and limits the individual subject's place within a linguistic community. The new archetype—the meaning to which all words/speech acts refer—is of human rendering and the mythical structure of "the eternal return" becomes internalized. The communal act of ending and beginning anew history through the yearly rites is transferred to and becomes located in the individual experience of sexual desire—including the willful acts desire inspires, and then cycles round again.

Medea's sexual desire brings about a transformation. This transformation, provoked by Medea's individual experience of desire, cannot accurately be called a "downfall". *Medea* tracks movement from the communal to an individual attempt to break out—the poetic, heretical act—and, ultimately under Pasolini's direction, back to the communal. The poetic act inspired by sexual desire brings about a transformation that marks the end of one era and brings forth a new age.

We recall Medea's final words in both Euripides' play and Pasolini's film: "Nothing is possible anymore". She has dismembered her brother, "murdered" her children, poisoned the princess/bride and the girl's father/lover the king, and set fire to her own house. Pasolini has shown Medea weeping at the prophetic dream-images of her future actions; but her weeping shows how the moralistic code of Greece has weakened her power to act as a priestess. Only slowly as her old sense of archetype and power return to her are her actions—the killings, the fire—reaffirmed as ritualistic and in reference to the sacred. Pasolini emphasizes this ritualistic focus and maintains the sacredness of the events. He specifically avoids portraying Medea as a murderer, a child killer. During the film's final shots, the viewer has an overwhelming sense that the children are safer lying dead with Medea among her red robes on the roof of the house engulfed in flames, than down below with Jason and the chaotic confusion of Corinthian citizens.

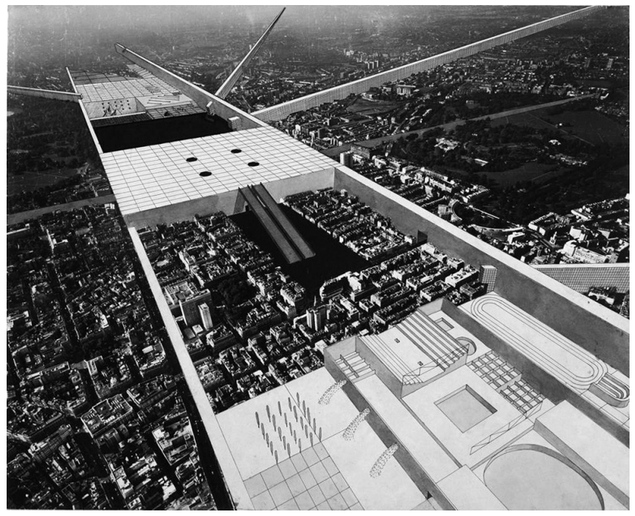
In Euripides' play, the gods use Medea. In Pasolini's film, Medea's desire/will and her own heretical vision emerge in the place of the will of the gods. What a careful analysis of Pasolini's film allows us to understand is that in both sources tragedy has disrupted the ethical, and an attempt to understand the world in such a way that we may lay blame upon Medea fails.

What can we learn from Pier Paolo Pasolini's handling of tragic transgression, the heretical poetic act based in the individual experience of desire? How does the passing of desire into the prophetic individual effect societal satisfaction and community functioning? At one level, what we would typically regard as tragedy does arise from Medea's experience of individual desire. Medea kills her two children, a tragic event even if death seems a better alternative than banishment from their father's city, and even if Medea does have a place in the land of the gods reserved for them. On a larger scale, we have witnessed an attempt to control events in the face of an inevitable future. Medea's heretical poetics are transgressive and productive within a cycle from which she fails to escape. There is no realm outside the prophecy. In a sense then, heretical transformation manages itself. What Pasolini provides is less a strategy and more an attitude of action and waiting, of silence and communication, but always in the wake of desire.

Janet L. Borgerson *Managing Desire: Heretical Transformation in Pasolini's Medea* (2002)

Gustaf Gründgens, *Goethe's Faust* (1957)

Addendum



Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis, *Exodus or the voluntary prisoners of architecture* (1972)

Paul Virilio

THE ORIGINAL ACCIDENT

PART I
1. Caution

'One feature, the most distinctive of all, pits contemporary civilization against those that have preceded it: speed. The metamorphosis occurred in the space of a single generation,' the historian, Marc Bloch, noted in the 1930s.

This situation involves a second feature in turn: the accident. The gradual spread of catastrophic events not only affects the reality of the moment but causes anxiety and anguish for generations to come.

From incidents to accidents, from catastrophes to cataclysms, everyday life has become a kaleidoscope where we endlessly bang into or run up against what crops up, ex abrupto, out of the blue, so to speak ... And so, in this broken mirror, we need to learn how to clearly make out what crops up more and more frequently and, more to the point, more and more rapidly, in an untimely fashion, perhaps even simultaneously.

Faced with this state of affairs in an accelerated temporality that affects customs and moral standards and art every bit as much as the politics of nations, one thing stands out as being of the utmost urgency: to expose the accident in Time. [...]

According to Aristotle, 'the accident reveals the substance.' If so, then invention of the 'substance' is equally invention of the 'accident'. The shipwreck is consequently the 'futurist' invention of the ship, and the air crash the invention of the supersonic airliner, just as the Chernobyl meltdown is the invention of the nuclear power station. [...]

Given that the declared objective of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century was precisely the repetition of standardized objects (machines, tools, vehicles, etc.), in other words, famously incriminated substances, it is only logical today to note that the twentieth century did in fact swamp us with mass–produced accidents one after the other, from the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 up to the Chernobyl meltdown in 1986, to say nothing of the Seveso chemical plant disaster of 1976 or of the Toulouse fertilizer factory disaster of 2001 .

And so serial reproduction of the most diverse catastrophes has dogged the great discoveries and the great technical inventions like a shadow, and, unless we accept the unacceptable, meaning allow the accident in turn to become automatic, the urgent need for an 'intelligence of the crisis in intelligence' is making itself felt, at the very beginning of the twenty–first century – an intelligence which ecology is the clinical symptom of, anticipating the imminent emergence of a philosophy of post–industrial eschatology.

Let's accept Valery's postulate: if consciousness only survives now as awareness of accidents, and if nothing functions except outside consciousness, the loss of consciousness about accidents as well as major disasters would not only amount to unconsciousness but to madness – the madness of deliberate blindness to the fatal consequences of our actions and our inventions. I am thinking in particular of genetic engineering and the biotechnologies. Such a situation would then mean embracing the swift reversal of philosophy into its opposite – in other words, the birth of philefolly, a love of what was repressed as radically unimaginable, unthinkable, whereby the insane nature of our acts would not only stop consciously worrying us, but would thrill us and captivate us.

After the accident in substances, we would see the fatal emergence of the accident in knowledge, which computer science could well be a sign of, due to the very nature of its indisputable 'advances' but also, by the same token, due to the nature of the incommensurable damage it does. [...]

By gradual habituation to insensitivity and indifference in the face of the craziest scenes, endlessly replayed by the entertainment markets in the name of some so–called freedom of expression that has morphed into the freeing up of expressionism, or even into an academicism of horror, we are succumbing to the ravages of a programming of outrageousness at all costs that leads, not to meaninglessness any more, but to the selling of terror and terrorism as heroism.

Much as the official art of the nineteenth century went out of its way to glorify the great battles of the past in its salons and wound up, as we know, in the mass slaughter of Verdun, at the

very dawn of the twenty–first century, we look on, gobsmacked, at the attempts to promote artistic torture, aesthetic self–mutilation and suicide as an artform. [...]

2. The Inventions of Accidents

Creation or collapse, the accident is an unconscious oeuvre, an invention in the sense of uncovering what was hidden, just waiting to happen.

Unlike the 'natural' accident, the 'artificial' accident results from the innovation of a motor or of some substantial material. Whether the sinking of the Titanic or the eruption of the Chernobyl nuclear power station – emblematic catastrophes of the past century – the issue raised by the accidental event is not so much that of an iceberg surging up in the North Atlantic on a certain night in 1912, or that of a divergent nuclear reactor on a certain day in 1986. The issue is the building of an 'unsinkable' ocean liner or the setting up of an atomic power station close to residential zones.

In 1922, for instance, when Howard Carter stumbled across Tutankhamun's sarcophagus in the Valley of the Kings, he literally invented it. But when the Soviet 'liquidators' covered the faulty Chernobyl reactor with a different kind of 'sarcophagus' , they invented the major nuclear accident, and this, only a few years after the one that had occurred at Three Mile Island in the United States.

So, just as Egyptology is one of the disciplines of historical discovery, in other words, of archaeological invention, analysis of the industrial accident ought to be seen as a 'logical art' or, more precisely, as an archaeotechnological invention. [...]

'There is no science of the accident,' Aristotle cautioned a long time ago. Despite the existence of risk studies which assess risks, there is no accidentology, but only a process of fortuitous discovery, archaeotechnological invention. To invent the sailing ship or steamer is to invent the shipwreck. To invent the train is to invent the rail accident of derailment. To invent the family automobile is to produce the pile–up on the highway.

To get what is heavier than air to take off in the form of an aeroplane or dirigible is to invent the crash, the air disaster. As for the space shuttle, Challenger, its blowing up in flight in the same year that the tragedy of Chernobyl occurred is the original accident of a new motor, the equivalent of the first shipwreck of the very first ship.

An indirect invention of the breakdown of computer (or other) systems, look at the economic upheaval in the financial markets when suddenly, with the stockmarket crash, the hidden face of the economic sciences and technologies of automated dealing in values rears up, like the iceberg before the Titanic, only on Wall Street, in Tokyo and in London.

And so, if, for Aristotle some little time ago and for us today, the accident reveals the substance, this is in fact because WHAT CROPS UP (accidens) is a sort of analysis, a technoanalysis of WHAT IS BENEATH (substare) any knowledge.

It follows that fighting against the damage done by Progress above all means uncovering the hidden truth of our successes in this accidental revelation – in no way apocalyptic – of the incriminated substances.

Whence the urgent need, at the threshold of the third millennium, for public recognition of this type of innovation that comes and feeds off every technology, as the twentieth century never ceased stunningly demonstrating.

On this score, too, political ecology cannot long go on sweeping under the carpet the eschatological dimension of the calamities caused by the positivist ideology of Progress.

So the dromologue, or, if you like, the analyst of the phenomena of acceleration, is consistent in thinking that if speed is responsible for the exponential development of the artificial accidents of the twentieth century, it is also every bit as responsible for the increased impact of ecological accidents (the sundry instances of pollution of the environment) as, let's say, the eschatological calamities that are looming with the very recent discoveries of genomics and biotechnologies. [...]

Far from urging some 'millenarian catastrophism', there is no question here of making a tragedy out of an accident with the aim of scaring the hordes as the mass media so often do, but only of finally taking accidents seriously.

Along the lines of the work of someone like Freud on our relationship to death and the impulse towards it, it is now a matter of scrupulously examining our relationship to the end, to all ends, in other words to finiteness. [...]

But let's get back to this technoanalysis revelatory of 'substance' – in other words, what lies beneath technicians' knowledge. Techniques are always streets ahead of the mentalities of competent personnel in the area of innovation, as the essayist, John Berger, likes to claim, in any case ('In every creation, whether it involves an original idea, a painting or a poem, error always sits alongside skill. Skill is never presented on its own; there is no skill, no creative talent, without error'). But this is because the accident is inseparable from the speed with which it unexpectedly surges up. And so this 'virtual speed' of the catastrophic surprise really should be studied instead of merely the 'actual speed' of objects and engines fresh off the drawing board.

Just as we need to protect ourselves (at any cost) from excess in real speed by means of breaks and automated safety systems, we have to try and protect ourselves from excess in virtual speed, from what unexpectedly happens to 'substance', meaning to what lies beneath the engineer's awareness as producer.

This is the 'archaeotechnological' invention itself, the discovery evoked above.

In his Physics, Aristotle remarks at the outset that it is not Time as such that corrupts and destroys, but what crops up (accidens). So it is indeed the passage of Time, in other words the speed with which they crop up that achieves the ruin of all things, every 'substance' being, in the end, a victim of the accident in the traffic circulation of time.

That being the case, it's all too easy to imagine the havoc wreaked by the accident in Time, with the instantaneity of the temporal compression of data in the course of globalization, and the unimaginable dangers of the synchronization of knowledge. [...]

In fact, the visible speed of the substance – that of the means of transport, of computing, of information – is only ever the tip of the iceberg of the invisible speed of the accident. This holds true just as much for road traffic as for the traffic of values.

If you need convincing, all you have to do is look at the very latest stock exchange crashes, the eccessive burstings of the speculative bubbles of the single market in a financial system that is now interconnected or has gone on–line.

Faced with this state of affairs, very largely catastrophic for the very future of humanity, we have no choice but to take stock of the urgent need for making perceptible, if not visible, the speed with which accidents surge up, plunging history into mourning.

To do this, apart from searching in vain for some black box capable of revealing the parameters of the contemporary disaster, we have to try as fast as possible to define the flagrant nature of disasters peculiar to new technologies. And we have to do this using scientific expertise, of course, but also a philosophical and cultural approach that would wash its hands of the promotional expressionism of the promoters of materials, since, as Malraux said, 'culture is what made man something more than an accident in the Universe.'

3. The Accident Argument

"Progress and disaster are two sides of the same coin." – Hannah Arendt

Lately, as though an accident was now an option, a privilege granted to chance to the detriment of error or the desire to do harm, the accident argument has become one of the mass media's pet themes, flagging, by this very fact, the confusion now creeping in between sabotage and breakdown, on the one hand, and between the suicide bombing mission and the industrial or other accident, on the other.

Actually, the unprecedented increase in the number of catastrophes since the start of the twentieth century and right up to the present day when, for the first time, 'artificial' accidents have outstripped 'natural' accidents, makes everyone aware that they have to choose, meaning opt, for one or the other version of whatever calamity might be under way. Whence the weirdly academic expression: the accident argument. [...]

The general trend towards negation of any terrorist attack – a new type of negationism that is emerging– is part and parcel, now, of the importance of the corporate image of any country or nation open to the cross–border tourism industry that is constantly growing thanks to the low cost of transcontinental transport.

Whence the gravity of the New York attack, which calls into question not only the United States's status as a sanctuary, but also the boom in the major airlines and the liberalization of tourist flows, to say nothing of the catastrophic impact of the collapse of the Twin Towers on the comprehensive insurance market.

From now on, faced with the ubiquity of risk, often even of a major risk of disaster for humanity, the issue of fear management becomes crucial once more.

To paraphrase a like–minded writer, we might even assert today that: 'If knowledge can be shown as a sphere whose volume is endlessly expanding, the area of contact with the unknown is growing out of all proportion. '

By replacing the geometric term sphere with the spatio temporal term dromosphere, we can't help but come to the conclusion that, if the speed at which the unknown has been growing expands or intensifies fear, this alarm in the face of the final end of humanity of which the ecology movement represents an early warning sign, then that fear is set to increase even further in the twenty–first century, in anticipation of one last movement emerging, an eschatology movement, this time, that would be concerned with stockpiling the dividends of terror.

The abrupt undermining of the substantial war that derived from politics via hyperterrorism, this accidental war that no longer speaks its name, also undermines politics – and not only traditional party politics.

Whence the alternation not so much between the traditional left and right any more than between politics and the media, in other words, this information managing (generating) capability that is gearing up to invade the imaginary of populations held in thrall by a proliferation of screens that perfectly typifies the globalization of 'affects' – this sudden synchronization of collective emotions greatly favouring the administration of fear. [...]

Confronted by this chain of media events, each one more catastrophic than the last (the anthrax virus, the threat of a radiological bomb, and so on), it is surely appropriate to ask ourselves about the dramatization that has been taking place since the beginning of the twenty–first century, in New York, Jerusalem and Toulouse as well as Karachi and elsewhere.

The first objective of this new dramatic art is: to never break the chain of emotion set in train by catastrophic scenes.

Whence this crescendo close to the end of a media show kicked off by Greek tragedy at the same time as Athenian democracy. In fact, for the historian of Antiquity, as for the modern philosopher, the tragic chorus is the city itself, where the future is played out between the menace of a single person and the war of each against all; this stasis that democracy must protect itself from every bit as much as from the lone tyrant.

With the globalization of the real time of telecommunications, as the new century gets under way, the public stage of the theatre of our origins gives way (and how!) to the public screen, on which the 'people's acts' are played out, this liturgy where repeat catastrophes and cataclysms have the role of some deus ex machina, if not of the oracle announcing the horrors to come and denouncing, thereby, the abomination of the destiny of peoples. [...]

The sudden stereoscopic highlighting of the event, accident or attack, thus well and truly amounts to the birth of a new type of tragedy, one not only audiovisual, but binocular and stereophonic, in which the perspective of the real time of synchronized emotions produces the submission of consciences to this 'terrorism in evidence' – that we see with our own eyes – that further enhances the authority of the media. [...]

4. The Accident Museum

A society that unthinkingly privileges the present, real time, to the detriment of past and future, also privileges accidents. Since, at every moment, everything happens, most often unex pectedly, a civilization that implements immediacy, ubiquity and instantaneity, stages accidents and disasters. [...]

Proof, if proof were needed, that far from promoting quietude, our industrialized societies have, over the course of the twentieth century, intensified anxiety and increased major risks, and this is not to mention the recent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Whence the urgent necessity of reversing a trend that consists in exposing us to the most catastrophic accidents deriving from technoscientific genius, in order to kick–start the opposite approach which would consist in exposing the accident – exhibiting it – as the major enigma of modern progress. [...]

In order to avoid shortly inhabiting the planetary dimensions of an integral accident, one capable of integrating a whole heap of incidents and disasters through chain reactions, we must start right now building, inhabiting and thinking through the laboratory of cataclysms, the museum of the accident of technical progress. This is the only way to avert the sudden springing up, in the near future, following the accident in substances – revealed by Aristotle – of the accient in all knowledge, a full–scale philosophical accident which genetic engineering, in the wake of atomic engineering, now portends. [...]

With the television image, we have looked on, live, since the end of last century, at endless overkill in the broadcasting of horror and, especially since the boom in live coverage, in the instantaneous broadcasting of cataclysms and terrorist outrages that have largely had the jump on disaster films.

Even more to the point, following the standardization of opinion that came in with the nineteenth century, we are now witnessing the sudden synchronization of emotions. [...]

Just as there exists a Richter scale for telluric catastrophes, there also exists a sort of secret scale of media–relayed catastrophes whose most obvious effect is to inspire resentment against those running the show, on the one hand, and, on the other, an effect of exemplarity that ends, when it comes to terrorism, in reproduction of the disaster, thanks to its dramatic amplification. This has reached the point where it would now be appropriate to supplement the birth of tragedy once studied by Nietzsche with an analysis of this media tragedy where perfect synchronization of the collective emotion of televiewers would play the same role as the Greek chorus of antiquity, not on the scale of the theatre of Epidaurus now, but on that life–size scale of whole continents.

This is obviously where the Accident Museum comes in. Actually the media scale of the catastrophes and cataclysms that cripple the world with grief is now so vast that it must necessarily make the magnitude of the field of perception the first phase of a new intelligence, not only that of the ecology of hazards due to pollution of the environment now, but also that of an ethology of threats in terms of brainwashing public opinion, of polluting public emotion.

5. The Future of the Accident

[...] On that score, let's hear what Friedrich Nietzsche had to say in his book, The Birth of Tragedy, written just after the Franco–Prussian War of 1870: 'A culture built on science must necessarily perish when it starts to become illogical, that is, to recoil before its [own] consequences. Our Art reflects this general crisis.'

In fact, if 'in tragedy the state of civilization is suspended, ' the whole panoply of beneficial knowledge finds itself wiped out with it. In total war, the sudden militarization of science necessary to the presumed victory of the adversaries turns all logic and all political wisdom on its head, to the point where age–old philo–sophy is shunted aside by the absurdity of a philo–folly capable of destroying the knowledge accumulated over the course of centuries. 'Inordinately enhanced, human power then transforms itself into a cause of ruin,' toppling the whole of the culture of nations into the vacuousness of causes that are lost, irremediably lost, in victory as in defeat, since we will not be able to disinvent a terrorist and sacrilegious knowledge produced by scientific intelligence.

And so, just as there are stormy patches in nature, there are stormy patches in culture and we would need a veritable 'meteorology' of invention to avert the storms of the artifice of Progress in knowledge, that genie that stokes the escalating extremism of the power of our tools and our substances and, with them, industrial and post–industrial accidents. We can't help but think here primarily of genetics and computer science, after the fallout from atomic progress, of which Chernobyl, in the wake of Hiroshima, has revealed to us the atrocious truth. [...]

Since extermination is the illogical outcome of accumulation, the suicidal state is no longer exclusively psychological, associated with the mentality of a few disturbed individuals, but sociological and political. This has reached the point where the widespread accident, announced by Nietzsche, now incorporates this dimension of panic, whereby the philosophy of the Enlightenment bows down before the philosophy of magnitude. This is, in fact, the accident in knowledge that now rounds off the accident in substances deriving from technoscientific research. [...]

'Time is just an illusion,' declared Albert Einstein, during the period that divided the First World War from the Second. An accident in historical knowledge, in other words, in the perception of things, a veritable loss of the sense of reality – the fruit of a reality now spiralling off

in accelerated flight, just like the galaxies in the expanding universe. Werner Heisenberg already foresaw the devastation such a loss would cause, fifty years ago, when he wrote: 'No one knows what will be real for people at the end of the wars now beginning. '

In the end, after the implosion of the Cold War between East and West, globalization is above all a sort of 'voyage to the centre of the Earth' in the gloomy obscurity of a temporal compression that definitively locks down the habitat of the human race. Certain utopians were already calling this the sixth continent, though all it is is the hypercentre of our environment.

This hypercentre is at once origin and end of a world now foreclosed, where each and every one of us is endlessly pulled towards this central region, without expanse and without temporal extension. And yet it is merely the outcome, the terminal, of this acceleration of reality that crushes everyone together, all five continents and all seven seas, and especially, the nations and peoples of the planet in its entirety.

Here we have a telluric compression of the history of humanity that, despite the ecologists, no seismograph is registering the magnitude of this cataclysm wherein everything is telescoped, rammed into everything else at every instant, where all distances are reduced to nothing, obliterated by the accident of the real time of interactivity. And this earthquake affects the whole Earth, with events now nothing more than untimely and simultaneous accidents, at the surface of a celestial object crazily compressed where gravity and atmospheric pressure are further reinforced by the instantaneous synchronization of exchanges.

At this level of anxiety, ecology is less bound up with nature than with culture and the ethological catastrophes culture has in the works. In effect, with the mise en abyme of time ratios, lags and scales, the instantaneous elimination of any interval in the promotion of immediacy, this pollution of the distances of the life–size scale of the globe teaches us infinitely more than the pollution of the substances of nature about the calamity, the tragedy of future branches of knowledge. In the frightening compression of the far–flung extremities of a once–gigantic world towards the centre, the hypercentre of the only habitable planet in the solar system, 'Nature can have confidence in Progress; Progress will know how to avenge the affronts it has made it suffer.' [...]

Radioactive fallout from Chernobyl, genetically modified organisms, reproductive human cloning following on from animal cloning – the list goes on. Scientific experts now find themselves smack–bang in the middle of controversies that are shaking up the dawning third millennium. This is behind the recent creation of agencies specializing in risk management in a bid to try and forecast the improbable or unthinkable in scientific and technical knowledge. For it is true that for some decades now, we have been confronted defencelessly by major risks that affect the biological and social balance of humanity.

Looked at from this particular angle, the 'accident in knowledge' is impressive not so much in terms of the number of victims but in the very nature of the risk run.

Unlike road, rail or air accidents, that risk is no longer quantifiable and statistically predictable; it has become unqualifiable and fundamentally unpredictable. This has reached the point of entailing the emergence of an unparalleled risk, whose scope is no longer exclusively ecological, connected to the conditions of the surrounding human habitat, but eschatological, since what it attacks is the mind's ability to anticipate; in other words, it attacks rationality itself.

'Ruin of the soul', wrote Rabelais about a science without a conscience. ... And that is another way, now, of approaching the problems of the end of life at a time when the euthanasia of humanity is at issue as a fatal consequence of a shutdown, the twilight of place which no one is turning a hair at.

6. The Expectation Horizon

"Poetic creation is the creation of expectation." – Paul Valéry

The feeling of insecurity that has crept up over the last dozen years or so in the city is not only linked to the discourteous acts of so–called 'incivility' currently plaguing city–dwellers. It is, it would seem, a symptom of a new expectation horizon, a third kind of horizon after 'revolution' and 'war', the Great War, the 'war to end wars'. I am talking about the expectation of the integral accident, this Great Accident that is not merely ecological. The latter has been part of our general mindset for the last thirty years or so. The integral accident is also, and above all, eschatological. It is the accident of a world now foreclosed in what is touted as 'globalization', this internationalization

at once desired and dreaded, now the subject of endless debate, as though the anthropological horizon of ideas and ideals suddenly felt blocked off, both by the foreclosure represented by a geographical lockdown and by the suddenness of worldwide interactivity of exchange. [...]

While ancient societies were almost all agoraphobic, shut in on themselves in their closed cities, within their outsizcd enclosures, postmodern societies suddenly seem claustrophobic, as though the open city of our day only leads, in the end, to exclusion.

'Completion is a limit,' Aristotle announced in his second axiom. The foreclosed world of economic and political globalization is effectively the ultimate limit of the geopolitics of nations, and the feeling of panicky insecurity felt by whole populations, along with the gigantic migration flows of the imminent repopulation of continents, are proof of this. The warning costs nothing and our democracies would do well to heed it before future tyrants use it to their own advantage.

And so, what is emerging, alongside the pollution of substances (of air, water, fauna and flora) at the very start of the twenty–first century, is the sudden pollution of distances and of the intervals that make up the very density of our daily reality; of this real space of our activities that the interactivity of the real time of instantaneous exchanges eradicates. [...]

Despite the threat of an unemployment that is structural and definitive for certain categories of people hard hit by the boom in automation of postindustrial production, the anguish now clearly palpable does not seem to be linked to such exclusion from employment, nor to the 'incivility' plague or domestic violence either, but, more profoundly still, to anguish over the failure, also definitive, of the Progress in knowledge that until this moment so strongly marked the age of industrialization.

In fact, the very first expectation of 'revolution' went hand in glove with the expectation of a progress at once philosophical and scientific that was itself to be swept aside by the hurricane of war; of a total war of which the militarization of national economies, over the course of the twentieth century, already flagged the devastating magnitude. The only thing it allowed to survive in people's consciousness was this feeling of fear – and often of hate – that today marks societies of abundance.

On this score, over to Karl Kraus once more: 'Ever since humanity bowed to the economy, all it has left is the freedom of hostility.'

In 1914, the date of this premonitory phrase, it was still only a matter of a deadly rough draft of a new 'war economy' that was to bring down the nations of Europe alone. But in these early days of the twenty–first century, which is our century, it is a matter of the conclusion of this political economy of disaster.

From now on, as every one of us senses, fears and dreads, the world is closed, foreclosed, and ecology has suddenly become the third dimension of politics, if not its very profile.

After the city–state and the nation–state, the outsize federation of the European Community and other groups like it is merely the pathetic mask of a geopolitical bankruptcy that goes by the assumed name of globalization – an integral accident in a political economy that has just reached the geophysical limit of its field of action.

7. Unknown Quantity

[...] Originally Freud was perhaps right, but, in the end – and that's where we are ecologically – when our feeling embraces all once more due to the fact of the temporal compression of sensations, we'd better watch out, for this will then be the great reduced, incarceration in the tiny cubby hole of a once 'oceanic' feeling for the world, suddenly reduced to claustrophobic suffocation.

This, in any case, is what is bitterly admitted by astrophysics: 'The rupture with the whole slew of great cosmic events is one of the causes of the malfunctioning of human societies. ' [...]

'The World is deeper than the Day thinks,' wrote Nietzsche, while it was still a question of sunlight. But already, here and there, and often everywhere at once, contemplation of a screen not only replaces contemplation of script, the written word, the writing of history, alone, but also contemplation of the stars. So much so that the audiovisual continuum has superseded the – substantial – continuum of astronomy.

In this 'disaster writing' of space–time, where the world becomes accessible in real time, humanity is struck with myopia, reduced to the sudden foreclosure of a seclusion triggered by the accident in time of instantaneous telecommunications.

From that moment, to inhabit the integral accident of globalization is to block, to choke off

not only the view, as Abel Gance hoped, followed by the filmmaker apostles of cinemascope, but also the daily life of a species that is nonetheless endowed with the motion of being.

At this stage of incarceration, terminal history becomes a huis clos, a hearing in camera, as camp detainees so rightly put it: 'Our horror, our stupor, is our lucidity.'

Everything is there, already there, already seen and soon, even, already said. All that's left after that is to wait the long wait for a catastrophic horizon that outstrips the geographic horizon of the rotundity of the earthly star.

And so, the local accident located here or there is trumped by the great accident, the global accident that integrates, one by one, the whole set of minor incidents along the way that once characterized societal life. This 'great lockdown' then puts an end to banishment, only to promote a sequence that is causal, this time, since, from now on, 'everything arrives without the need to leave' , to go towards the other, the distinctly other, as we once went towards a landscape's horizontal limit in days gone by.

Here, and whether Nietzsche likes it or not, it is no longer God, the Father, who dies, it is the Earth, Mother of the living since the beginning of time. With light, the speed of light, matter is being exterminated. The telluric accident of the earthquake is succeeded by the seism of a timequake involving this worldwide time that erases all distance. [...]

A panic phenomenon of dependence, the vogue in 'on–line games' has given a new dimension to what psychiatry used to call a loss of the sense of reality, driving adults and adolescents into a groundless parallel world, where each individual gradually gets used to inhabiting the accident of an audiovisual continuum, independent of the real space of their life. [...]

This is precisely what is happening to our globalized societies, where the local is the exterior, and the global the interior of a finite world, exclusively defined by the existence of networks of instantaneous information and communication, to the detriment of any geopolitics, since the real time of (economic, political) exchanges wins hands down over the real space of the geophysics of the world's regions.

By accelerating, globalization turns reality inside out like a glove. From now on, your nearest and dearest is a stranger and the exotic, a neighbour. The deregulation of transportation is topped by the derangement of a foreclosure that triggers exclusion of the 'close' to the momentary advantage of any 'far–off' whatever that you happen to stumble across in the telescoping of civilizations. [...]

And so, globalization's closed–field effect is nothing less than the progressive strangulation of the legitimate state of representative democracy, the society of strict supervision taking over from the society of local seclusion. After the standardization ushered in by the industrial revolution, synchronization (of opinions, of decisions) has come to set up an ultimate model of tyranny: the tyranny of this real time of forced interaction that replaces the real space of action and its free reaction within the expanse of a world that is open ... but only for a little while longer.

If interactivity is to information what radioactivity is to energy – a contaminating and disintegrating capability – then the integral accident in time causes conflicts in the socius and its intelligibility to accumulate, making the whole world opaque little by little. After the accident in substances, meaning matter, the time of the accident in knowledge is upon us: this is what the so–called information revolution really is and what cybernetics really is: the arbitrariness of anarchy in the power of nations, the different powers of a community not only thrown out of work by automation but further thrown out of whack by the sudden synchronization of human activities.

PART II

8. Public Emotion

According to Clausewitz, 'war first surfaces in the art of holding a siege.' This military art is thus opposed to the tunmlts of the origins of the history of conflicts.

Today, as everyone can see for themselves, 'hyperwar' resurfaces in the art of provoking panic, thanks to the tools of mass communication.

A purely media phenomenon, this situation in turn entails reinterpretation of the classic notion of deterrence. 'Military' deterrence in the recent past, 'civil' deterrence in the near future or shortly after: the threats to democracy are numerous.

In fact, it is definitely the fortification that, in history, has best embodied the desire for deterrence of the different powers. Isolated, linear or strung out in a network of strongholds, the rampart signals a desire for deterrence in relation to some massive aggression, but as Thierry Wideman rightly points out, 'From the point of view of strategic thinking, a global theory of conventional deterrence seems unworkable, unless it is based on Clausewitz's theory of the superiority of the defensive raised to the status of an axiom, the multiplicity of variables effectively making any generalization impossible.'

As an operational strategic concept, deterrence only made sense with the advent of nuclear power.[...]

Today, though, globalization and its poliorcetic foreclosure are spreading on a planetary scale. But by the same token, what is surfacing with this global state of siege are no longer the enclosure and its colossal fortifications, despite the illusory anti–missile system of the United States. First and foremost what it produces is the inordinate spread of panic, a panic that is still mute, certainly, but that never ceases to grow at the rate of all the accidents and disasters and 'mass terrorist attacks' that point to the emergence, not so much of some hyperterrorism as of this post–Clausewitzian 'hyperwar' that outpaces all political givens regarding conflicts, national or international.

Damaging strategy, in other words, the geostrategy that so long rejected its new chronostrategic dimension, this sudden internationalization of real time imposes ex abrupto, a different tyranny – that of instantaneity and ubiquity– not only on military commanders and planners but on the democratically elected politicians who are supposed to be running the show.

In fact, after mass and energy (atomic or otherwise), war now opens into its third dimension: information that is instantaneous, or as good as. [...]

At this point in time, as the third millennium kicks off, what is dawning in people's mentalities is what some like to describe, euphemistically, as a feeling of insecurity. And this is nothing but the symptom of mass panic of the besieged targeting, in the first instance, the metropolitan concentrations, veritable 'resonance chambers' that they are, of a type of population movement no one really regulates.

Actually, the more the contemporary city–dweller is subject to diffuse and uncertain threats, the more he or she tends to make political demands for someone at the helm to be punished, for want of an avowed guilty party. This is what the clandestine terrorist takes advantage of, thereby directly threatening the representative democracy of assemblies and even, lately, the democracy of opinion created by the major media outlets, thereby boosting a democracy of public emotion that is nothing less than the poisoned fruit of the panic phenomenon referred to above.

In fact, what emerges alongside the necessary formation of public opinion by the sundry media outlets is the unheard of possibility of a public emotion whose unanimity would be merely the symptom of the decline of any true 'democracy'. And this would in turn pave the way for a conditioned reflex, no longer 'psychological' but 'sociological', a fruit of the panic–ridden terror of populations faced with the outrageousness of the broadcasting of real or simulated threats. [...]

Whereas republican opinion rested, from the very beginning, on the art of oratory and reading, post–republican emotion rests, for its part, on sound and light. In other words, on the audio–visibility of a spectacle or, rather, of an incantatory liturgy that is only apparently secular ... witness the characteristic abuse of rebroadcasting not only of commercials but equally of terrorizing events. [...]

After the Cold War and its apocalyptic threats of annihilation comes the time of this cold panic of an organized terrorism likely to inflict analogous disasters.

Imperceptibly, with the decline of the nation–state, we are seeing the end of the monopoly on public violence enjoyed by the state, triggering the ascendancy of a privatization of domestic terror that not only threatens democracy but the legally constituted state.

Europe, today inordinately enlarged, can't go on for long turning a blind eye to these issues that are not so much political any more as 'metropolitical', since the demographic concentration of its populations in megalopolises has gradually shifted the old theatre of operations from the country to the city, with the 'carpet bombing' of the midtwentieth century prefiguring the 'mass suicide bombing' against densely–populated urban agglomerations at the very beginning of the twenty–first century.

And so, the very notion of defence is radically transformed. After the military defence of nations and the civil defence of urban populations it seems that there is an urgent need for a new line of inquiry.

On top of national security, based on the armed forces, and social security, underdeveloped as it is in a number of democratic states, we must now add the crucial issue of human security, which would extend the old public interest of the state. [...]

CLAUSTROPOLIS or COSMOPOLIS? A society of enforced seclusion, as once upon a time, or a society of forcible control? Actually, the dilemma itself seems illusory, with the temporal compression of instantaneity and the ubiquity of the age of the information revolution. This interactive society is one in which real time overrules the real space of geostrategy, promoting a 'metrostrategy' in which the city is less the centre of a territory, a 'national' space, than the centre of time, of this global and astronomical time that makes every city the resonating chamber of the most incredibly diverse events (breakdowns, major accidents, terrorist outrages, etc). Break up of a social order will be triggered by the extreme emotional fragility of an aberrant demographic polarization, with megalopolises that will shortly bring together, not millions but tens of millions of inhabitants in very high towers where they will be interconnected in a network, and where the standardization of the industrial age will make way for this synchronization of collective emotion likely to do away with all democratic representation, all institutions, promoting instead a hysteria, a chaos of which certain continents are already the bloody theatre. [...]

9. The Original Accident

According to Albert Einstein, events do not happen, they are there and we merely encounter them in passing, in an eternal present; there are no minor incidents on the way, history is merely one long chain reaction. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Harrisburg, Chernobyl – simply instances of momentary inertia, the radioactivity of a place being analogous to the relativity of an instant.

Fusion, fission: the measure of power is no longer so much matter, but immateriality, energy output.

From now on, motion commands the event. After the 'earth worship' of the original paganism comes the terror worship of the original accident; this terror that is only ever a product of the laws of motion, as Hannah Arendt used to say.

In fact, it is urgent that we go back on the philosophical tradition according to which the accident is relative and contingent and the substance absolute and essential. From the Latin accidens, the word 'accident' signifies what arises unexpectedly – in a device, or system or product; the unexpected, the surprise of failure or destruction. As though this 'temporary failure' was not itself programmed, in a way, when the product was first put to use.

Actually, the arrogant primacy accorded to the production mode really does seem to have contributed to obscuring the old production mode / destruction mode dialectic (rather than simply consumption mode) in force in pre–industrial societies. Since the production of any 'substance' whatever is instantaneously production of a typical 'accident', then a break down or failure would not mean deregulation in production so much as the production of a specific fault – in other words, partial or total destruction. Fundamentally modifying research and development accordingly, we could then imagine some long–term planning of the accident. [...]

'In the twentieth century we learnt the atomic nature of the entire material world. In the twenty–first, the challenge will be to understand the arena itself, to probe the deepest nature of space and time,' writes the British astrophysicist and Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin Rees.

A little further on, extending this observation about the 'unknown quantity', Rees adds: 'More than fifty years ago, the great logician Kurt Godel invented a bizarre hypothetical universe, consistent with Einstein's theory, that allowed "time loops", in which events in the future "cause" events in the past that then "cause" their own causes, introducing a lot of weirdness to the world but no contradictions'.

By way of concluding these transhistoric words, Rees specifies further:

"A unified theory may reveal some unsuspected things, either on tiny scales, or by explaining some mysteries of our expanding universe. Perhaps some novel form of energy latent in space can be usefully extracted; an understanding of extra dimensions could give substance to the concept of time travel. Such a theory will also tell us what kinds of extreme experiments, if any, could trigger catastrophe."

This would be a cosmic calamity and not just a terrestrial one 'in which the concentrated energy created when particles crash together could trigger a "phase transition" that would rip the fabric of space itself.'

According to the official astronomer to the Royal British Court:

"The boundary of the new–style vacuum would spread like an expanding bubble. In that bubble atoms could not exist: it would be curtains for us, for Earth, and indeed for the wider cosmos; eventually, the entire galaxy, and beyond, would be engulfed. And we would never see this disaster coming. The 'bubble' of new vacuum advances as fast as light, and so no signal could forewarn us of our fate."

With this fantastic illustration of the dromosphere of the speed of light in a vacuum, we are at least in time to question the witnesses, those of Chernobyl, for instance, for in 1986 the time of the accident suddenly became for them, and finally for all of us, the 'accident in time'. [...]

10. The Dromosphere

[...] Heralding a reversal in perspective, Nietzsche wrote: 'Love your furthest away as you love yourself.'

In the United States, this azimuthal projection seems to be back in pride of place with the saying: 'To annihilate the enemy close to you, you have to first strike the one further away.' Whether a preemptive strike at the end of the Cold War or a preventive war on terrorism today, the same 'forward–scatter' logic has long been at work.

Dromological logic of a race for 'all–out' supremacy that causes our nearest and dearest to disappear in favour of the furthest away, all that is furthest away, all the exoticisms, in other words, every manner of exodus!

A race beyond Good and Evil that renounces all the 'on–this–sides' only to wind up, ultimately, at this topological reversal whereby the global now represents the interiority of a finite world, and the local, its exteriority, that great suburban belt of a history without geography – a chronosphere of present time, 'real time', that has replaced the geosphere of life's arena.

This, admittedly, is the conclusion of Bossuet's sage little phrase: 'People bewail effects, but make the most of causes.' There is one qualification, though: it is the 'weak' who bewail the disasters of technological progress and the 'powerful' who most readily make the most of causes. The excluded are exiled on all sides; for them the globalized foreclosure ends in equally all–out exclusion. No need here to wheel out once again the great transcontinental migratory flows of dire poverty.

What can you say, for example, about these old retirees that never stop travelling around the world trying to see it all before signing off, while no one at all bewails the idle young who have already seen it all before beginning to live?

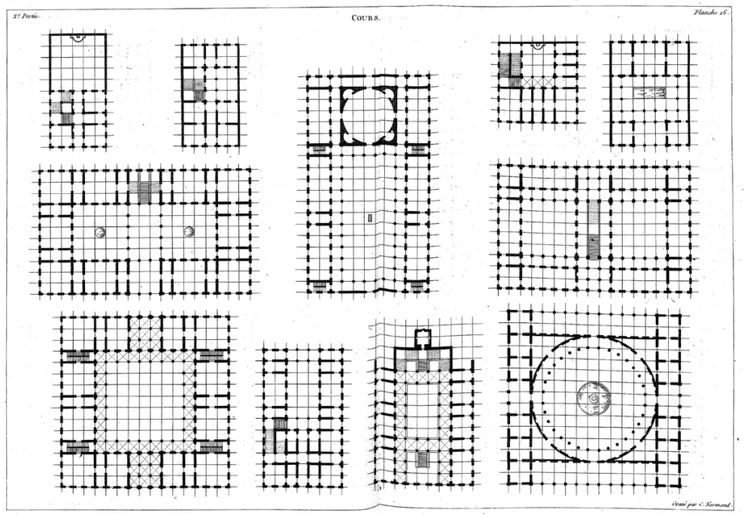
In the end, the progressive pressure of the dromosphere is nothing but a headlong rush that leads to this externalization – outsourcing– that is only ever the postmodern term for extermination. Revelation of a finiteness in which, globality disqualifying all locality, Hegel's schöne Totalität appears for what it is.

After two millennia of experiments and failures, of accidents of all kinds, with globalization the third millennium inaugurates the paradox of the failure of success for it is the success of Progress that provokes disaster. An integral accident of a science now deprived of a conscience, whose arrogant triumph wipes out even the memory of its former benefits. [...]

If globalization is certainly not the end of the world, it is nonetheless associated with a sort of 'voyage to the centre of the Earth', to the centre of real time that has so dangerously replaced the centre of the world, that space, undeniably real, that always used to organize the intervals and time limits for action – before the age of widespread interaction.

Everything right now! Such is the crazy catch–cry of hypermodern times, of this hypercentre of temporal compression where everything crashes together, telescoping endlessly under the fearful pressure of telecommunications, into this 'teleobjcctivc' proximity that has nothing concrete about it except its infectious hysteria. [...]

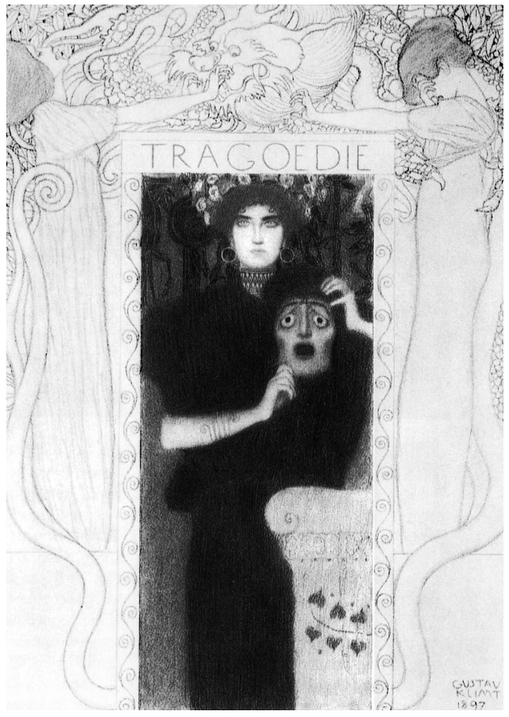
Paul Virilio, *The Original Accident* (2005)



J.N.L. Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture – données à l'Ecole Polytechnique* (1802)

Motifs

TRAGEDY



Gustav Klimt, *Allegorie Tragödie* (1897)
MIMESIS

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. We have evidence of this in the facts of experience. Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies. The cause of this again is, that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he.'

Aristotle, *Poetics* (335 BC)
MIMESIS

Jeff Wall, *An Eviction* (1988)

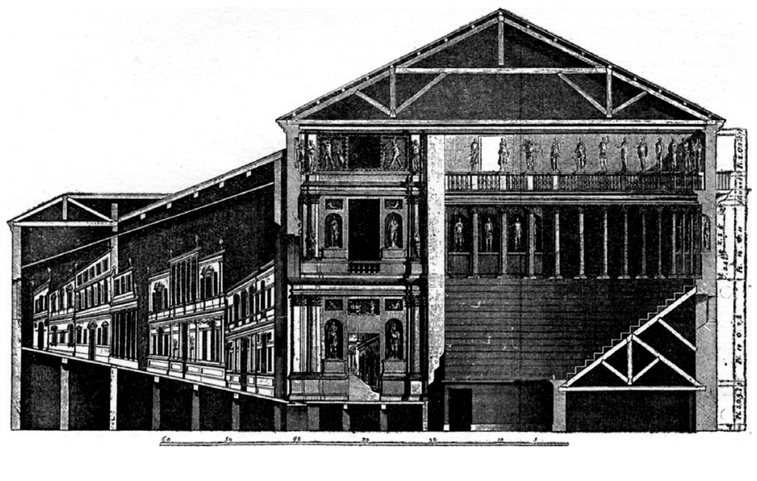
But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all.

Aristotle, *Poetics* (335 BC)

Carlo Mollino, *Self Portrait* (1936)
ACTOR

In this way I saw the architect as the saviour of the culture of modern American society, saviour now as for all civilizations heretofore.

Frank Lloyd Wright, *A Testament* (1957)
ACTOR



Andrea Palladio, Vincenzo Scamozzi, *Teatro Olimpico* (1585)
SPECTATOR

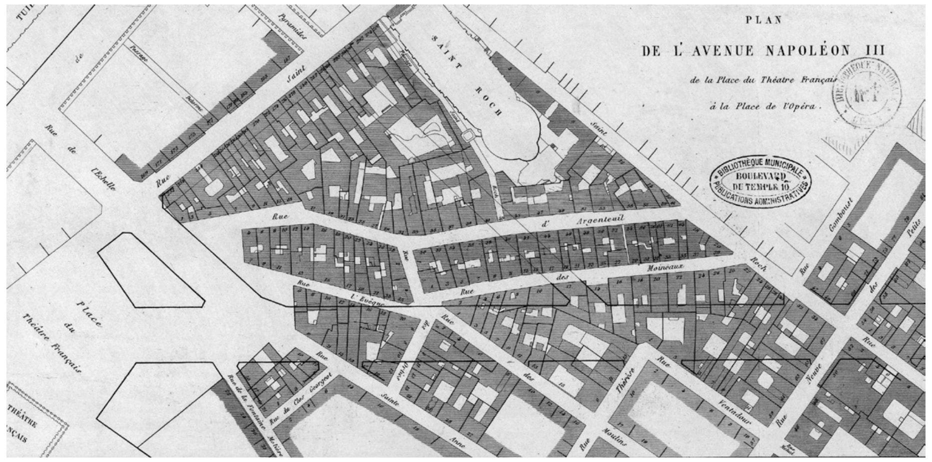
To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984)
SPECTATOR

Martin Parr, *Acropolis* (1991)
THEATRALISATION

The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967)
THEATRALISATION



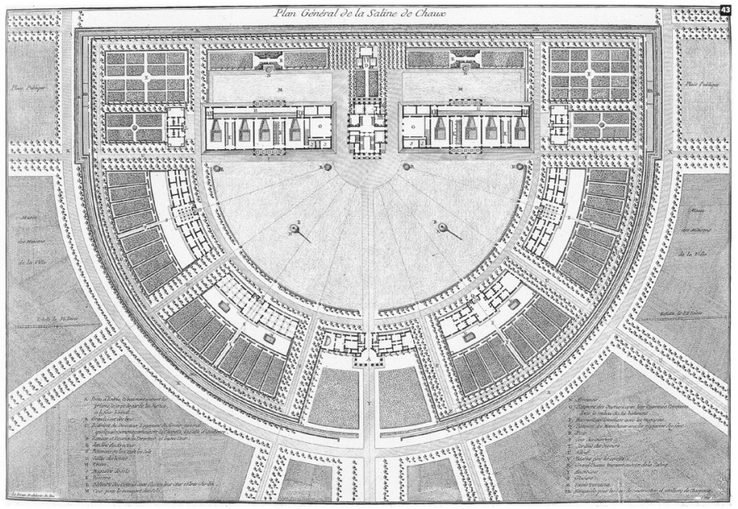
Georges-Eugène Haussmann, *Avenue de l'Opéra* (1879)

STAGING

The streets, reduced to corridors for public procession, became in a very real sense outdoor passages where the buildings that enclosed them were simply facades for an international city. The tragic street was thus the instrument of urban control and regulation, inserted at the will of the planner into a hitherto private realm. The streets of Fontana and the boulevards of Haussmann two and a half centuries later shared this common realm.

Anthony Vidler, *The Scenes of the Street* (1978)

STAGING



Claude-Nicolas Ledoux , *Saline royale d'Arc-et-Senans* (1775)

A choice of utopia or else, the urbanistic vision of the nineteen-twenties is propounded in terms of the moral or biological problem of salvation: and building holds the key. *'The machinery of society, profoundly out of gear, oscillates between an amelioration, of historical importance, and a catastrophe'.* Le Corbusier, Vers une Architecture (1923)

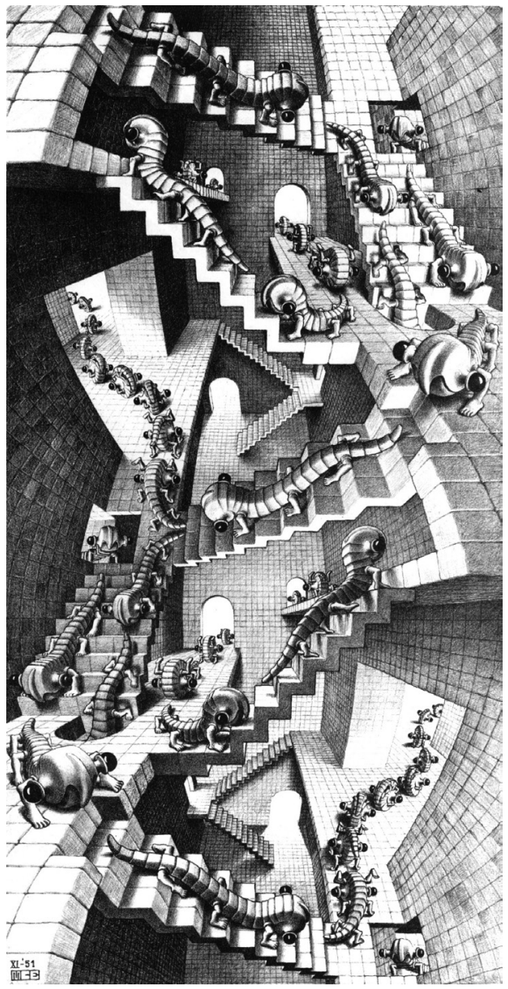
Such was the essential backdrop and it is against this blinding light that there ultimately might be placed the whole extraordinary orchestration of German 'history' and French 'science', of spiritual explosiveness and mechanical coolness, of inevitability and observation, of people and progress. It was a light which generated energy and which, as it became compounded with the gentler forces of a liberal tradition and the romantic directives of a fledgling avant gardism, contributed to modern architecture the velocity of a projectile, enabling it to enter the twentieth century like some apocalyptic discharge of a newly invented shot gun: and, even though faded, this continues to be the light which still conditions any 'serious' endeavour connected with the 'structure' or the well being of society. But, however once vivid, it must finally be recognized that this is also a light which permits only a restrictive and monocular vision and it is therefore from the bias of normal optics than we must recognize and can speak of utopia's decline and fall.

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Utopia: Decline and Fall? in: Collage City* (1978)

Jacques-Louis David, *The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (1789)

Everything tragic rests on irresolvable opposition. As soon as resolution enters or becomes possible the tragic vanishes.

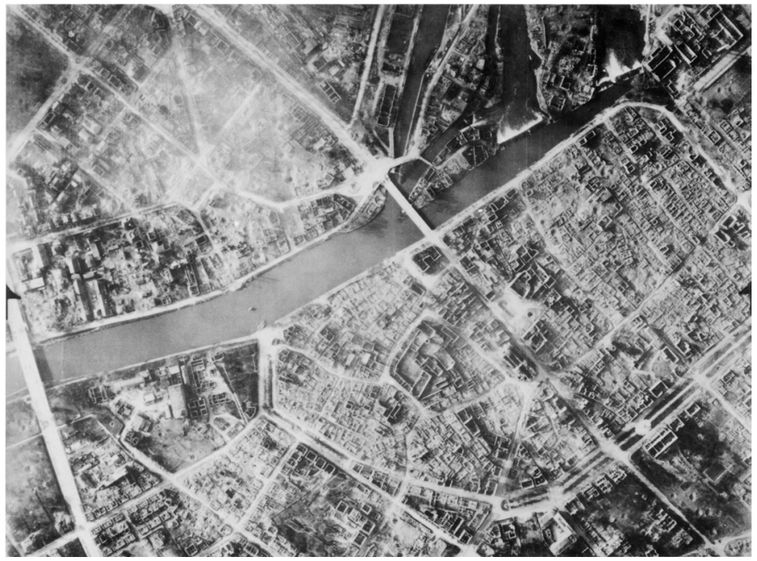
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Conversation with Kanzler F. v. Müller* (1824)



M.C. Escher, *House of Stairs* (1951)

Whenever I've tried to free my life from a set of the circumstances that continuously oppress it, I've been instantly surrounded by other circumstances of the same order, as if the inscrutable web of creation were irrevocably at odds with me. I yank from my neck a hand that was choking me, and I see that my own hand is tied to a noose that fell around my neck when I freed it from the stranger's hand. When I gingerly remove the noose, it's with my own hands that I nearly strangle myself.

Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet* (1982)



Heilbronn after the Allied campaign of strategic bombing (1944)

FAILURE

HAMLET:
How does the queen?

KING CLAUDIUS:
She swounds to see them bleed.

QUEEN GERTRUDE:
No, no, the drink, the drink,–O my dear Hamlet,–
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.
Dies

HAMLET:
O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES:
It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise
Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET:
The point!--envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work.
Stabs KING CLAUDIUS

All:
Treason! treason!

KING CLAUDIUS:
O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

HAMLET:
Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother.
KING CLAUDIUS dies

LAERTES:
He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me.
Dies

HAMLET:
Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time–as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest–O, I could tell you–
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO:
Never believe it:
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET:
As thou'rt a man,
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.
March afar off, and shot within
What warlike noise is this?

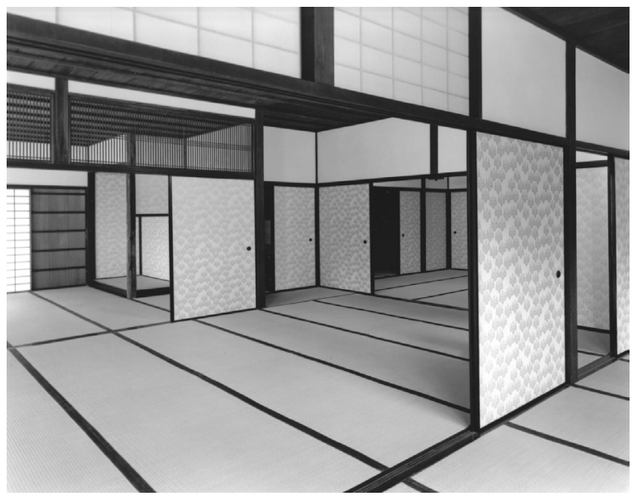
OSRIC:
Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET:
O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.
Dies

HORATIO:
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

William Shakespeare, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (1603)

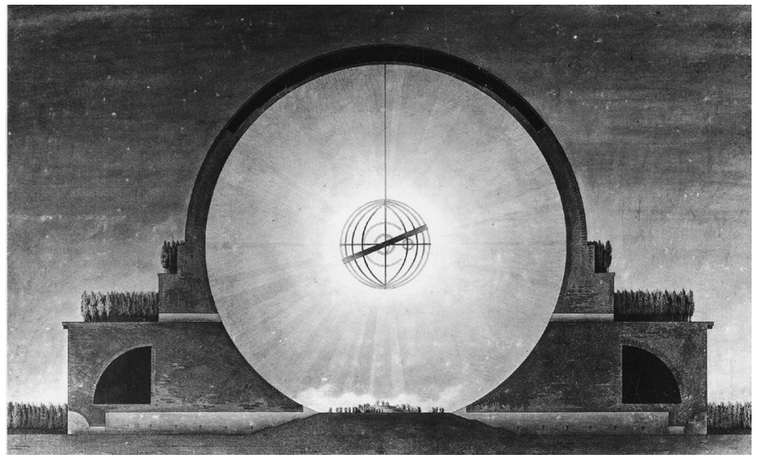
FAILURE



Katsura Imperial Villa (1624)
NOMADIC

Si j'avais à imaginer un nouveau Robinson, je ne le placerais pas dans une île déserte, mais dans une ville de douze millions d'habitants dont il ne saurait déchiffrer ni la parole ni l'écriture : ce serait là, je crois, la forme moderne du mythe.

Roland Barthes, *Le grain de la voix: Entretiens* (1962-1980)
NOMADIC



Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Cénotaphe à Newton* (1784)
UNIVERSAL

Houses for Tragedies, must be made for great personages, for that actions of love, strange adventures, and cruell murthers (as you reade in ancient and moderne Tragedies) happen alwayes in the houses of great Lords, Dukes, Princes, and Kings. Therefore in such cases you must make none but stately houses. . . .

Sebastiano Serlio, *General Rules of Architecture: 2nd Book* (1545)
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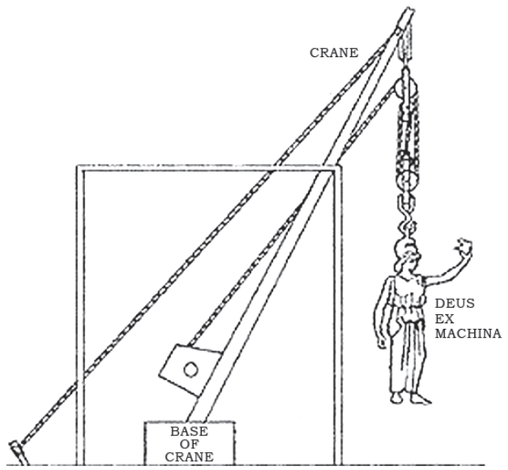


Mechanè
MACHINATION

ORESTES:
Brief my command: I bid my sister pass
In silence to the house, and all I bid
This my design with wariness conceal,
That they who did by craft a chieftain slay
May by like craft and in like noose be talen,
Dying the death which Loxias foretold-
Apollo, king and prophet undisproved.
I with this warrior Pylades will come
In likeness of a stranger, full equipt
As travellers come, and at the palace gates
Will stand, as stranger yet in friendship's bond

Aeschylus, *Oresteia: Choephoroi* (458 BC)
MACHINATION

The Skyline of New York (1931)
CHORUS

CREON:
Ah me! The fault is mine. On no one else,
Of all that live, the fearful guilt can come;
I, even I, did slay thee, wretched one,
I; yes, I say it clearly. Come, ye guards,
Lead me forth quickly; lead me out of sight,
More crushed to nothing than the dead unborn.

CHORUS:
Thou counsellest gain, if gain there be in ills,
For present evils then are easiest borne
When shortest lived.

CREON:
Oh, come thou, then, come thou,
Last of my sorrows, that shall bring to me
Best boon, my life's last day. Come, then, oh, come
That nevermore I look upon the light.

CHORUS:
These things are in the future. What is near,
That we must do. O'er what is yet to come
They watch, to whom that work of right belongs.

CREON:
I did but pray for what I most desire.

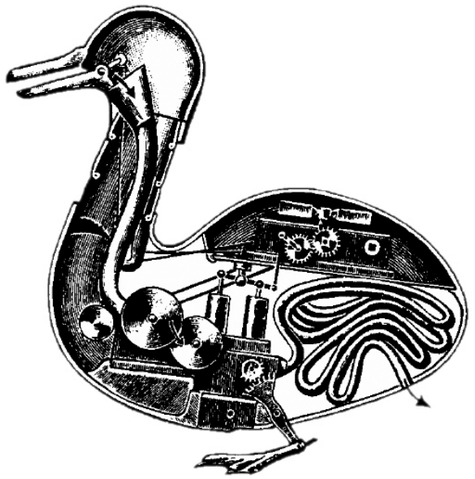
CHORUS:
Pray thou for nothing more. For mortal man
There is no issue from a doom decreed.

CREON:
looking at the two corpses
Lead me, then, forth,
vain shadow that I am,
Who slew thee, O my son, unwittingly,
And thee, too—(O my sorrow)—and I know not
Which way to look. All near at hand is turned
Aside to evil; and upon my head
There falls a doom far worse than I can bear.

CHORUS:
Man's highest blessedness
In wisdom chiefly stands;
And in the things that touch upon the Gods,
'Tis best in word of deed
To shun unholy pride;
Great words of boasting bring great
punishments;
And so to gray-haired age
Comes wisdom at the last.

Sophocles, *Antigone* (441 BC)
CHORUS

III. Comedy



Jaques de Vaucanson, *Mechanical Duck* (1738)

Henri Bergson

LAUGTHER
An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic

CHAPTER I

THE COMIC IN GENERAL –
THE COMIC ELEMENT IN FORMS AND MOVEMENTS – EXPANSIVE FORCE OF THE COMIC.

What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merry-andrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation. Our excuse for attacking the problem in our turn must lie in the fact that we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition. We regard it, above all, as a living thing. However trivial it may be, we shall treat it with the respect due to life. We shall confine ourselves to watching it grow and expand. Passing by imperceptible gradations from one form to another, it will be seen to achieve the strangest metamorphoses. We shall disdain nothing we have seen. Maybe we may gain from this prolonged contact, for the matter of that, something more flexible than an abstract definition,–a practical, intimate acquaintance, such as springs from a long companionship. And maybe we may also find that, unintentionally, we have made an acquaintance that is useful. For the comic spirit has a logic of its own, even in its wildest eccentricities. It has a method in its madness. It dreams, I admit, but it conjures up, in its dreams, visions that are at once accepted and understood by the whole of a social group. Can it then fail to throw light for us on the way that human imagination works, and more particularly social, collective, and popular imagination? Begotten of real life and akin to art, should it not also have something of its own to tell us about art and life?

At the outset we shall put forward three observations which we look upon as fundamental. They have less bearing on the actually comic than on the field within which it must be sought.

I

The first point to which attention should be called is that the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly HUMAN. A landscape may be beautiful, charming and sublime, or insignificant and ugly; it will never be laughable. You may laugh at an animal, but only because you have detected in it some human attitude or expression. You may laugh at a hat, but what you are making fun of, in this case, is not the piece of felt or straw, but the shape that men have given it,–the human caprice whose mould it has assumed. It is strange that so important a fact, and such a simple one too, has not attracted to a greater degree the attention of philosophers. Several have defined man as "an animal which laughs." They might equally well have defined him as an animal which is laughed at; for if any other animal, or some lifeless object, produces the same effect, it is always because of some resemblance to man, of the stamp he gives it or the use he puts it to.

Here I would point out, as a symptom equally worthy of notice, the ABSENCE OF FEELING which usually accompanies laughter. It seems as though the comic could not produce its disturbing effect unless it fell, so to say, on the surface of a soul that is thoroughly calm and unruffled. Indifference is its natural environment, for laughter has no greater foe than emotion. I do not mean that we could not laugh at a person who inspires us with pity, for instance, or even with affection, but in such a case we must, for the moment, put our affection out of court and impose silence upon our pity. In a society composed of pure intelligences there would probably be no more tears, though perhaps there would still be laughter; whereas highly emotional souls, in tune and unison with life, in whom every event would be sentimentally prolonged and re-echoed, would neither know nor understand laughter. Try, for a moment, to become interested in everything that

is being said and done; act, in imagination, with those who act, and feel with those who feel; in a word, give your sympathy its widest expansion: as though at the touch of a fairy wand you will see the flimsiest of objects assume importance, and a gloomy hue spread over everything. Now step aside, look upon life as a disinterested spectator: many a drama will turn into a comedy. It is enough for us to stop our ears to the sound of music, in a room where dancing is going on, for the dancers at once to appear ridiculous. How many human actions would stand a similar test? Should we not see many of them suddenly pass from grave to gay, on isolating them from the accompanying music of sentiment? To produce the whole of its effect, then, the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple.

This intelligence, however, must always remain in touch with other intelligences. And here is the third fact to which attention should be drawn. You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others. Laughter appears to stand in need of an echo, Listen to it carefully: it is not an articulate, clear, well-defined sound; it is something which would fain be prolonged by reverberating from one to another, something beginning with a crash, to continue in successive rumblings, like thunder in a mountain. Still, this reverberation cannot go on for ever. It can travel within as wide a circle as you please: the circle remains, none the less, a closed one. Our laughter is always the laughter of a group. It may, perchance, have happened to you, when seated in a railway carriage or at table d'hote, to hear travellers relating to one another stories which must have been comic to them, for they laughed heartily. Had you been one of their company, you would have laughed like them; but, as you were not, you had no desire whatever to do so. A man who was once asked why he did not weep at a sermon, when everybody else was shedding tears, replied: "I don't belong to the parish!" What that man thought of tears would be still more true of laughter. However spontaneous it seems, laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers, real or imaginary. How often has it been said that the fuller the theatre, the more uncontrolled the laughter of the audience! On the other hand, how often has the remark been made that many comic effects are incapable of translation from one language to another, because they refer to the customs and ideas of a particular social group! It is through not understanding the importance of this double fact that the comic has been looked upon as a mere curiosity in which the mind finds amusement, and laughter itself as a strange, isolated phenomenon, without any bearing on the rest of human activity. Hence those definitions which tend to make the comic into an abstract relation between ideas: "an intellectual contrast," "a palpable absurdity," etc.,–definitions which, even were they really suitable to every form of the comic, would not in the least explain why the comic makes us laugh. How, indeed, should it come about that this particular logical relation, as soon as it is perceived, contracts, expands and shakes our limbs, whilst all other relations leave the body unaffected? It is not from this point of view that we shall approach the problem. To understand laughter, we must put it back into its natural environment, which is society, and above all must we determine the utility of its function, which is a social one. Such, let us say at once, will be the leading idea of all our investigations. Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a SOCIAL signification.

Let us clearly mark the point towards which our three preliminary observations are converging. The comic will come into being, it appears, whenever a group of men concentrate their attention on one of their number, imposing silence on their emotions and calling into play nothing but their intelligence. What, now, is the particular point on which their attention will have to be concentrated, and what will here be the function of intelligence? To reply to these questions will be at once to come to closer grips with the problem. But here a few examples have become indispensable.

II

A man, running along the street, stumbles and falls; the passers-by burst out laughing. They would not laugh at him, I imagine, could they suppose that the whim had suddenly seized him to sit down on the ground. They laugh because his sitting down is involuntary.

Consequently, it is not his sudden change of attitude that raises a laugh, but rather the involuntary element in this change,–his clumsiness, in fact. Perhaps there was a stone on the road. He should have altered his pace or avoided the obstacle. Instead of that, through

lack of elasticity, through absentmindedness and a kind of physical obstinacy, AS A RESULT, IN FACT, OF RIGIDITY OR OF MOMENTUM, the muscles continued to perform the same movement when the circumstances of the case called for something else. That is the reason of the man's fall, and also of the people's laughter.

Now, take the case of a person who attends to the petty occupations of his everyday life with mathematical precision. The objects around him, however, have all been tampered with by a mischievous wag, the result being that when he dips his pen into the inkstand he draws it out all covered with mud, when he fancies he is sitting down on a solid chair he finds himself sprawling on the floor, in a word his actions are all topsy-turvy or mere beating the air, while in every case the effect is invariably one of momentum. Habit has given the impulse: what was wanted was to check the movement or deflect it. He did nothing of the sort, but continued like a machine in the same straight line. The victim, then, of a practical joke is in a position similar to that of a runner who falls,–he is comic for the same reason. The laughable element in both cases consists of a certain MECHANICAL INELASTICITY, just where one would expect to find the wide-awake adaptability and the living pliableness of a human being. The only difference in the two cases is that the former happened of itself, whilst the latter was obtained artificially. In the first instance, the passer-by does nothing but look on, but in the second the mischievous wag intervenes.

All the same, in both cases the result has been brought about by an external circumstance. The comic is therefore accidental: it remains, so to speak, in superficial contact with the person. How is it to penetrate within? The necessary conditions will be fulfilled when mechanical rigidity no longer requires for its manifestation a stumbling-block which either the hazard of circumstance or human knavery has set in its way, but extracts by natural processes, from its own store, an inexhaustible series of opportunities for externally revealing its presence. Suppose, then, we imagine a mind always thinking of what it has just done and never of what it is doing, like a song which lags behind its accompaniment. Let us try to picture to ourselves a certain inborn lack of elasticity of both senses and intelligence, which brings it to pass that we continue to see what is no longer visible, to hear what is no longer audible, to say what is no longer to the point: in short, to adapt ourselves to a past and therefore imaginary situation, when we ought to be shaping our conduct in accordance with the reality which is present. This time the comic will take up its abode in the person himself; it is the person who will supply it with everything–matter and form, cause and opportunity. Is it then surprising that the absent-minded individual–for this is the character we have just been describing–has usually fired the imagination of comic authors? When La Bruyere came across this particular type, he realised, on analysing it, that he had got hold of a recipe for the wholesale manufacture of comic effects. As a matter of fact he overdid it, and gave us far too lengthy and detailed a description of Menalque, coming back to his subject, dwelling and expatiating on it beyond all bounds. The very facility of the subject fascinated him. Absentmindedness, indeed, is not perhaps the actual fountain-head of the comic, but surely it is contiguous to a certain stream of facts and fancies which flows straight from the fountain-head. It is situated, so to say, on one of the great natural watersheds of laughter.

Now, the effect of absentmindedness may gather strength in its turn. There is a general law, the first example of which we have just encountered, and which we will formulate in the following terms: when a certain comic effect has its origin in a certain cause, the more natural we regard the cause to be, the more comic shall we find the effect. Even now we laugh at absentmindedness when presented to us as a simple fact. Still more laughable will be the absentmindedness we have seen springing up and growing before our very eyes, with whose origin we are acquainted and whose life-history we can reconstruct. To choose a definite example: suppose a man has taken to reading nothing but romances of love and chivalry. Attracted and fascinated by his heroes, his thoughts and intentions gradually turn more and more towards them, till one fine day we find him walking among us like a somnambulist. His actions are distractions. But then his distractions can be traced back to a definite, positive cause. They are no longer cases of ABSENCE of mind, pure and simple; they find their explanation in the PRESENCE of the individual in quite definite, though imaginary, surroundings. Doubtless a fall is always a fall, but it is one thing to tumble into a well because you were looking anywhere but in front of you, it is quite another thing to fall into it because you were intent upon a star.

It was certainly a star at which Don Quixote was gazing. How profound is the comic element in the over-romantic, Utopian bent of mind! And yet, if you reintroduce the idea of absentmindedness, which acts as a go-between, you will see this profound comic element uniting with the most superficial type. Yes, indeed, these whimsical wild enthusiasts, these madmen who are yet so strangely reasonable, excite us to laughter by playing on the same chords within ourselves, by setting in motion the same inner mechanism, as does the victim of a practical joke or the passer-by who slips down in the street. They, too, are runners who fall and simple souls who are being hoaxed–runners after the ideal who stumble over realities, child-like dreamers for whom life delights to lie in wait. But, above all, they are past-masters in absentmindedness, with this superiority over their fellows that their absentmindedness is systematic and organised around one central idea, and that their mishaps are also quite coherent, thanks to the inexorable logic which reality applies to the correction of dreams, so that they kindle in those around them, by a series of cumulative effects, a hilarity capable of unlimited expansion.

Now, let us go a little further. Might not certain vices have the same relation to character that the rigidity of a fixed idea has to intellect? Whether as a moral kink or a crooked twist given to the will, vice has often the appearance of a curvature of the soul. Doubtless there are vices into which the soul plunges deeply with all its pregnant potency, which it rejuvenates and drags along with it into a moving circle of reincarnations. Those are tragic vices. But the vice capable of making us comic is, on the contrary, that which is brought from without, like a ready-made frame into which we are to step. It lends us its own rigidity instead of borrowing from us our flexibility. We do not render it more complicated; on the contrary, it simplifies us. Here, as we shall see later on in the concluding section of this study, lies the essential difference between comedy and drama. A drama, even when portraying passions or vices that bear a name, so completely incorporates them in the person that their names are forgotten, their general characteristics effaced, and we no longer think of them at all, but rather of the person in whom they are assimilated; hence, the title of a drama can seldom be anything else than a proper noun. On the other hand, many comedies have a common noun as their title: l'Avare, le Joueur, etc. Were you asked to think of a play capable of being called le Jaloux, for instance, you would find that Sganarelle or George Dandin would occur to your mind, but not Othello: le Jaloux could only be the title of a comedy. The reason is that, however intimately vice, when comic, is associated with persons, it none the less retains its simple, independent existence, it remains the central character, present though invisible, to which the characters in flesh and blood on the stage are attached. At times it delights in dragging them down with its own weight and making them share in its tumbles. More frequently, however, it plays on them as on an instrument or pulls the strings as though they were puppets. Look closely: you will find that the art of the comic poet consists in making us so well acquainted with the particular vice, in introducing us, the spectators, to such a degree of intimacy with it, that in the end we get hold of some of the strings of the marionette with which he is playing, and actually work them ourselves; this it is that explains part of the pleasure we feel. Here, too, it is really a kind of automatism that makes us laugh–an automatism, as we have already remarked, closely akin to mere absentmindedness. To realise this more fully, it need only be noted that a comic character is generally comic in proportion to his ignorance of himself. The comic person is unconscious. As though wearing the ring of Gyges with reverse effect, he becomes invisible to himself while remaining visible to all the world. A character in a tragedy will make no change in his conduct because he will know how it is judged by us; he may continue therein, even though fully conscious of what he is and feeling keenly the horror he inspires in us. But a defect that is ridiculous, as soon as it feels itself to be so, endeavours to modify itself, or at least to appear as though it did. Were Harpagon to see us laugh at his miserliness, I do not say that he would get rid of it, but he would either show it less or show it differently. Indeed, it is in this sense only that laughter "corrects men's manners." It makes us at once endeavour to appear what we ought to be, what some day we shall perhaps end in being.

It is unnecessary to carry this analysis any further. From the runner who falls to the simpleton who is hoaxed, from a state of being hoaxed to one of absentmindedness, from absentmindedness to wild enthusiasm, from wild enthusiasm to various distortions of character and will, we have followed the line of progress along which the comic becomes more and more deeply imbedded in the person, yet without ceasing, in its subtler manifestations, to recall to us some trace of what we noticed in its grosser forms, an effect of automatism and of inelasticity. Now we can obtain a first glimpse–a distant one, it is true, and still hazy and confused–of the laughable side of human nature and of the ordinary function of laughter.

What life and society require of each of us is a constantly alert attention that discerns the outlines of the present situation, together with a certain elasticity of mind and body to enable us to adapt ourselves in consequence. TENSION and ELASTICITY are two forces, mutually complementary, which life brings into play. If these two forces are lacking in the body to any considerable extent, we have sickness and infirmity and accidents of every kind. If they are lacking in the mind, we find every degree of mental deficiency, every variety of insanity. Finally, if they are lacking in the character, we have cases of the gravest inadaptability to social life, which are the sources of misery and at times the causes of crime. Once these elements of inferiority that affect the serious side of existence are removed–and they tend to eliminate themselves in what has been called the struggle for life–the person can live, and that in common with other persons. But society asks for something more; it is not satisfied with simply living, it insists on living well. What it now has to dread is that each one of us, content with paying attention to what affects the essentials of life, will, so far as the rest is concerned, give way to the easy automatism of acquired habits. Another thing it must fear is that the members of whom it is made up, instead of aiming after an increasingly delicate adjustment of wills which will fit more and more perfectly into one another, will confine themselves to respecting simply the fundamental conditions of this adjustment: a cut-and-dried agreement among the persons will not satisfy it, it insists on a constant striving after reciprocal adaptation. Society will therefore be suspicious of all INELASTICITY of character, of mind and even of body, because it is the possible sign of a slumbering activity as well as of an activity with separatist tendencies, that inclines to swerve from the common centre round which society gravitates: in short, because it is the sign of an eccentricity. And yet, society cannot intervene at this stage by material repression, since it is not affected in a material fashion. It is confronted with something that makes it uneasy, but only as a symptom–scarcely a threat, at the very most a gesture. A gesture, therefore, will be its reply. Laughter must be something of this kind, a sort of SOCIAL GESTURE. By the fear which it inspires, it restrains eccentricity, keeps constantly awake and in mutual contact certain activities of a secondary order which might retire into their shell and go to sleep, and, in short, softens down whatever the surface of the social body may retain of mechanical inelasticity. Laughter, then, does not belong to the province of esthetics alone, since unconsciously (and even immorally in many particular instances) it pursues a utilitarian aim of general improvement. And yet there is something esthetic about it, since the comic comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art. In a word, if a circle be drawn round those actions and dispositions–implied in individual or social life–to which their natural consequences bring their own penalties, there remains outside this sphere of emotion and struggle–and within a neutral zone in which man simply exposes himself to man's curiosity–a certain rigidity of body, mind and character, that society would still like to get rid of in order to obtain from its members the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability. This rigidity is the comic, and laughter is its corrective.

Still, we must not accept this formula as a definition of the comic. It is suitable only for cases that are elementary, theoretical and perfect, in which the comic is free from all adulteration. Nor do we offer it, either, as an explanation. We prefer to make it, if you will, the leitmotiv which is to accompany all our explanations. We must ever keep it in mind, though without dwelling on it too much, somewhat as a skilful fencer must think of the discontinuous movements of the lesson whilst his body is given up to the continuity of the fencing-match. We will now endeavour to reconstruct the sequence of comic forms, taking up again the thread that leads from the horseplay of a clown up to the most refined effects of comedy, following this thread in its often unforeseen windings, halting at intervals to look around, and finally getting back, if possible, to the point at which the thread is dangling and where we shall perhaps find–since the comic oscillates between life and art–the general relation that art bears to life.

III

Let us begin at the simplest point. What is a comic physiognomy? Where does a ridiculous expression of the face come from? And what is, in this case, the distinction between the comic and the ugly? Thus stated, the question could scarcely be answered in any other than an arbitrary fashion. Simple though it may appear, it is, even now, too subtle to allow of a direct attack. We should have to begin with a definition of ugliness, and then discover what addition the comic makes to it; now, ugliness is not much easier to analyse than is beauty. However, we will employ an artifice which will often stand us in good stead. We will exaggerate the problem, so to speak, by magnifying the effect to the point of making the cause visible. Suppose, then, we intensify ugliness to the point of deformity, and study the transition from the deformed to the ridiculous.

Now, certain deformities undoubtedly possess over others the sorry privilege of causing some persons to laugh; some hunchbacks, for instance, will excite laughter. Without at this point entering into useless details, we will simply ask the reader to think of a number of deformities, and then to divide them into two groups: on the one hand, those which nature has directed towards the ridiculous; and on the other, those which absolutely diverge from it. No doubt he will hit upon the following law: A deformity that may become comic is a deformity that a normally built person, could successfully imitate.

Is it not, then, the case that the hunchback suggests the appearance of a person who holds himself badly? His back seems to have contracted an ugly stoop. By a kind of physical obstinacy, by rigidity, in a word, it persists in the habit it has contracted. Try to see with your eyes alone. Avoid reflection, and above all, do not reason. Abandon all your prepossessions; seek to recapture a fresh, direct and primitive impression. The vision you will reacquire will be one of this kind. You will have before you a man bent on cultivating a certain rigid attitude–whose body, if one may use the expression, is one vast grin.

Now, let us go back to the point we wished to clear up. By toning down a deformity that is laughable, we ought to obtain an ugliness that is comic. A laughable expression of the face, then, is one that will make us think of something rigid and, so to speak, coagulated, in the wonted mobility of the face. What we shall see will be an ingrained twitching or a fixed grimace. It may be objected that every habitual expression of the face, even when graceful and beautiful, gives us this same impression of something stereotyped? Here an important distinction must be drawn. When we speak of expressive beauty or even expressive ugliness, when we say that a face possesses expression, we mean expression that may be stable, but which we conjecture to be mobile. It maintains, in the midst of its fixity, a certain indecision in which are obscurely portrayed all possible shades of the state of mind it expresses, just as the sunny promise of a warm day manifests itself in the haze of a spring morning. But a comic expression of the face is one that promises nothing more than it gives. It is a unique and permanent grimace. One would say that the person's whole moral life has crystallised into this particular cast of features. This is the reason why a face is all the more comic, the more nearly it suggests to us the idea of some simple mechanical action in which its personality would for ever be absorbed. Some faces seem to be always engaged in weeping, others in laughing or whistling, others, again, in eternally blowing an imaginary trumpet, and these are the most comic faces of all. Here again is exemplified the law according to which the more natural the explanation of the cause, the more comic is the effect. Automatism, inelasticity, habit that has been contracted and maintained, are clearly the causes why a face makes us laugh. But this effect gains in intensity when we are able to connect these characteristics with some deep-seated cause, a certain fundamental absentmindedness, as though the soul had allowed itself to be fascinated and hypnotised by the materiality of a simple action.

We shall now understand the comic element in caricature. However regular we may imagine a face to be, however harmonious its lines and supple its movements, their adjustment is never altogether perfect: there will always be discoverable the signs of some impending bias, the vague suggestion of a possible grimace, in short some favourite distortion towards which nature seems to be particularly inclined. The art of the caricaturist consists in detecting this, at times, imperceptible tendency, and in rendering it visible to all eyes by magnifying it. He makes his models grimace, as they would do themselves if they went to the end of their tether. Beneath the skin-deep harmony of form, he divines the deep-seated recalcitrance of matter. He realises disproportions and deformations which must have existed in nature as mere inclinations, but which have not succeeded in coming to a head, being held in check by a higher force. His art, which has a touch of the diabolical, raises up the demon who had been overthrown by the angel. Certainly, it is an art that exaggerates, and yet the definition would be very far from complete were exaggeration alone alleged to be its aim and object, for there exist caricatures that are more lifelike than portraits, caricatures in which the exaggeration is scarcely noticeable, whilst, inversely, it is quite possible to exaggerate to excess without obtaining a real caricature. For exaggeration to be comic, it must not appear as an aim, but rather as a means that the artist is using in order to make manifest to our eyes the distortions which he sees in embryo. It is this process of distortion that is of moment and interest. And that is precisely why we shall look for it even in those elements of the face that are incapable of movement, in the curve of a nose or the shape of an ear. For, in our eyes, form is always the outline of a movement. The caricaturist who alters the size of a nose, but respects its ground plan, lengthening it, for instance, in the very direction in which it was being lengthened by nature, is really making the nose indulge in a grin. Henceforth we shall always look upon the original as having determined to lengthen itself and start grinning. In this sense, one might say that Nature herself often meets with the successes of a caricaturist. In the movement through which she has slit that mouth, curtailed that chin and bulged out that cheek, she would appear to have succeeded in completing the intended grimace, thus outwitting the restraining supervision of a more reasonable force. In that case, the face we laugh at is, so to speak, its own caricature.

To sum up, whatever be the doctrine to which our reason assents, our imagination has a very clear-cut philosophy of its own: in every human form it sees the effort of a soul which is shaping matter, a soul which is infinitely supple and perpetually in motion, subject to no law of gravitation, for it is not the earth that attracts it. This soul imparts a portion of its winged lightness to the body it animates: the immateriality which thus passes into matter is what is called gracefulness. Matter, however, is obstinate and resists. It draws to itself the ever-alert activity of this higher principle, would fain convert it to its own inertia and cause it to revert to mere automatism. It would fain immobilise the intelligently varied movements of the body in stupidly contracted grooves, stereotype in permanent grimaces the fleeting expressions of the face, in short imprint on the whole person such an attitude as to make it appear immersed and absorbed in the materiality of some mechanical occupation instead of ceaselessly renewing its vitality by keeping in touch with a living ideal. Where matter thus succeeds in dulling the outward life of the soul, in petrifying its movements and thwarting its gracefulness, it achieves, at the expense of the body, an effect that is comic. If, then, at this point we wished to define the comic by comparing it with its contrary, we should have to contrast it with gracefulness even more than with beauty. It partakes rather of the unsprightly than of the unsightly, of RIGIDNESS rather than of UGLINESS.

IV

We will now pass from the comic element in FORMS to that in GESTURES and MOVEMENTS. Let us at once state the law which seems to govern all the phenomena of this kind. It may indeed be deduced without any difficulty from the considerations stated above. THE ATTITUDES, GESTURES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE HUMAN BODY ARE LAUGHABLE IN EXACT PROPORTION AS THAT BODY REMINDS US OF A MERE MACHINE. There is no need to follow this law through the details of its immediate applications, which are innumerable. To verify it directly, it would be sufficient to study closely the work of comic artists, eliminating entirely the element of caricature, and omitting that portion of the comic which is not inherent in the drawing itself. For, obviously, the comic element in a drawing is often a borrowed one, for which the text supplies all the stock-in-trade. I mean that the artist may be his own understudy in the shape of a satirist, or even a playwright, and that then we laugh far less at the drawings themselves than at the satire or comic incident they represent. But if we devote our whole attention to the drawing with the firm resolve to think of nothing else, we shall probably find that it is generally comic in proportion to the clearness, as well as the subtleness, with which it enables us to see a man as a jointed puppet. The suggestion must be a clear one, for inside the person we must distinctly perceive, as though through a glass, a set-up mechanism. But the suggestion must

also be a subtle one, for the general appearance of the person, whose every limb has been made rigid as a machine, must continue to give us the impression of a living being. The more exactly these two images, that of a person and that of a machine, fit into each other, the more striking is the comic effect, and the more consummate the art of the draughtsman. The originality of a comic artist is thus expressed in the special kind of life he imparts to a mere puppet.

We will, however, leave on one side the immediate application of the principle, and at this point insist only on the more remote consequences. The illusion of a machine working in the inside of the person is a thing that only crops up amid a host of amusing effects; but for the most part it is a fleeting glimpse, that is immediately lost in the laughter it provokes. To render it permanent, analysis and reflection must be called into play.

In a public speaker, for instance, we find that gesture vies with speech. Jealous of the latter, gesture closely dogs the speaker's thought, demanding also to act as interpreter. Well and good; but then it must pledge itself to follow thought through all the phases of its development. An idea is something that grows, buds, blossoms and ripens from the beginning to the end of a speech. It never halts, never repeats itself. It must be changing every moment, for to cease to change would be to cease to live. Then let gesture display a like animation! Let it accept the fundamental law of life, which is the complete negation of repetition! But I find that a certain movement of head or arm, a movement always the same, seems to return at regular intervals. If I notice it and it succeeds in diverting my attention, if I wait for it to occur and it occurs when I expect it, then involuntarily I laugh. Why? Because I now have before me a machine that works automatically. This is no longer life, it is automatism established in life and imitating it. It belongs to the comic.

This is also the reason why gestures, at which we never dreamt of laughing, become laughable when imitated by another individual. The most elaborate explanations have been offered for this extremely simple fact. A little reflection, however, will show that our mental state is ever changing, and that if our gestures faithfully followed these inner movements, if they were as fully alive as we, they would never repeat themselves, and so would keep imitation at bay. We begin, then, to become imitable only when we cease to be ourselves. I mean our gestures can only be imitated in their mechanical uniformity, and therefore exactly in what is alien to our living personality. To imitate any one is to bring out the element of automatism he has allowed to creep into his person. And as this is the very essence of the ludicrous, it is no wonder that imitation gives rise to laughter.

Still, if the imitation of gestures is intrinsically laughable, it will become even more so when it busies itself in deflecting them, though without altering their form, towards some mechanical occupation, such as sawing wood, striking on an anvil, or tugging away at an imaginary bell-rope. Not that vulgarity is the essence of the comic,–although certainly it is to some extent an ingredient,–but rather that the incriminated gesture seems more frankly mechanical when it can be connected with a simple operation, as though it were intentionally mechanical. To suggest this mechanical interpretation ought to be one of the favourite devices of parody. We have reached this result through deduction, but I imagine clowns have long had an intuition of the fact.

This seems to me the solution of the little riddle propounded by Pascal in one passage of his Thoughts: "Two faces that are alike, although neither of them excites laughter by itself, make us laugh when together, on account of their likeness." It might just as well be said: "The gestures of a public speaker, no one of which is laughable by itself, excite laughter by their repetition." The truth is that a really living life should never repeat itself. Wherever there is repetition or complete similarity, we always suspect some mechanism at work behind the living. Analyse the impression you get from two faces that are too much alike, and you will find that you are thinking of two copies cast in the same mould, or two impressions of the same seal, or two reproductions of the same negative,–in a word, of some manufacturing process or other. This deflection of life towards the mechanical is here the real cause of laughter.

And laughter will be more pronounced still, if we find on the stage not merely two characters, as in the example from Pascal, but several, nay, as great a number as possible, the image of one another, who come and go, dance and gesticulate together, simultaneously striking the same attitudes and tossing their arms about in the same manner. This time, we distinctly think of marionettes. Invisible threads seem to us to be joining arms to arms, legs to legs, each muscle in

one face to its fellow-muscle in the other: by reason of the absolute uniformity which prevails, the very litheness of the bodies seems to stiffen as we gaze, and the actors themselves seem transformed into automata. Such, at least, appears to be the artifice underlying this somewhat obvious form of amusement. I daresay the performers have never read Pascal, but what they do is merely to realise to the full the suggestions contained in Pascal's words. If, as is undoubtedly the case, laughter is caused in the second instance by the hallucination of a mechanical effect, it must already have been so, though in more subtle fashion, in the first.

Continuing along this path, we dimly perceive the increasingly important and far-reaching consequences of the law we have just stated. We faintly catch still more fugitive glimpses of mechanical effects, glimpses suggested by man's complex actions, no longer merely by his gestures. We instinctively feel that the usual devices of comedy, the periodical repetition of a word or a scene, the systematic inversion of the parts, the geometrical development of a farcical misunderstanding, and many other stage contrivances, must derive their comic force from the same source,–the art of the playwright probably consisting in setting before us an obvious clockwork arrangement of human events, while carefully preserving an outward aspect of probability and thereby retaining something of the suppleness of life. But we must not forestall results which will be duly disclosed in the course of our analysis.

V

Before going further, let us halt a moment and glance around. As we hinted at the outset of this study, it would be idle to attempt to derive every comic effect from one simple formula. The formula exists well enough in a certain sense, but its development does not follow a straightforward course. What I mean is that the process of deduction ought from time to time to stop and study certain culminating effects, and that these effects each appear as models round which new effects resembling them take their places in a circle. These latter are not deductions from the formula, but are comic through their relationship with those that are. To quote Pascal again, I see no objection, at this stage, to defining the process by the curve which that geometrician studied under the name of roulette or cycloid,–the curve traced by a point in the circumference of a wheel when the carriage is advancing in a straight line: this point turns like the wheel, though it advances like the carriage. Or else we might think of an immense avenue such as are to be seen in the forest of Fontainebleau, with crosses at intervals to indicate the cross-ways: at each of these we shall walk round the cross, explore for a while the paths that open out before us, and then return to our original course. Now, we have just reached one of these mental crossways. Something mechanical encrusted on the living, will represent a cross at which we must halt, a central image from which the imagination branches off in different directions. What are these directions? There appear to be three main ones. We will follow them one after the other, and then continue our onward course.

1. In the first place, this view of the mechanical and the living dovetailed into each other makes us incline towards the vaguer image of SOME RIGIDITY OR OTHER applied to the mobility of life, in an awkward attempt to follow its lines and counterfeit its suppleness. Here we perceive how easy it is for a garment to become ridiculous. It might almost be said that every fashion is laughable in some respect. Only, when we are dealing with the fashion of the day, we are so accustomed to it that the garment seems, in our mind, to form one with the individual wearing it. We do not separate them in imagination. The idea no longer occurs to us to contrast the inert rigidity of the covering with the living suppleness of the object covered: consequently, the comic here remains in a latent condition. It will only succeed in emerging when the natural incompatibility is so deep-seated between the covering and the covered that even an immemorial association fails to cement this union: a case in point is our head and top hat. Suppose, however, some eccentric individual dresses himself in the fashion of former times: our attention is immediately drawn to the clothes themselves, we absolutely distinguish them from the individual, we say that the latter IS DISGUISING HIMSELF,–as though every article of clothing were not a disguise!–and the laughable aspect of fashion comes out of the shadow into the light.

Here we are beginning to catch a faint glimpse of the highly intricate difficulties raised by this problem of the comic. One of the reasons that must have given rise to many erroneous or

unsatisfactory theories of laughter is that many things are comic de jure without being comic de facto, the continuity of custom having deadened within them the comic quality. A sudden dissolution of continuity is needed, a break with fashion, for this quality to revive. Hence the impression that this dissolution of continuity is the parent of the comic, whereas all it does is to bring it to our notice. Hence, again, the explanation of laughter by surprise, contrast, etc., definitions which would equally apply to a host of cases in which we have no inclination whatever to laugh. The truth of the matter is far from being so simple. But to return to our idea of disguise, which, as we have just shown, has been entrusted with the special mandate of arousing laughter. It will not be out of place to investigate the uses it makes of this power.

Why do we laugh at a head of hair which has changed from dark to blond? What is there comic about a rubicund nose? And why does one laugh at a negro? The question would appear to be an embarrassing one, for it has been asked by successive psychologists such as Hecker, Kraepelin and Lipps, and all have given different replies. And yet I rather fancy the correct answer was suggested to me one day in the street by an ordinary cabby, who applied the expression "unwashed" to the negro fare he was driving. Unwashed! Does not this mean that a black face, in our imagination, is one daubed over with ink or soot? If so, then a red nose can only be one which has received a coating of vermilion. And so we see that the notion of disguise has passed on something of its comic quality to instances in which there is actually no disguise, though there might be.

In the former set of examples, although his usual dress was distinct from the individual, it appeared in our mind to form one with him, because we had become accustomed to the sight. In the latter, although the black or red colour is indeed inherent in the skin, we look upon it as artificially laid on, because it surprises us.

But here we meet with a fresh crop of difficulties in the theory of the comic. Such a proposition as the following: "My usual dress forms part of my body" is absurd in the eyes of reason. Yet imagination looks upon it as true. "A red nose is a painted nose," "A negro is a white man in disguise," are also absurd to the reason which rationalises; but they are gospel truths to pure imagination. So there is a logic of the imagination which is not the logic of reason, one which at times is even opposed to the latter,–with which, however, philosophy must reckon, not only in the study of the comic, but in every other investigation of the same kind. It is something like the logic of dreams, though of dreams that have not been left to the whim of individual fancy, being the dreams dreamt by the whole of society. In order to reconstruct this hidden logic, a special kind of effort is needed, by which the outer crust of carefully stratified judgments and firmly established ideas will be lifted, and we shall behold in the depths of our mind, like a sheet of subterranean water, the flow of an unbroken stream of images which pass from one into another. This interpenetration of images does not come about by chance. It obeys laws, or rather habits, which hold the same relation to imagination that logic does to thought.

Let us then follow this logic of the imagination in the special case in hand. A man in disguise is comic. A man we regard as disguised is also comic. So, by analogy, any disguise is seen to become comic, not only that of a man, but that of society also, and even the disguise of nature.

Let us start with nature. You laugh at a dog that is half-clipped, at a bed of artificially coloured flowers, at a wood in which the trees are plastered over with election addresses, etc. Look for the reason, and you will see that you are once more thinking of a masquerade. Here, however, the comic element is very faint; it is too far from its source. If you wish to strengthen it, you must go back to the source itself and contrast the derived image, that of a masquerade, with the original one, which, be it remembered, was that of a mechanical tampering with life. In "a nature that is mechanically tampered with" we possess a thoroughly comic theme, on which fancy will be able to play ever so many variations with the certainty of successfully provoking the heartiest hilarity. You may call to mind that amusing passage in Tartarin Sur Les Alpes, in which Bompard makes Tartarin–and therefore also the reader to some slight extent–accept the idea of a Switzerland choke-full of machinery like the basement of the opera, and run by a company which maintains a series of waterfalls, glaciers and artificial crevasses. The same theme reappears, though transposed in quite another key, in the Novel Notes of the English humorist, Jerome K. Jerome. An elderly Lady Bountiful, who does not want her deeds of charity to take up too much of her time, provides homes within easy hail of her

mansion for the conversion of atheists who have been specially manufactured for her, so to speak, and for a number of honest folk who have been made into drunkards so that she may cure them of their failing, etc. There are comic phrases in which this theme is audible, like a distant echo, coupled with an ingenuousness, whether sincere or affected, which acts as accompaniment. Take, as an instance, the remark made by a lady whom Cassini, the astronomer, had invited to see an eclipse of the moon. Arriving too late, she said, "M. de Cassini, I know, will have the goodness to begin it all over again, to please me." Or, take again the exclamation of one of Gondiinet's characters on arriving in a town and learning that there is an extinct volcano in the neighbourhood, "They had a volcano, and they have let it go out!"

Let us go on to society. As we are both in and of it, we cannot help treating it as a living being. Any image, then, suggestive of the notion of a society disguising itself, or of a social masquerade, so to speak, will be laughable. Now, such a notion is formed when we perceive anything inert or stereotyped, or simply ready-made, on the surface of living society. There we have rigidity over again, clashing with the inner suppleness of life. The ceremonial side of social life must, therefore, always include a latent comic element, which is only waiting for an opportunity to burst into full view. It might be said that ceremonies are to the social body what clothing is to the individual body: they owe their seriousness to the fact that they are identified, in our minds, with the serious object with which custom associates them, and when we isolate them in imagination, they forthwith lose their seriousness. For any ceremony, then, to become comic, it is enough that our attention be fixed on the ceremonial element in it, and that we neglect its matter, as philosophers say, and think only of its form. Every one knows how easily the comic spirit exercises its ingenuity on social actions of a stereotyped nature, from an ordinary prize-distribution to the solemn sitting of a court of justice. Any form or formula is a ready-made frame into which the comic element may be fitted.

Here, again, the comic will be emphasised by bringing it nearer to its source. From the idea of travesty, a derived one, we must go back to the original idea, that of a mechanism superposed upon life. Already, the stiff and starched formality of any ceremonial suggests to us an image of this kind. For, as soon as we forget the serious object of a solemnity or a ceremony, those taking part in it give us the impression of puppets in motion. Their mobility seems to adopt as a model the immobility of a formula. It becomes automatism. But complete automatism is only reached in the official, for instance, who performs his duty like a mere machine, or again in the unconsciousness that marks an administrative regulation working with inexorable fatality, and setting itself up for a law of nature. Quite by chance, when reading the newspaper, I came across a specimen of the comic of this type. Twenty years ago, a large steamer was wrecked off the coast at Dieppe. With considerable difficulty some of the passengers were rescued in a boat. A few custom-house officers, who had courageously rushed to their assistance, began by asking them "if they had anything to declare." We find something similar, though the idea is a more subtle one, in the remark of an M.P. when questioning the Home Secretary on the morrow of a terrible murder which took place in a railway carriage: "The assassin, after despatching his victim, must have got out the wrong side of the train, thereby infringing the Company's rules."

A mechanical element introduced into nature and an automatic regulation of society, such, then, are the two types of laughable effects at which we have arrived. It remains for us, in conclusion, to combine them and see what the result will be. The result of the combination will evidently be a human regulation of affairs usurping the place of the laws of nature. We may call to mind the answer Sganarelle gave Geronte when the latter remarked that the heart was on the left side and the liver on the right: "Yes, it was so formerly, but we have altered all that; now, we practise medicine in quite a new way." We may also recall the consultation between M. de Pourceaugnac's two doctors: "The arguments you have used are so erudite and elegant that it is impossible for the patient not to be hypochondriacally melancholic; or, even if he were not, he must surely become so because of the elegance of the things you have said and the accuracy of your reasoning." We might multiply examples, for all we need do would be to call up Moliere's doctors, one after the other. However far, moreover, comic fancy may seem to go, reality at times undertakes to improve upon it. It was suggested to a contemporary philosopher, an out-and-out arguer, that his arguments, though irreproachable in their deductions, had experience against them. He put an end to the discussion by merely remarking, "Experience is in

the wrong." The truth is, this idea of regulating life as a matter of business routine is more widespread than might be imagined; it is natural in its way, although we have just obtained it by an artificial process of reconstruction. One might say that it gives us the very quintessence of pedantry, which, at bottom, is nothing else than art pretending to outdo nature.

To sum up, then, we have one and the same effect, which assumes ever subtler forms as it passes from the idea of an artificial MECHANISATION of the human body, if such an expression is permissible, to that of any substitution whatsoever of the artificial for the natural. A less and less rigorous logic, that more and more resembles the logic of dreamland, transfers the same relationship into higher and higher spheres, between increasingly immaterial terms, till in the end we find a mere administrative enactment occupying the same relation to a natural or moral law that a ready-made garment, for instance, does to the living body. We have now gone right to the end of the first of the three directions we had to follow. Let us turn to the second and see where it will lead us.

2. Our starting-point is again "something mechanical encrusted upon the living." Where did the comic come from in this case? It came from the fact that the living body became rigid, like a machine. Accordingly, it seemed to us that the living body ought to be the perfection of suppleness, the ever-alert activity of a principle always at work. But this activity would really belong to the soul rather than to the body. It would be the very flame of life, kindled within us by a higher principle and perceived through the body, as if through a glass. When we see only gracefulness and suppleness in the living body, it is because we disregard in it the elements of weight, of resistance, and, in a word, of matter; we forget its materiality and think only of its vitality, a vitality which we regard as derived from the very principle of intellectual and moral life, Let us suppose, however, that our attention is drawn to this material side of the body; that, so far from sharing in the lightness and subtlety of the principle with which it is animated, the body is no more in our eyes than a heavy and cumbersome vesture, a kind of irksome ballast which holds down to earth a soul eager to rise aloft. Then the body will become to the soul what, as we have just seen, the garment was to the body itself–inert matter dumped down upon living energy. The impression of the comic will be produced as soon as we have a clear apprehension of this putting the one on the other. And we shall experience it most strongly when we are shown the soul TANTALISED by the needs of the body: on the one hand, the moral personality with its intelligently varied energy, and, on the other, the stupidly monotonous body, perpetually obstructing everything with its machine-like obstinacy. The more paltry and uniformly repeated these claims of the body, the more striking will be the result. But that is only a matter of degree, and the general law of these phenomena may be formulated as follows: ANY INCIDENT IS COMIC THAT CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO THE PHYSICAL IN A PERSON WHEN IT IS THE MORAL SIDE THAT IS CONCERNED.

Why do we laugh at a public speaker who sneezes just at the most pathetic moment of his speech? Where lies the comic element in this sentence, taken from a funeral speech and quoted by a German philosopher: "He was virtuous and plump"? It lies in the fact that our attention is suddenly recalled from the soul to the body. Similar instances abound in daily life, but if you do not care to take the trouble to look for them, you have only to open at random a volume of Labiche, and you will be almost certain to light upon an effect of this kind. Now, we have a speaker whose most eloquent sentences are cut short by the twinges of a bad tooth; now, one of the characters who never begins to speak without stopping in the middle to complain of his shoes being too small, or his belt too tight, etc. A PERSON EMBARRASSED BY HIS BODY is the image suggested to us in all these examples. The reason that excessive stoutness is laughable is probably because it calls up an image of the same kind. I almost think that this too is what sometime makes bashfulness somewhat ridiculous. The bashful man rather gives the impression of a person embarrassed by his body, looking round for some convenient cloak-room in which to deposit it.

This is just why the tragic poet is so careful to avoid anything calculated to attract attention to the material side of his heroes. No sooner does anxiety about the body manifest itself than the intrusion of a comic element is to be feared. On this account, the hero in a tragedy does not eat or drink or warm himself. He does not even sit

down any more than can be helped. To sit down in the middle of a fine speech would imply that you remembered you had a body. Napoleon, who was a psychologist when he wished to be so, had noticed that the transition from tragedy to comedy is effected simply by sitting down. In the "Journal inedit" of Baron Gourgaud–when speaking of an interview with the Queen of Prussia after the battle of Iena–he expresses himself in the following terms: "She received me in tragic fashion like Chimene: Justice! Sire, Justice! Magdeburg! Thus she continued in a way most embarrassing to me. Finally, to make her change her style, I requested her to take a seat. This is the best method for cutting short a tragic scene, for as soon as you are seated it all becomes comedy."

Let us now give a wider scope to this image of THE BODY TAKING PRECEDENCE OF THE SOUL. We shall obtain something more general–THE MANNER SEEKING TO OUTDO THE MATTER, THE LETTER AIMING AT OUSTING THE SPIRIT. Is it not perchance this idea that comedy is trying to suggest to us when holding up a profession to ridicule? It makes the lawyer, the magistrate and the doctor speak as though health and justice were of little moment,–the main point being that we should have lawyers, magistrates and doctors, and that all outward formalities pertaining to these professions should be scrupulously respected. And so we find the means substituted for the end, the manner for the matter; no longer is it the profession that is made for the public, but rather the public for the profession. Constant attention to form and the mechanical application of rules here bring about a kind of professional automatism analogous to that imposed upon the soul by the habits of the body, and equally laughable. Numerous are the examples of this on the stage. Without entering into details of the variations executed on this theme, let us quote two or three passages in which the theme itself is set forth in all its simplicity. "You are only bound to treat people according to form," says Doctor Diafoirus in the "Malade imaginaire". Again, says Doctor Bahis, in "L'Amour medecin": "It is better to die through following the rules than to recover through violating them." In the same play, Desfonandres had previously said: "We must always observe the formalities of professional etiquette, whatever may happen." And the reason is given by Tomes, his colleague: "A dead man is but a dead man, but the non-observance of a formality causes a notable prejudice to the whole faculty." Brid'oison's words, though. embodying a rather different idea, are none the less significant: "F-form, mind you, f-form. A man laughs at a judge in a morning coat, and yet he would quake with dread at the mere sight of an attorney in his gown. F-form, all a matter of f-form."

Here we have the first illustration of a law which will appear with increasing distinctness as we proceed with our task. When a musician strikes a note on an instrument, other notes start up of themselves, not so loud as the first, yet connected with it by certain definite relations, which coalesce with it and determine its quality. These are what are called in physics the overtones of the fundamental note. It would seem that comic fancy, even in its most far-fetched inventions, obeys a similar law. For instance, consider this comic note: appearance seeking to triumph over reality. If our analysis is correct, this note must have as its overtones the body tantalising the mind, the body taking precedence of the mind. No sooner, then, does the comic poet strike the first note than he will add the second on to it, involuntarily and instinctively. In other words, HE WILL DUPLICATE WHAT IS RIDICULOUS PROFESSIONALLY WITH SOMETHING THAT IS RIDICULOUS PHYSICALLY.

When Brid'oison the judge comes stammering on to the stage, is he not actually preparing us, by this very stammering, to understand the phenomenon of intellectual ossification we are about to witness? What bond of secret relationship can there be between the physical defect and the moral infirmity? It is difficult to say; yet we feel that the relationship is there, though we cannot express it in words. Perhaps the situation required that this judging machine should also appear before us as a talking machine. However it may be, no other overtone could more perfectly have completed the fundamental note.

When Moliere introduces to us the two ridiculous doctors, Bahis and Macroton, in L'Amour medecin, he makes one of them speak very slowly, as though scanning his words syllable by syllable, whilst the other stutters. We find the same contrast between the two lawyers in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. In the rhythm of speech is generally to be found the physical peculiarity that is destined to complete

the element of professional ridicule. When the author has failed to suggest a defect of this kind, it is seldom the case that the actor does not instinctively invent one.

Consequently, there is a natural relationship, which we equally naturally recognise, between the two images we have been comparing with each other, the mind crystallising in certain grooves, and the body losing its elasticity through the influence of certain defects. Whether or not our attention be diverted from the matter to the manner, or from the moral to the physical, in both cases the same sort of impression is conveyed to our imagination; in both, then, the comic is of the same kind. Here, once more, it has been our aim to follow the natural trend of the movement of the imagination. This trend or direction, it may be remembered, was the second of those offered to us, starting from a central image. A third and final path remains unexplored, along which we will now proceed.

3. Let us then return, for the last time, to our central image: something mechanical encrusted on something living. Here, the living being under discussion was a human being, a person. A mechanical arrangement, on the other hand, is a thing. What, therefore, incited laughter was the momentary transformation of a person into a thing, if one considers the image from this standpoint. Let us then pass from the exact idea of a machine to the vaguer one of a thing in general. We shall have a fresh series of laughable images which will be obtained by taking a blurred impression, so to speak, of the outlines of the former and will bring us to this new law: WE LAUGH EVERY TIME A PERSON GIVES US THE IMPRESSION OF BEING A THING.

We laugh at Sancho Panza tumbled into a bed-quilt and tossed into the air like a football. We laugh at Baron Munchausen turned into a cannon-ball and travelling through space. But certain tricks of circus clowns might afford a still more precise exemplification of the same law. True, we should have to eliminate the jokes, mere interpolations by the clown into his main theme, and keep in mind only the theme itself, that is to say, the divers attitudes, capers and movements which form the strictly "clownish" element in the clown's art. On two occasions only have I been able to observe this style of the comic in its unadulterated state, and in both I received the same impression. The first time, the clowns came and went, collided, fell and jumped up again in a uniformly accelerated rhythm, visibly intent upon affecting a CRESCENDO. And it was more and more to the jumping up again, the REBOUND, that the attention of the public was attracted. Gradually, one lost sight of the fact that they were men of flesh and blood like ourselves; one began to think of bundles of all sorts, falling and knocking against each other. Then the vision assumed a more definite aspect. The forms grew rounder, the bodies rolled together and seemed to pick themselves up like balls. Then at last appeared the image towards which the whole of this scene had doubtless been unconsciously evolving–large rubber balls hurled against one another in every direction. The second scene, though even coarser than the first, was no less instructive. There came on the stage two men, each with an enormous head, bald as a billiard ball. In their hands they carried large sticks which each, in turn, brought down on to the other's cranium. Here, again, a certain gradation was observable. After each blow, the bodies seemed to grow heavier and more unyielding, overpowered by an increasing degree of rigidity. Then came the return blow, in each case heavier and more resounding than the last, coming, too, after a longer interval. The skulls gave forth a formidable ring throughout the silent house. At last the two bodies, each quite rigid and as straight as an arrow, slowly bent over towards each other, the sticks came crashing down for the last time on to the two heads with a thud as of enormous mallets falling upon oaken beams, and the pair lay prone upon the ground. At that instant appeared in all its vividness the suggestion that the two artists had gradually driven into the imagination of the spectators: "We are about to become ...we have now become solid wooden dummies."

A kind of dim, vague instinct may enable even an uncultured mind to get an inkling here of the subtler results of psychological science. We know that it is possible to call up hallucinatory visions in a hypnotised subject by simple suggestion. If he be told that a bird is perched on his hand, he will see the bird and watch it fly away. The idea suggested, however, is far from being always accepted with like docility. Not infrequently, the mesmeriser only succeeds in getting an idea into his subject's head by slow degrees through a carefully graduated series of hints. He will then start with objects really perceived by the subject, and will endeavour to make the perception of

these objects more and more indefinite; then, step by step, he will bring out of this state of mental chaos the precise form of the object of which he wishes to create an hallucination. Something of the kind happens to many people when dropping off to sleep; they see those coloured, fluid, shapeless masses, which occupy the field of vision, insensibly solidifying into distinct objects.

Consequently, the gradual passing from the dim and vague to the clear and distinct is the method of suggestion par excellence. I fancy it might be found to be at the root of a good many comic suggestions, especially in the coarser forms of the comic, in which the transformation of a person into a thing seems to be taking place before our eyes. But there are other and more subtle methods in use, among poets, for instance, which perhaps unconsciously lead to the same end. By a certain arrangement of rhythm, rhyme and assonance, it is possible to lull the imagination, to rock it to and fro between like and like with a regular see-saw motion, and thus prepare it submissively to accept the vision suggested. Listen to these few lines of Regnard, and see whether something like the fleeting image of a DOLL does not cross the field of your imagination:

"... Plus, il doit a maints particuliers La somme de dix mil une livre une obole, Pour l'avoir sans relache un an sur sa parole Habille, voiture, chauffe, chausse, gante, Alimente, rase, desaltere, porte." ["Further, he owes to many an honest wight Item-the sum two thousand pounds, one farthing, For having on his simple word of honour Sans intermission for an entire year Clothed him, conveyed him, warmed him, shod him, gloved him, Fed him and shaved him, quenched his thirst and borne him."]

Is not something of the same kind found in the following sally of Figaro's (though here an attempt is perhaps made to suggest the image of an animal rather than that of a thing): "Quel homme est-ce?–C'est un beau, gros, court, jeune vieillard, gris pommele, ruse, rase, blase, qui guette et furette, et gronde et geint tout a la fois." ["What sort of man is here?–He is a handsome, stout, short, youthful old gentleman, iron-grey, an artful knave, clean shaved, clean 'used up,' who spies and pries and growls and groans all in the same breath."]

Now, between these coarse scenes and these subtle suggestions there is room for a countless number of amusing effects, for all those that can be obtained by talking about persons as one would do about mere things. We will only select one or two instances from the plays of Labiche, in which they are legion.

Just as M. Perrichon is getting into the railway carriage, he makes certain of not forgetting any of his parcels: "Four, five, six, my wife seven, my daughter eight, and myself nine." In another play, a fond father is boasting of his daughter's learning in the following terms: "She will tell you, without faltering, all the kings of France that have occurred." This phrase, "that have occurred," though not exactly transforming the kings into mere things, likens them, all the same, to events of an impersonal nature.

As regards this latter example, note that it is unnecessary to complete the identification of the person with the thing in order to ensure a comic effect. It is sufficient for us to start in this direction by feigning, for instance, to confuse the person with the function he exercises. I will only quote a sentence spoken by a village mayor in one of About's novels: "The prefect, who has always shown us the same kindness, though he has been changed several times since 1847..."

All these witticisms are constructed on the same model. We might make up any number of them, when once we are in possession of the recipe. But the art of the story-teller or the playwright does not merely consist in concocting jokes. The difficulty lies in giving to a joke its power of suggestion, i.e. in making it acceptable. And we only do accept it either because it seems to be the natural product of a particular state of mind or because it is in keeping with the circumstances of the case. For instance, we are aware that M. Perrichon is greatly excited on the occasion of his first railway journey. The expression "to occur" is one that must have cropped up a good many times in the lessons repeated by the girl before her father; it makes us think of such a repetition. Lastly, admiration of the governmental machine might, at a pinch, be extended to the point of making us believe that no change takes place in the prefect when he changes his name, and that the function gets carried on independently of the functionary.

We have now reached a point very far from the original cause of laughter. Many a comic form, that cannot be explained by itself, can indeed only be understood from its resemblance to another, which only makes us laugh by reason of its relationship with a third, and so on indefinitely, so that psychological analysis, however luminous

and searching, will go astray unless it holds the thread along which the comic impression has travelled from one end of the series to the other. Where does this progressive continuity come from? What can be the driving force, the strange impulse which causes the comic to glide thus from image to image, farther and farther away from the starting-point, until it is broken up and lost in infinitely remote analogies? But what is that force which divides and subdivides the branches of a tree into smaller boughs and its roots into radicles? An inexorable law dooms every living energy, during the brief interval allotted to it in time, to cover the widest possible extent in space. Now, comic fancy is indeed a living energy, a strange plant that has nourished on the stony portions of the social soil, until such time as culture should allow it to vie with the most refined products of art. True, we are far from great art in the examples of the comic we have just been reviewing. But we shall draw nearer to it, though without attaining to it completely, in the following chapter. Below art, we find artifice, and it is this zone of artifice, midway between nature and art, that we are now about to enter. We are going to deal with the comic playwright and the wit.

CHAPTER II

THE COMIC ELEMENT IN SITUATIONS AND THE COMIC ELEMENT IN WORDS

We have studied the comic element in forms, in attitudes, and in movements generally; now let us look for it in actions and in situations. We encounter, indeed, this kind of comic readily enough in everyday life. It is not here, however, that it best lends itself to analysis. Assuming that the stage is both a magnified and a simplified view of life, we shall find that comedy is capable of furnishing us with more information than real life on this particular part of our subject. Perhaps we ought even to carry simplification still farther, and, going back to our earliest recollections, try to discover, in the games that amused us as children, the first faint traces of the combinations that make us laugh as grown-up persons. We are too apt to speak of our feelings of pleasure and of pain as though full grown at birth, as though each one of them had not a history of its own. Above all, we are too apt to ignore the childish element, so to speak, latent in most of our joyful emotions. And yet, how many of our present pleasures, were we to examine them closely, would shrink into nothing more than memories of past ones! What would there be left of many of our emotions were we to reduce them to the exact quantum of pure feeling they contain, by subtracting from them all that is merely reminiscence? Indeed, it seems possible that, after a certain age, we become impervious to all fresh or novel forms of joy, and the sweetest pleasures of the middle-aged man are perhaps nothing more than a revival of the sensations of childhood, a balmy zephyr wafted in fainter and fainter breaths by a past that is ever receding. In any case, whatever reply we give to this broad question, one thing is certain: there can be no break in continuity between the child's delight in games and that of the grown-up person. Now, comedy is a game, a game that imitates life. And since, in the games of the child when working its dolls and puppets, many of the movements are produced by strings, ought we not to find those same strings, somewhat frayed by wear, reappearing as the threads that knot together the situations in a comedy? Let us, then, start with the games of a child, and follow the imperceptible process by which, as he grows himself, he makes his puppets grow, inspires them with life, and finally brings them to an ambiguous state in which, without ceasing to be puppets, they have yet become human beings. We thus obtain characters of a comedy type. And upon them we can test the truth of the law of which all our preceding analyses gave an inkling, a law in accordance with which we will define all broadly comic situations in general. ANY ARRANGEMENT OF ACTS AND EVENTS IS COMIC WHICH GIVES US, IN A SINGLE COMBINATION, THE ILLUSION OF LIFE AND THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION OF A MECHANICAL ARRANGEMENT.

1. THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX.–As children we have all played with the little man who springs out of his box. You squeeze him flat, he jumps up again. Push him lower, and he shoots up still higher. Crush him down beneath the lid, and often he will send everything flying. It is hard to tell whether or no the toy itself is very ancient, but the kind of amusement it affords belongs to all time. It is a struggle between two stubborn elements, one of which, being simply mechanical, generally ends by giving in to the other, which

treats it as a plaything. A cat playing with a mouse, which from time to time she releases like a spring, only to pull it up short with a stroke of her paw, indulges in the same kind of amusement.

We will now pass on to the theatre, beginning with a Punch and Judy show. No sooner does the policeman put in an appearance on the stage than, naturally enough, he receives a blow which fells him. He springs to his feet, a second blow lays him flat. A repetition of the offence is followed by a repetition of the punishment. Up and down the constable flops and hops with the uniform rhythm of the bending and release of a spring, whilst the spectators laugh louder and louder. Now, let us think of a spring that is rather of a moral type, an idea that is first expressed, then repressed, and then expressed again; a stream of words that bursts forth, is checked, and keeps on starting afresh. Once more we have the vision of one stubborn force, counteracted by another, equally pertinacious. This vision, however, will have discarded a portion of its materiality. No longer is it Punch and Judy that we are watching, but rather a real comedy.

Many a comic scene may indeed be referred to this simple type. For instance, in the scene of the Mariage force between Sganarelle and Pancrace, the entire vis comica lies in the conflict set up between the idea of Sganarelle, who wishes to make the philosopher listen to him, and the obstinacy of the philosopher, a regular talking-machine working automatically. As the scene progresses, the image of the Jack-in-the-box becomes more apparent, so that at last the characters themselves adopt its movements,–Sganarelle pushing Pancrace, each time he shows himself, back into the wings, Pancrace returning to the stage after each repulse to continue his patter. And when Sganarelle finally drives Pancrace back and shuts him up inside the house–inside the box, one is tempted to say–a window suddenly flies open, and the head of the philosopher again appears as though it had burst open the lid of a box.

The same by-play occurs in the Malade Imaginaire. Through the mouth of Monsieur Purgon the outraged medical profession pours out its vials of wrath upon Argan, threatening him with every disease that flesh is heir to. And every time Argan rises from his seat, as though to silence Purgon, the latter disappears for a moment, being, as it were, thrust back into the wings; then, as though Impelled by a spring, he rebounds on to the stage with a fresh curse on his lips. The self-same exclamation: "Monsieur Purgon!" recurs at regular beats, and, as it were, marks the TEMPO of this little scene.

Let us scrutinise more closely the image of the spring which is bent, released, and bent again. Let us disentangle its central element, and we shall hit upon one of the usual processes of classic comedy,–REPETITION.

Why is it there is something comic in the repetition of a word on the stage? No theory of the ludicrous seems to offer a satisfactory answer to this very simple question. Nor can an answer be found so long as we look for the explanation of an amusing word or phrase in the phrase or word itself, apart from all it suggests to us. Nowhere will the usual method prove to be so inadequate as here. With the exception, however, of a few special instances to which we shall recur later, the repetition of a word is never laughable in itself. It makes us laugh only because it symbolises a special play of moral elements, this play itself being the symbol of an altogether material diversion. It is the diversion of the cat with the mouse, the diversion of the child pushing back the Jack-in-the-box, time after time, to the bottom of his box,–but in a refined and spiritualised form, transferred to the realm of feelings and ideas. Let us then state the law which, we think, defines the main comic varieties of word-repetition on the stage: IN A COMIC REPETITION OF WORDS WE GENERALLY FIND TWO TERMS: A REPRESSED FEELING WHICH GOES OFF LIKE A SPRING, AND AN IDEA THAT DELIGHTS IN REPRESSING THE FEELING ANEW.

When Dorine is telling Orgon of his wife's illness, and the latter continually interrupts him with inquiries as to the health of Tartuffe, the question: "Et tartuffe?" repeated every few moments, affords us the distinct sensation of a spring being released. This spring Dorine delights in pushing back, each time she resumes her account of Elmire's illness. And when Scapin informs old Geronte that his son has been taken prisoner on the famous galley, and that a ransom must be paid without delay, he is playing with the avarice of Geronte exactly as Dorine does with the infatuation of Orgon. The old man's avarice is no sooner repressed than up it springs again automatically, and it is this automatism that Moliere tries to indicate by the mechanical repetition of a sentence expressing regret at the money that would have to be forthcoming:

"What the deuce did he want in that galley?" The same criticism is applicable to the scene in which Valere points out to Harpagon the wrong he would be doing in marrying his daughter to a man she did not love. "No dowry wanted!" interrupts the miserly Harpagon every few moments. Behind this exclamation, which recurs automatically, we faintly discern a complete repeating-machine set going by a fixed idea.

At times this mechanism is less easy to detect, and here we encounter a fresh difficulty in the theory of the comic. Sometimes the whole interest of a scene lies in one character playing a double part, the intervening speaker acting as a mere prism, so to speak, through which the dual personality is developed. We run the risk, then, of going astray if we look for the secret of the effect in what we see and hear,–in the external scene played by the characters,–and not in the altogether inner comedy of which this scene is no more than the outer refraction. For instance, when Alceste stubbornly repeats the words, "I don't say that!" on Oronte asking him if he thinks his poetry bad, the repetition is laughable, though evidently Oronte is not now playing with Alceste at the game we have just described. We must be careful, however, for, in reality, we have two men in Alceste: on the one hand, the "misanthropist" who has vowed henceforth to call a spade a spade, and on the other the gentleman who cannot unlearn, in a trice, the usual forms of politeness, or even, it may be, just the honest fellow who, when called upon to put his words into practice, shrinks from wounding another's self-esteem or hurting his feelings. Accordingly, the real scene is not between Alceste and Oronte, it is between Alceste and himself. The one Alceste would fain blurt out the truth, and the other stops his mouth just as he is on the point of telling everything. Each "I don't say that!" reveals a growing effort to repress something that strives and struggles to get out. And so the tone in which the phrase is uttered gets more and more violent, Alceste becoming more and more angry–not with Oronte, as he thinks–but with himself. The tension of the spring is continually being renewed and reinforced until it at last goes off with a bang. Here, as elsewhere, we have the same identical mechanism of repetition.

For a man to make a resolution never henceforth to say what he does not think, even though he "openly defy the whole human race," is not necessarily laughable; it is only a phase of life at its highest and best. For another man, through amiability, selfishness, or disdain, to prefer to flatter people is only another phase of life; there is nothing in it to make us laugh. You may even combine these two men into one, and arrange that the individual waver between offensive frankness and delusive politeness, this duel between two opposing feelings will not even then be comic, rather it will appear the essence of seriousness if these two feelings through their very distinctness complete each other, develop side by side, and make up between them a composite mental condition, adopting, in short, a modus vivendi which merely gives us the complex impression of life. But imagine these two feelings as INELASTIC and unvarying elements in a really living man, make him oscillate from one to the other; above all, arrange that this oscillation becomes entirely mechanical by adopting the well-known form of some habitual, simple, childish contrivance: then you will get the image we have so far found in all laughable objects, SOMETHING MECHANICAL IN SOMETHING LIVING; in fact, something comic.

We have dwelt on this first image, the Jack-in-the-box, sufficiently to show how comic fancy gradually converts a material mechanism into a moral one. Now we will consider one or two other games, confining ourselves to their most striking aspects.

2. THE DANCING-JACK.–There are innumerable comedies in which one of the characters thinks he is speaking and acting freely, and, consequently, retains all the essentials of life, whereas, viewed from a certain standpoint, he appears as a mere toy in the hands of another who is playing with him. The transition is easily made, from the dancing-jack which a child works with a string, to Geronte and Argante manipulated by Scapin. Listen to Scapin himself: "The MACHINE is all there"; and again: "Providence has brought them into my net," etc. Instinctively, and because one would rather be a cheat than be cheated, in imagination at all events, the spectator sides with the knaves; and for the rest of the time, like a child who has persuaded his playmate to lend him his doll, he takes hold of the strings himself and makes the marionette come and go on the stage as he pleases. But this latter condition is not indispensable; we can remain outside the pale of what is taking place if only we retain the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement. This is what happens whenever one of the characters vacillates between two contrary opinions, each in turn appealing to him, as when Panurge asks Tom, Dick, and Harry whether or no he ought to get married. Note that, in such a case, a comic author is always careful to PERSONIFY the two opposing decisions. For, if there is no spectator, there must at all events be actors to hold the strings.

All that is serious in life comes from our freedom. The feelings we have matured, the passions we have brooded over, the actions we have weighed, decided upon, and carried through, in short, all that comes from us and is our very own, these are the things that give life its ofttimes dramatic and generally grave aspect. What, then, is requisite to transform all this into a comedy? Merely to fancy that our seeming, freedom conceals the strings of a dancing-Jack, and that we are, as the poet says,

"... humble marionettes The wires of which are pulled by Fate." ["... d'humbles marionnettes Dont le fil est aux mains de la Necessite." SULLY-PRUDHOMME.]

So there is not a real, a serious, or even a dramatic scene that fancy cannot render comic by simply calling forth this image. Nor is there a game for which a wider field lies open.

3. THE SNOW-BALL.–The farther we proceed in this investigation into the methods of comedy, the more clearly we see the part played by childhood's memories. These memories refer, perhaps, less to any special game than to the mechanical device of which that game is a particular instance. The same general device, moreover, may be met with in widely different games, just as the same operatic air is found in many different arrangements and variations. What is here of importance and is retained in the mind, what passes by imperceptible stages from the games of a child to those of a man, is the mental diagram, the skeleton outline of the combination, or, if you like, the abstract formula of which these games are particular illustrations. Take, for instance, the rolling snow-ball, which increases in size as it moves along. We might just as well think of toy soldiers standing behind one another. Push the first and it tumbles down on the second, this latter knocks down the third, and the state of things goes from bad to worse until they all lie prone on the floor. Or again, take a house of cards that has been built up with infinite care: the first you touch seems uncertain whether to move or not, its tottering neighbour comes to a quicker decision, and the work of destruction, gathering momentum as it goes on, rushes headlong to the final collapse.

These instances are all different, but they suggest the same abstract vision, that of an effect which grows by arithmetical progression, so that the cause, insignificant at the outset, culminates by a necessary evolution in a result as important as it is unexpected. Now let us open a children's picture-book; we shall find this arrangement already on the high road to becoming comic. Here, for instance–in one of the comic chap-books picked up by chance–we have a caller rushing violently into a drawing-room; he knocks against a lady, who upsets her cup of tea over an old gentleman, who slips against a glass window which falls in the street on to the head of a constable, who sets the whole police force agog, etc. The same arrangement reappears in many a picture intended for grownup persons. In the "stories without words" sketched by humorous artists we are often shown an object which moves from place to place, and persons who are closely connected with it, so that through a series of scenes a change in the position of the object mechanically brings about increasingly serious changes in the situation of the persons. Let us now turn to comedy. Many a droll scene, many a comedy even, may be referred to this simple type. Read the speech of Chicanneau in the Plaideurs: here we find lawsuits within lawsuits, and the mechanism works faster and faster–Racine produces in us this feeling of increasing acceleration by crowding his law terms ever closer together–until the lawsuit over a truss of hay costs the plaintiff the best part of his fortune. And again the same arrangement occurs in certain scenes of Don Quixote; for instance, in the inn scene, where, by an extraordinary concatenation of circumstances, the mule-driver strikes Sancho, who belabours Maritornes, upon whom the innkeeper falls, etc. Finally, let us pass to the light comedy of to-day. Need we call to mind all the forms in which this same combination appears? There is one that is employed rather frequently. For instance, a certain thing, say a letter, happens to be of supreme importance to a certain person and must be recovered at all costs. This thing, which always vanishes just when you think you have caught it, pervades the entire play, "rolling up" increasingly serious and unexpected incidents as it proceeds. All this is far more like a child's

game than appears at first blush. Once more the effect produced is that of the snowball.

It is the characteristic of a mechanical combination to be generally REVERSIBLE. A child is delighted when he sees the ball in a game of ninepins knocking down everything in its way and spreading havoc in all directions; he laughs louder than ever when the ball returns to its starting-point after twists and turns and waverings of every kind. In other words, the mechanism just described is laughable even when rectilinear, it is much more so on becoming circular and when every effort the player makes, by a fatal interaction of cause and effect, merely results in bringing it back to the same spot. Now, a considerable number of light comedies revolve round this idea. An Italian straw hat has been eaten up by a horse. [Un Chapeau de paille d'Italie (Labiche).] There is only one other hat like it in the whole of Paris; it MUST be secured regardless of cost. This hat, which always slips away at the moment its capture seems inevitable, keeps the principal character on the run, and through him all the others who hang, so to say, on to his coat tails, like a magnet which, by a successive series of attractions, draws along in its train the grains of iron filings that hang on to each other. And when at last, after all sorts of difficulties, the goal seems in sight, it is found that the hat so ardently sought is precisely the one that has been eaten. The same voyage of discovery is depicted in another equally well-known comedy of Labiche. [La Cagnotte.] The curtain rises on an old bachelor and an old maid, acquaintances of long standing, at the moment of enjoying their daily rubber. Each of them, unknown to the other, has applied to the same matrimonial agency. Through innumerable difficulties, one mishap following on the heels of another, they hurry along, side by side, right through the play, to the interview which brings them back, purely and simply, into each other's presence. We have the same circular effect, the same return to the starting-point, in a more recent play. [Les Surprises du divorce.] A henpecked husband imagines he has escaped by divorce from the clutches of his wife and his mother-in-law. He marries again, when, lo and behold, the double combination of marriage and divorce brings back to him his former wife in the aggravated form of a second mother-in-law!

When we think how intense and how common is this type of the comic, we understand why it has fascinated the imagination of certain philosophers. To cover a good deal of ground only to come back unwittingly to the starting-point, is to make a great effort for a result that is nil. So we might be tempted to define the comic in this latter fashion. And such, indeed, seems to be the idea of Herbert Spencer: according to him, laughter is the indication of an effort which suddenly encounters a void. Kant had already said something of the kind: "Laughter is the result of an expectation, which, of a sudden, ends in nothing." No doubt these definitions would apply to the last few examples given, although, even then, the formula needs the addition of sundry limitations, for we often make an ineffectual effort which is in no way provocative of laughter. While, however, the last few examples are illustrations of a great cause resulting in a small effect, we quoted others, immediately before, which might be defined inversely as a great effect springing from a small cause. The truth is, this second definition has scarcely more validity than the first. Lack of proportion between cause and effect, whether appearing in one or in the other, is never the direct source of laughter. What we do laugh at is something that this lack of proportion may in certain cases disclose, namely, a particular mechanical arrangement which it reveals to us, as through a glass, at the back of the series of effects and causes. Disregard this arrangement, and you let go the only clue capable of guiding you through the labyrinth of the comic. Any hypothesis you otherwise would select, while possibly applicable to a few carefully chosen cases, is liable at any moment to be met and overthrown by the first unsuitable instance that comes along.

But why is it we laugh at this mechanical arrangement? It is doubtless strange that the history of a person or of a group should sometimes appear like a game worked by strings, or gearings, or springs; but from what source does the special character of this strangeness arise? What is it that makes it laughable? To this question, which we have already propounded in various forms, our answer must always be the same. The rigid mechanism which we occasionally detect, as a foreign body, in the living continuity of human affairs is of peculiar interest to us as being a kind of ABSENTMINDEDNESS on the part of life. Were events unceasingly mindful of their own course, there would be no coincidences, no conjunctures and no circular series; everything would evolve and progress continuously. And were all men always attentive to life, were we constantly keeping in touch with others as well as with

ourselves, nothing within us would ever appear as due to the working of strings or springs. The comic is that side of a person which reveals his likeness to a thing, that aspect of human events which, through its peculiar inelasticity, conveys the impression of pure mechanism, of automatism, of movement without life. Consequently it expresses an individual or collective imperfection which calls for an immediate corrective. This corrective is laughter, a social gesture that singles out and represses a special kind of absentmindedness in men and in events.

But this in turn tempts us to make further investigations. So far, we have spent our time in rediscovering, in the diversions of the grownup man, those mechanical combinations which amused him as a child. Our methods, in fact, have been entirely empirical. Let us now attempt to frame a full and methodical theory, by seeking, as it were, at the fountainhead, the changeless and simple archetypes of the manifold and transient practices of the comic stage. Comedy, we said, combines events so as to introduce mechanism into the outer forms of life. Let us now ascertain in what essential characteristics life, when viewed from without, seems to contrast with mere mechanism. We shall only have, then, to turn to the opposite characteristics, in order to discover the abstract formula, this time a general and complete one, for every real and possible method of comedy.

Life presents itself to us as evolution in time and complexity in space. Regarded in time, it is the continuous evolution of a being ever growing older; it never goes backwards and never repeats anything. Considered in space, it exhibits certain coexisting elements so closely interdependent, so exclusively made for one another, that not one of them could, at the same time, belong to two different organisms: each living being is a closed system of phenomena, incapable of interfering with other systems. A continual change of aspect, the irreversibility of the order of phenomena, the perfect individuality of a perfectly self-contained series: such, then, are the outward characteristics–whether real or apparent is of little moment–which distinguish the living from the merely mechanical. Let us take the counterpart of each of these: we shall obtain three processes which might be called REPETITION, INVERSION, and RECIPROCAL INTERFERENCE OF SERIES. Now, it is easy to see that these are also the methods of light comedy, and that no others are possible.

As a matter of fact, we could discover them, as ingredients of varying importance, in the composition of all the scenes we have just been considering, and, a fortiori, in the children's games, the mechanism of which they reproduce. The requisite analysis would, however, delay us too long, and it is more profitable to study them in their purity by taking fresh examples. Nothing could be easier, for it is in their pure state that they are found both in classic comedy and in contemporary plays.

1. REPETITION.-Our present problem no longer deals, like the preceding one, with a word or a sentence repeated by an individual, but rather with a situation, that is, a combination of circumstances, which recurs several times in its original form and thus contrasts with the changing stream of life. Everyday experience supplies us with this type of the comic, though only in a rudimentary state. Thus, you meet a friend in the street whom you have not seen for an age; there is nothing comic in the situation. If, however, you meet, him again the same day, and then a third and a fourth time, you may laugh at the "coincidence." Now, picture to yourself a series of imaginary events which affords a tolerably fair illusion of life, and within this ever-moving series imagine one and the same scene reproduced either by the same characters or by different ones: again you will have a coincidence, though a far more extraordinary one.

Such are the repetitions produced on the stage. They are the more laughable in proportion as the scene repeated is more complex and more naturally introduced–two conditions which seem mutually exclusive, and which the play-writer must be clever enough to reconcile.

Contemporary light comedy employs this method in every shape and form. One of the best-known examples consists in bringing a group of characters, act after act, into the most varied surroundings, so as to reproduce, under ever fresh circumstances, one and the same series of incidents or accidents more or less symmetrically identical.

In several of Moliere's plays we find one and the same arrangement of events repeated right through the comedy from beginning to end. Thus, the Ecole des femmes does nothing more than reproduce and repeat a single incident in three tempi: first tempo, Horace tells Arnolphe of the plan he has devised to deceive Agnes's guardian,

who turns out to be Arnolphe himself; second tempo, Arnolphe thinks he has checkmated the move; third tempo, Agnes contrives that Horace gets all the benefit of Arnolphe's precautionary measures. There is the same symmetrical repetition in the Ecole des marts, in L'Etourdi, and above all in George Dandin, where the same effect in three tempi is again met with: first tempo, George Dandin discovers that his wife is unfaithful; second tempo, he summons his father–and mother-in-law to his assistance; third tempo, it is George Dandin himself, after all, who has to apologise.

At times the same scene is reproduced with groups of different characters. Then it not infrequently happens that the first group consists of masters and the second of servants. The latter repeat in another key a scene already played by the former, though the rendering is naturally less refined. A part of the Depit amoureux is constructed on this plan, as is also Amphitryon. In an amusing little comedy of Benedix, Der Eigensinn, the order is inverted: we have the masters reproducing a scene of stubbornness in which their servants have set the example.

But, quite irrespective of the characters who serve as pegs for the arrangement of symmetrical situations, there seems to be a wide gulf between classic comedy and the theatre of to-day. Both aim at introducing a certain mathematical order into events, while none the less maintaining their aspect of likelihood, that is to say, of life. But the means they employ are different. The majority of light comedies of our day seek to mesmerise directly the mind of the spectator. For, however extraordinary the coincidence, it becomes acceptable from the very fact that it is accepted; and we do accept it, if we have been gradually prepared for its reception. Such is often the procedure adopted by contemporary authors. In Moliere's plays, on the contrary, it is the moods of the persons on the stage, not of the audience, that make repetition seem natural. Each of the characters represents a certain force applied in a certain direction, and it is because these forces, constant in direction, necessarily combine together in the same way, that the same situation is reproduced. Thus interpreted, the comedy of situation is akin to the comedy of character. It deserves to be called classic, if classic art is indeed that which does not claim to derive from the effect more than it has put into the cause.

2. Inversion.–This second method has so much analogy with the first that we will merely define it without insisting on illustrations. Picture to yourself certain characters in a certain situation: if you reverse the situation and invert the roles, you obtain a comic scene. The double rescue scene in Le Voyage de M. Perrichon belongs to this class. [Labiche, "Le Voyage de M. Perrichon."] There is no necessity, however, for both the identical scenes to be played before us. We may be shown only one, provided the other is really in our minds. Thus, we laugh at the prisoner at the bar lecturing the magistrate; at a child presuming to teach its parents; in a word, at everything that comes under the heading of "topsyturvydom." Not infrequently comedy sets before us a character who lays a trap in which he is the first to be caught. The plot of the villain who is the victim of his own villainy, or the cheat cheated, forms the stock-in-trade of a good many plays. We find this even in primitive farce. Lawyer Pathelin tells his client of a trick to outwit the magistrate; the client employs the self-same trick to avoid paying the lawyer. A termagant of a wife insists upon her husband doing all the housework; she has put down each separate item on a "rota." Now let her fall into a copper, her husband will refuse to drag her out, for "that is not down on his 'rota.'" In modern literature we meet with hundreds of variations on the theme of the robber robbed. In every case the root idea involves an inversion of roles, and a situation which recoils on the head of its author.

Here we apparently find the confirmation of a law, some illustrations of which we have already pointed out. When a comic scene has been reproduced a number of times, it reaches the stage of being a classical type or model. It becomes amusing in itself, quite apart from the causes which render it amusing. Henceforth, new scenes, which are not comic de jure, may become amusing de facto, on account of their partial resemblance to this model. They call up in our mind a more or less confused image which we know to be comical. They range themselves in a category representing an officially recognised type of the comic. The scene of the "robber robbed" belongs to this class. It casts over a host of other scenes a reflection of the comic element it contains. In the end it renders comic any mishap that befalls one through one's own fault, no matter what the fault or mishap may be,–nay, an allusion to this mishap, a single

word that recalls it, is sufficient. There would be nothing amusing in the saying, "It serves you right, George Dandin," were it not for the comic overtones that take up and re-echo it.

3. We have dwelt at considerable length on repetition and inversion; we now come to the reciprocal interference [The word "interference" has here the meaning given to it in Optics, where it indicates the partial superposition and neutralisation, by each other, of two series of light-waves.] of series. This is a comic effect, the precise formula of which is very difficult to disentangle, by reason of the extraordinary variety of forms in which it appears on the stage. Perhaps it might be defined as follows: A situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time.

You will at once think of an equivocal situation. And the equivocal situation is indeed one which permits of two different meanings at the same time, the one merely plausible, which is put forward by the actors, the other a real one, which is given by the public. We see the real meaning of the situation, because care has been taken to show us every aspect of it; but each of the actors knows only one of these aspects: hence the mistakes they make and the erroneous judgments they pass both on what is going on around them and on what they are doing themselves. We proceed from this erroneous judgment to the correct one, we waver between the possible meaning and the real, and it is this mental seesaw between two contrary interpretations which is at first apparent in the enjoyment we derive from an equivocal situation. It is natural that certain philosophers should have been specially struck by this mental instability, and that some of them should regard the very essence of the ludicrous as consisting in the collision or coincidence of two judgments that contradict each other. Their definition, however, is far from meeting every case, and even when it does, it defines–not the principle of the ludicrous, but only one of its more or less distant consequences. Indeed, it is easy to see that the stage-made misunderstanding is nothing but a particular instance of a far more general phenomenon,–the reciprocal interference of independent series, and that, moreover, it is not laughable in itself, but only as a sign of such an interference.

As a matter of fact, each of the characters in every stage-made misunderstanding has his setting in an appropriate series of events which he correctly interprets as far as he is concerned, and which give the key-note to his words and actions. Each of the series peculiar to the several characters develop independently, but at a certain moment they meet under such conditions that the actions and words that belong to one might just as well belong to another. Hence arise the misunderstandings and the equivocal nature of the situation. But this latter is not laughable in itself, it is so only because it reveals the coincidence of the two independent series. The proof of this lies in the fact that the author must be continually taxing his ingenuity to recall our attention to the double fact of independence and coincidence. This he generally succeeds in doing by constantly renewing the vain threat of dissolving partnership between the two coinciding series. Every moment the whole thing threatens to break down, but manages to get patched up again; it is this diversion that excites laughter, far more than the oscillation of the mind between two contradictory ideas. It makes us laugh because it reveals to us the reciprocal interference of two independent series, the real source of the comic effect.

And so the stage-made misunderstanding is nothing more than one particular instance, one means–perhaps the most artificial–of illustrating the reciprocal interference of series, but it is not the only one. Instead of two contemporary series, you might take one series of events belonging to the past and another belonging to the present: if the two series happen to coincide in our imagination, there will be no resulting cross-purposes, and yet the same comic effect will continue to take place. Think of Bonivard, captive in the Castle of Chillon: one series of facts. Now picture to yourself Tartarin, travelling in Switzerland, arrested and imprisoned: second series, independent of the former. Now let Tartarin be manacled to Bonivard's chain, thus making the two stories seem for a moment to coincide, and you will get a very amusing scene, one of the most amusing that Daudet's imagination has pictured. [Tartarin sur les Alpes, by Daudet.] Numerous incidents of the mock-heroic style, if analysed, would reveal the same elements. The transposition from the ancient to the modern–always a laughable one–draws its inspiration from the same idea. Labiche has made use of this

method in every shape and form. Sometimes he begins by building up the series separately, and then delights in making them interfere with one another: he takes an independent group–a wedding-party, for instance–and throws them into altogether unconnected surroundings, into which certain coincidences allow of their being foisted for the time being. Sometimes he keeps one and the same set of characters right through the play, but contrives that certain of these characters have something to conceal–have, in fact, a secret understanding on the point–in short, play a smaller comedy within the principal one: at one moment, one of the two comedies is on the point of upsetting the other; the next, everything comes right and the coincidence between the two series is restored. Sometimes, even, he introduces into the actual series a purely immaterial series of events, an inconvenient past, for instance, that some one has an interest in concealing, but which is continually cropping up in the present, and on each occasion is successfully brought into line with situations with which it seemed destined to play havoc. But in every case we find the two independent series, and also their partial coincidence.

We will not carry any further this analysis of the methods of light comedy. Whether we find reciprocal interference of series, inversion, or repetition, we see that the objective is always the same–to obtain what we have called a MECHANISATION of life. You take a set of actions and relations and repeat it as it is, or turn it upside down, or transfer it bodily to another set with which it partially coincides–all these being processes that consist in looking upon life as a repeating mechanism, with reversible action and interchangeable parts. Actual life is comedy just so far as it produces, in a natural fashion, actions of the same kind,–consequently, just so far as it forgets itself, for were it always on the alert, it would be ever-changing continuity, irrevertible progress, undivided unity. And so the ludicrous in events may be defined as absentmindedness in things, just as the ludicrous in an individual character always results from some fundamental absentmindedness in the person, as we have already intimated and shall prove later on. This absentmindedness in events, however, is exceptional. Its results are slight. At any rate it is incurable, so that it is useless to laugh at it. Therefore the idea would never have occurred to any one of exaggerating that absentmindedness, of converting it into a system and creating an art for it, if laughter were not always a pleasure and mankind did not pounce upon the slightest excuse for indulging in it. This is the real explanation of light comedy, which holds the same relation to actual life as does a jointed dancing-doll to a man walking,–being, as it is, an artificial exaggeration of a natural rigidity in things. The thread that binds it to actual life is a very fragile one. It is scarcely more than a game which, like all games, depends on a previously accepted convention. Comedy in character strikes far deeper roots into life. With that kind of comedy we shall deal more particularly in the final portion of our investigation. But we must first analyse a certain type of the comic, in many respects similar to that of light comedy: the comic in words.

II

There may be something artificial in making a special category for the comic in words, since most of the varieties of the comic that we have examined so far were produced through the medium of language. We must make a distinction, however, between the comic EXPRESSED and the comic CREATED by language. The former could, if necessary, be translated from one language into another, though at the cost of losing the greater portion of its significance when introduced into a fresh society different in manners, in literature, and above all in association of ideas. But it is generally impossible to translate the latter. It owes its entire being to the structure of the sentence or to the choice of the words. It does not set forth, by means of language, special cases of absentmindedness in man or in events. It lays stress on lapses of attention in language itself. In this case, it is language itself that becomes comic.

Comic sayings, however, are not a matter of spontaneous generation; if we laugh at them, we are equally entitled to laugh at their author. This latter condition, however, is not indispensable, since the saying or expression has a comic virtue of its own. This is proved by the fact that we find it very difficult, in the majority of these cases, to say whom we are laughing at, although at times we have a dim, vague feeling that there is some one in the background.

Moreover, the person implicated is not always the speaker. Here it seems as though we should draw an important distinction between

the WITTY (SPIRITUEL) and the COMIC. A word is said to be comic when it makes us laugh at the person who utters it, and witty when it makes us laugh either at a third party or at ourselves. But in most cases we can hardly make up our minds whether the word is comic or witty. All that we can say is that it is laughable.

Before proceeding, it might be well to examine more closely what is meant by ESPRIT. A witty saying makes us at least smile; consequently, no investigation into laughter would be complete did it not get to the bottom of the nature of wit and throw light on the underlying idea. It is to be feared, however, that this extremely subtle essence is one that evaporates when exposed to the light.

Let us first make a distinction between the two meanings of the word wit ESPRIT, the broader one and the more restricted. In the broader meaning of the word, it would seem that what is called wit is a certain DRAMATIC way of thinking. Instead of treating his ideas as mere symbols, the wit sees them, he hears them and, above all, makes them converse with one another like persons. He puts them on the stage, and himself, to some extent, into the bargain. A witty nation is, of necessity, a nation enamoured of the theatre. In every wit there is something of a poet–just as in every good reader there is the making of an actor. This comparison is made purposely, because a proportion might easily be established between the four terms. In order to read well we need only the intellectual side of the actor's art; but in order to act well one must be an actor in all one's soul and body. In just the same way, poetic creation calls for some degree of self-forgetfulness, whilst the wit does not usually err in this respect. We always get a glimpse of the latter behind what he says and does. He is not wholly engrossed in the business, because he only brings his intelligence into play. So any poet may reveal himself as a wit when he pleases. To do this there will be no need for him to acquire anything; it seems rather as though he would have to give up something. He would simply have to let his ideas hold converse with one another "for nothing, for the mere joy of the thing!" ["Pour rien, pour le plaisir" is a quotation from Victor Hugo's Marion Delorme] He would only have to unfasten the double bond which keeps his ideas in touch with his feelings and his soul in touch with life. In short, he would turn into a wit by simply resolving to be no longer a poet in feeling, but only in intelligence.

But if wit consists, for the most part, in seeing things SUB SPECIE THEATRI, it is evidently capable of being specially directed to one variety of dramatic art, namely, comedy. Here we have a more restricted meaning of the term, and, moreover, the only one that interests us from the point of view of the theory of laughter. What is here called WIT is a gift for dashing off comic scenes in a few strokes–dashing them off, however, so subtly, delicately and rapidly, that all is over as soon as we begin to notice them.

Who are the actors in these scenes? With whom has the wit to deal? First of all, with his interlocutors themselves, when his witticism is a direct retort to one of them. Often with an absent person whom he supposes to have spoken and to whom he is replying. Still oftener, with the whole world,–in the ordinary meaning of the term,–which he takes to task, twisting a current idea into a paradox, or making use of a hackneyed phrase, or parodying some quotation or proverb. If we compare these scenes in miniature with one another, we find they are almost always variations of a comic theme with which we are well acquainted, that of the "robber robbed." You take up a metaphor, a phrase, an argument, and turn it against the man who is, or might be, its author, so that he is made to say what he did not mean to say and lets himself be caught, to some extent, in the toils of language. But the theme of the "robber robbed" is not the only possible one. We have gone over many varieties of the comic, and there is not one of them that is incapable of being volatilised into a witticism.

Every witty remark, then, lends itself to an analysis, whose chemical formula, so to say, we are now in a position to state. It runs as follows: Take the remark, first enlarge it into a regular scene, then find out the category of the comic to which the scene evidently belongs: by this means you reduce the witty remark to its simplest elements and obtain a full explanation of it.

Let us apply this method to a classic example. "Your chest hurts me" (J'AI MAL A VOTRE POITRINE) wrote Mme. de Sevigne to her ailing daughter–clearly a witty saying. If our theory is correct, we need only lay stress upon the saying, enlarge and magnify it, and we shall see it expand into a comic scene. Now, we find this very scene, ready made, in the AMOUR MEDECIN of Moliere. The sham doctor, Clitandre, who has been summoned to attend Sganarelle's daughter, contents himself with feeling Sganarelle's own

pulse, whereupon, relying on the sympathy there must be between father and daughter, he unhesitatingly concludes: "Your daughter is very ill!" Here we have the transition from the witty to the comical. To complete our analysis, then, all we have to do is to discover what there is comical in the idea of giving a diagnosis of the child after sounding the father or the mother. Well, we know that one essential form of comic fancy lies in picturing to ourselves a living person as a kind of jointed dancing-doll, and that frequently, with the object of inducing us to form this mental picture, we are shown two or more persons speaking and acting as though attached to one another by invisible strings. Is not this the idea here suggested when we are led to materialise, so to speak, the sympathy we postulate as existing between father and daughter?

We now see how it is that writers on wit have perforce confined themselves to commenting on the extraordinary complexity of the things denoted by the term without ever succeeding in defining it. There are many ways of being witty, almost as many as there are of being the reverse. How can we detect what they have in common with one another, unless we first determine the general relationship between the witty and the comic? Once, however, this relationship is cleared up, everything is plain sailing. We then find the same connection between the comic and the witty as exists between a regular scene and the fugitive suggestion of a possible one. Hence, however numerous the forms assumed by the comic, wit will possess an equal number of corresponding varieties. So that the comic, in all its forms, is what should be defined first, by discovering (a task which is already quite difficult enough) the clue that leads from one form to the other. By that very operation wit will have been analysed, and will then appear as nothing more than the comic in a highly volatile state. To follow the opposite plan, however, and attempt directly to evolve a formula for wit, would be courting certain failure. What should we think of a chemist who, having ever so many jars of a certain substance in his laboratory, would prefer getting that substance from the atmosphere, in which merely infinitesimal traces of its vapour are to be found?

But this comparison between the witty and the comic is also indicative of the line we must take in studying the comic in words. On the one hand, indeed, we find there is no essential difference between a word that is comic and one that is witty; on the other hand, the latter, although connected with a figure of speech, invariably calls up the image, dim or distinct, of a comic scene. This amounts to saying that the comic in speech should correspond, point by point, with the comic in actions and in situations, and is nothing more, if one may so express oneself, than their projection on to the plane of words. So let us return to the comic in actions and in situations, consider the chief methods by which it is obtained, and apply them to the choice of words and the building up of sentences. We shall thus have every possible form of the comic in words as well as every variety of wit.

1. Inadvertently to say or do what we have no intention of saying or doing, as a result of inelasticity or momentum, is, as we are aware, one of the main sources of the comic. Thus, absentmindedness is essentially laughable, and so we laugh at anything rigid, ready-made, mechanical in gesture, attitude and even facial expression. Do we find this kind of rigidity in language also? No doubt we do, since language contains ready-made formulas and stereotyped phrases. The man who always expressed himself in such terms would invariably be comic. But if an isolated phrase is to be comic in itself, when once separated from the person who utters it, it must be something more than ready-made, it must bear within itself some sign which tells us, beyond the possibility of doubt, that it was uttered automatically. This can only happen when the phrase embodies some evident absurdity, either a palpable error or a contradiction in terms. Hence the following general rule: A COMIC MEANING IS INVARIABLY OBTAINED WHEN AN ABSURD IDEA IS FITTED INTO A WELL-ESTABLISHED PHRASE-FORM.

"Ce sabre est le plus beau jour de ma vie," said M. Prudhomme. Translate the phrase into English or German and it becomes purely absurd, though it is comic enough in French. The reason is that "le plus beau jour de ma vie" is one of those ready-made phrase-endings to which a Frenchman's ear is accustomed. To make it comic, then, we need only clearly indicate the automatism of the person who utters it. This is what we get when we introduce an absurdity into the phrase. Here the absurdity is by no means the source of the comic, it is only a very simple and effective means of making it obvious.

We have quoted only one saying of M. Prudhomme, but the majority of those attributed to him belong to the same class. M. Prudhomme is a man of ready-made phrases. And as there are ready-made phrases in all languages, M. Prudhomme is always capable of being transposed, though seldom of being translated. At times the commonplace phrase, under cover of which the absurdity slips in, is not so readily noticeable. "I don't like working between meals," said a lazy lout. There would be nothing amusing in the saying did there not exist that salutary precept in the realm of hygiene: "One should not eat between meals."

Sometimes, too, the effect is a complicated one. Instead of one commonplace phrase-form, there are two or three which are dovetailed into each other. Take, for instance, the remark of one of the characters in a play by Labiche, "Only God has the right to kill His fellow-creature." It would seem that advantage is here taken of two separate familiar sayings; "It is God who disposes of the lives of men," and, "It is criminal for a man to kill his fellow-creature." But the two sayings are combined so as to deceive the ear and leave the impression of being one of those hackneyed sentences that are accepted as a matter of course. Hence our attention nods, until we are suddenly aroused by the absurdity of the meaning. These examples suffice to show how one of the most important types of the comic can be projected–in a simplified form–on the plane of speech. We will now proceed to a form which is not so general.

2. "We laugh if our attention is diverted to the physical in a person when it is the moral that is in question," is a law we laid down in the first part of this work. Let us apply it to language. Most words might be said to have a PHYSICAL and a MORAL meaning, according as they are interpreted literally or figuratively. Every word, indeed, begins by denoting a concrete object or a material action; but by degrees the meaning of the word is refined into an abstract relation or a pure idea. If, then, the above law holds good here, it should be stated as follows: "A comic effect is obtained whenever we pretend to take literally an expression which was used figuratively"; or, "Once our attention is fixed on the material aspect of a metaphor, the idea expressed becomes comic."

In the phrase, "Tous les arts sont freres" (all the arts are brothers), the word "frere" (brother) is used metaphorically to indicate a more or less striking resemblance. The word is so often used in this way, that when we hear it we do not think of the concrete, the material connection implied in every relationship. We should notice it more if we were told that "Tous les arts sont cousins," for the word "cousin" is not so often employed in a figurative sense; that is why the word here already assumes a slight tinge of the comic. But let us go further still, and suppose that our attention is attracted to the material side of the metaphor by the choice of a relationship which is incompatible with the gender of the two words composing the metaphorical expression: we get a laughable result. Such is the well-known saying, also attributed to M. Prudhomme, "Tous les arts (masculine) sont soeurs (feminine)." "He is always running after a joke," was said in Boufflers' presence regarding a very conceited fellow. Had Boufflers replied, "He won't catch it," that would have been the beginning of a witty saying, though nothing more than the beginning, for the word "catch" is interpreted figuratively almost as often as the word "run"; nor does it compel us more strongly than the latter to materialise the image of two runners, the one at the heels of the other. In order that the rejoinder may appear to be a thoroughly witty one, we must borrow from the language of sport an expression so vivid and concrete that we cannot refrain from witnessing the race in good earnest. This is what Boufflers does when he retorts, "I'll back the joke!"

We said that wit often consists in extending the idea of one's interlocutor to the point of making him express the opposite of what he thinks and getting him, so to say, entrapt by his own words. We must now add that this trap is almost always some metaphor or comparison the concrete aspect of which is turned against him. You may remember the dialogue between a mother and her son in the Faux Bonshommes: "My dear boy, gambling on 'Change is very risky. You win one day and lose the next."–"Well, then, I will gamble only every other day." In the same play too we find the following edifying conversation between two company-promoters: "Is this a very honourable thing we are doing? These unfortunate shareholders, you see, we are taking the money out of their very pockets...."–"Well, out of what do you expect us to take it?"

An amusing result is likewise obtainable whenever a symbol or an emblem is expanded on its concrete side, and a pretence is made of retaining the same symbolical value for this expansion as for the emblem itself. In a very lively

comedy we are introduced to a Monte Carlo official, whose uniform is covered with medals, although he has only received a single decoration. "You see, I staked my medal on a number at roulette," he said, "and as the number turned up, I was entitled to thirty-six times my stake." This reasoning is very similar to that offered by Giboyer in the Effrontes. Criticism is made of a bride of forty summers who is wearing orange-blossoms with her wedding costume: "Why, she was entitled to oranges, let alone orange-blossoms!" remarked Giboyer.

But we should never cease were we to take one by one all the laws we have stated, and try to prove them on what we have called the plane of language. We had better confine ourselves to the three general propositions of the preceding section. We have shown that "series of events" may become comic either by repetition, by inversion, or by reciprocal interference. Now we shall see that this is also the case with series of words.

To take series of events and repeat them in another key or another environment, or to invert them whilst still leaving them a certain meaning, or mix them up so that their respective meanings jostle one another, is invariably comic, as we have already said, for it is getting life to submit to be treated as a machine. But thought, too, is a living thing. And language, the translation of thought, should be just as living. We may thus surmise that a phrase is likely to become comic if, though reversed, it still makes sense, or if it expresses equally well two quite independent sets of ideas, or, finally, if it has been obtained by transposing an idea into some key other than its own. Such, indeed, are the three fundamental laws of what might be called THE COMIC TRANSFORMATION OF SENTENCES, as we shall show by a few examples.

Let it first be said that these three laws are far from being of equal importance as regards the theory of the ludicrous. INVERSION is the least interesting of the three. It must be easy of application, however, for it is noticeable that, no sooner do professional wits hear a sentence spoken than they experiment to see if a meaning cannot be obtained by reversing it,–by putting, for instance, the subject in place of the object, and the object in place of the subject. It is not unusual for this device to be employed for refuting an idea in more or less humorous terms. One of the characters in a comedy of Labiche shouts out to his neighbour on the floor above, who is in the habit of dirtying his balcony, "What do you mean by emptying your pipe on to my terrace?" The neighbour retorts, "What do you mean by putting your terrace under my pipe?" There is no necessity to dwell upon this kind of wit, instances of which could easily be multiplied. The RECIPROCAL INTERFERENCE of two sets of ideas in the same sentence is an inexhaustible source of amusing varieties. There are many ways of bringing about this interference, I mean of bracketing in the same expression two independent meanings that apparently tally. The least reputable of these ways is the pun. In the pun, the same sentence appears to offer two independent meanings, but it is only an appearance; in reality there are two different sentences made up of different words, but claiming to be one and the same because both have the same sound. We pass from the pun, by imperceptible stages, to the true play upon words. Here there is really one and the same sentence through which two different sets of ideas are expressed, and we are confronted with only one series of words; but advantage is taken of the different meanings a word may have, especially when used figuratively instead of literally. So that in fact there is often only a slight difference between the play upon words on the one hand, and a poetic metaphor or an illuminating comparison on the other. Whereas an illuminating comparison and a striking image always seem to reveal the close harmony that exists between language and nature, regarded as two parallel forms of life, the play upon words makes us think somehow of a negligence on the part of language, which, for the time being, seems to have forgotten its real function and now claims to accommodate things to itself instead of accommodating itself to things. And so the play upon words always betrays a momentary LAPSE OF ATTENTION in language, and it is precisely on that account that it is amusing.

INVERSION and RECIPROCAL INTERFERENCE, after all, are only a certain playfulness of the mind which ends at playing upon words. The comic in TRANSPOSITION is much more far-reaching. Indeed, transposition is to ordinary language what repetition is to comedy.

We said that repetition is the favourite method of classic comedy. It consists in so arranging events that a scene is reproduced either between the same characters under fresh circumstances or between fresh characters under

the same circumstances. Thus we have, repeated by lackeys in less dignified language, a scene already played by their masters. Now, imagine ideas expressed in suitable style and thus placed in the setting of their natural environment. If you think of some arrangement whereby they are transferred to fresh surroundings, while maintaining their mutual relations, or, in other words, if you can induce them to express themselves in an altogether different style and to transpose themselves into another key, you will have language itself playing a comedy–language itself made comic. There will be no need, moreover, actually to set before us both expressions of the same ideas, the transposed expression and the natural one. For we are acquainted with the natural one–the one which we should have chosen instinctively. So it will be enough if the effort of comic invention bears on the other, and on the other alone. No sooner is the second set before us than we spontaneously supply the first. Hence the following general rule: A COMIC EFFECT IS ALWAYS OBTAINABLE BY TRANSPOSING THE NATURE EXPRESSION OF AN IDEA INTO ANOTHER KEY.

The means of transposition are so many and varied, language affords so rich a continuity of themes and the comic is here capable of passing through so great a number of stages, from the most insipid buffoonery up to the loftiest forms of humour and irony, that we shall forego the attempt to make out a complete list. Having stated the rule, we will simply, here and there, verify its main applications.

In the first place, we may distinguish two keys at the extreme ends of the scale, the solemn and the familiar. The most obvious effects are obtained by merely transposing the one into the other, which thus provides us with two opposite currents of comic fancy.

Transpose the solemn into the familiar and the result is parody. The effect of parody, thus defined, extends to instances in which the idea expressed in familiar terms is one that, if only in deference to custom, ought to be pitched in another key. Take as an example the following description of the dawn, quoted by Jean Paul Richter: "The sky was beginning to change from black to red, like a lobster being boiled." Note that the expression of old-world matters in terms of modern life produces the same effect, by reason of the halo of poetry which surrounds classical antiquity.

It is doubtless the comic in parody that has suggested to some philosophers, and in particular to Alexander Bain, the idea of defining the comic, in general, as a species of DEGRADATION. They describe the laughable as causing something to appear mean that was formerly dignified. But if our analysis is correct, degradation is only one form of transposition, and transposition itself only one of the means of obtaining laughter. There is a host of others, and the source of laughter must be sought for much further back. Moreover, without going so far, we see that while the transposition from solemn to trivial, from better to worse, is comic, the inverse transposition may be even more so.

It is met with as often as the other, and, apparently, we may distinguish two main forms of it, according as it refers to the PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS of an object or to its MORAL VALUE.

To speak of small things as though they were large is, in a general way, TO EXAGGERATE. Exaggeration is always comic when prolonged, and especially when systematic; then, indeed, it appears as one method of transposition. It excites so much laughter that some writers have been led to define the comic as exaggeration, just as others have defined it as degradation. As a matter of fact, exaggeration, like degradation, is only one form of one kind of the comic. Still, it is a very striking form. It has given birth to the mock-heroic poem, a rather old-fashioned device, I admit, though traces of it are still to be found in persons inclined to exaggerate methodically. It might often be said of braggadocio that it is its mock-heroic aspect which makes us laugh.

Far more artificial, but also far more refined, is the transposition upwards from below when applied to the moral value of things, not to their physical dimensions. To express in reputable language some disreputable idea, to take some scandalous situation, some low-class calling or disgraceful behaviour, and describe them in terms of the utmost "RESPECTABILITY," is generally comic. The English word is here purposely employed, as the practice itself is characteristically English. Many instances of it may be found in Dickens and Thackeray, and in English literature generally. Let us remark, in passing, that the intensity of the effect does not here depend on its length. A word is sometimes sufficient, provided it gives us a glimpse of an entire system of transposition accepted in certain social circles

and reveals, as it were, a moral organisation of immorality. Take the following remark made by an official to one of his subordinates in a novel of Gogol's, "Your peculations are too extensive for an official of your rank."

Summing up the foregoing, then, there are two extreme terms of comparison, the very large and the very small, the best and the worst, between which transposition may be effected in one direction or the other. Now, if the interval be gradually narrowed, the contrast between the terms obtained will be less and less violent, and the varieties of comic transposition more and more subtle.

The most common of these contrasts is perhaps that between the real and the ideal, between what is and what ought to be. Here again transposition may take place in either direction. Sometimes we state what ought to be done, and pretend to believe that this is just what is actually being done; then we have IRONY. Sometimes, on the contrary, we describe with scrupulous minuteness what is being done, and pretend to believe that this is just what ought to be done; such is often the method of HUMOUR. Humour, thus denned, is the counterpart of irony. Both are forms of satire, but irony is oratorical in its nature, whilst humour partakes of the scientific. Irony is emphasised the higher we allow ourselves to be uplifted by the idea of the good that ought to be: thus irony may grow so hot within us that it becomes a kind of high-pressure eloquence. On the other hand, humour is the more emphasised the deeper we go down into an evil that actually is, in order t o set down its details in the most cold-blooded indifference. Several authors, Jean Paul amongst them, have noticed that humour delights in concrete terms, technical details, definite facts. If our analysis is correct, this is not an accidental trait of humour, it is its very essence. A humorist is a moralist disguised as a scientist, something like an anatomist who practises dissection with the sole object of filling us with disgust; so that humour, in the restricted sense in which we are here regarding the word, is really a transposition from the moral to the scientific.

By still further curtailing the interval between the terms transposed, we may now obtain more and more specialised types of comic transpositions. Thus, certain professions have a technical vocabulary: what a wealth of laughable results have been obtained by transposing the ideas of everyday life into this professional jargon! Equally comic is the extension of business phraseology to the social relations of life,–for instance, the phrase of one of Labiche's characters in allusion to an invitation he has received, "Your kindness of the third ult.," thus transposing the commercial formula, "Your favour of the third instant." This class of the comic, moreover, may attain a special profundity of its own when it discloses not merely a professional practice, but a fault in character. Recall to mind the scenes in the Faux Bonshommes and the Famille Benoiton, where marriage is dealt with as a business affair, and matters of sentiment are set down in strictly commercial language.

Here, however, we reach the point at which peculiarities of language really express peculiarities of character, a closer investigation of which we must hold over to the next chapter. Thus, as might have been expected and may be seen from the foregoing, the comic in words follows closely on the comic in situation and is finally merged, along with the latter, in the comic in character. Language only attains laughable results because it is a human product, modelled as exactly as possible on the forms of the human mind. We feel it contains some living element of our own life; and if this life of language were complete and perfect, if there were nothing stereotype in it, if, in short, language were an absolutely unified organism incapable of being split up into independent organisms, it would evade the comic as would a soul whose life was one harmonious whole, unruffled as the calm surface of a peaceful lake. There is no pool, however, which has not some dead leaves floating on its surface, no human soul upon which there do not settle habits that make it rigid against itself by making it rigid against others, no language, in short, so subtle and instinct with life, so fully alert in each of its parts as to eliminate the ready-made and oppose the mechanical operations of inversion, transposition, etc., which one would fain perform upon it as on some lifeless thing. The rigid, the ready–made, the mechanical, in contrast with the supple, the ever-changing and the living, absentmindedness in contrast with attention, in a word, automatism in contrast with free activity, such are the defects that laughter singles out and would fain correct. We appealed to this idea to give us light at the outset, when starting upon the analysis of the ludicrous. We have seen it shining at every decisive turning in our road. With its help, we shall now enter upon

a more important investigation, one that will, we hope, be more instructive. We purpose, in short, studying comic characters, or rather determining the essential conditions of comedy in character, while endeavouring to bring it about that this study may contribute to a better understanding of the real nature of art and the general relation between art and life.

CHAPTER III

THE COMIC IN CHARACTER

We have followed the comic along many of its winding channels in an endeavour to discover how it percolates into a form, an attitude, or a gesture; a situation, an action, or an expression. The analysis of comic CHARACTERS has now brought us to the most important part of our task. It would also be the most difficult, had we yielded to the temptation of defining the laughable by a few striking–and consequently obvious–examples; for then, in proportion as we advanced towards the loftiest manifestations of the comic, we should have found the facts slipping between the over-wide meshes of the definition intended to retain them. But, as a matter of fact, we have followed the opposite plan, by throwing light on the subject from above. Convinced that laughter has a social meaning and import, that the comic expresses, above all else, a special lack of adaptability to society, and that, in short, there is nothing comic apart from man, we have made man and character generally our main objective. Our chief difficulty, therefore, has lain in explaining how we come to laugh at anything else than character, and by what subtle processes of fertilisation, combination or amalgamation, the comic can worm its way into a mere movement, an impersonal situation, or an independent phrase. This is what we have done so far. We started with the pure metal, and all our endeavours have been directed solely towards reconstructing the ore. It is the metal itself we are now about to study. Nothing could be easier, for this time we have a simple element to deal with. Let us examine it closely and see how it reacts upon everything else.

There are moods, we said, which move us as soon us as soon as we perceive them, joys and sorrows with which we sympathise, passions and vices which call forth painful astonishment, terror or pity, in the beholder; in short, sentiments that are prolonged in sentimental overtones from mind to mind. All this concerns the essentials of life. All this is serious, at times even tragic. Comedy can only begin at the point where our neighbour's personality ceases to affect us. It begins, in fact, with what might be called a growing callousness to social life. Any individual is comic who automatically goes his own way without troubling himself about getting into touch with the rest of his fellow-beings. It is the part of laughter to reprove his absentmindedness and wake him out of his dream. If it is permissible to compare important things with trivial ones, we would call to mind what happens when a youth enters one of our military academies. After getting through the dreaded ordeal of the examination, he finds the has other ordeals to face, which his seniors have arranged with the object of fitting him for the new life he is entering upon, or, as they say, of "breaking him into harness." Every small society that forms within the larger is thus impelled, by a vague kind of instinct, to devise some method of discipline or "breaking in," so as to deal with the rigidity of habits that have been formed elsewhere and have now to undergo a partial modification. Society, properly so-called, proceeds in exactly the same way. Each member must be ever attentive to his social surroundings; he must model himself on his environment; in short, he must avoid shutting himself up in his own peculiar character as a philosopher in his ivory tower. Therefore society holds suspended over each individual member, if not the threat of correction, at all events the prospect of a snubbing, which, although it is slight, is none the less dreaded. Such must be the function of laughter. Always rather humiliating for the one against whom it is directed, laughter is, really and truly, a kind of social "ragging."

Hence the equivocal nature of the comic. It belongs neither altogether to art nor altogether to life. On the one hand, characters in real life would never make us laugh were we not capable of watching their vagaries in the same way as we look down at a play from our seat in a box; they are only comic in our eyes because they perform a kind of comedy before us. But, on the other hand, the pleasure caused by laughter, even on the stage, is not an unadulterated enjoyment; it is not a pleasure that is exclusively esthetic or altogether disinterested. It always implies a secret or unconscious intent, if not of each one of us, at all events of society as a whole. In laughter we

always find an unavowed intention to humiliate, and consequently to correct our neighbour, if not in his will, at least in his deed. This is the reason a comedy is far more like real life than a drama is. The more sublime the drama, the more profound the analysis to which the poet has had to subject the raw materials of daily life in order to obtain the tragic element in its unadulterated form. On the contrary, it is only in its lower aspects, in light comedy and farce, that comedy is in striking contrast to reality: the higher it rises, the more it approximates to life; in fact, there are scenes in real life so closely bordering on high-class comedy that the stage might adopt them without changing a single word.

Hence it follows that the elements of comic character on the stage and in actual life will be the same. What are these elements? We shall find no difficulty in deducing them. It has often been said that it is the TRIFLING faults of our fellow-men that make us laugh.

Evidently there is a considerable amount of truth in this opinion; still, it cannot be regarded as altogether correct. First, as regards faults, it is no easy matter to draw the line between the trifling and the serious; maybe it is not because a fault is trifling that it makes us laugh, but rather because it makes us laugh that we regard it as trifling, for there is nothing disarms us like laughter. But we may go even farther, and maintain that there are faults at which we laugh, even though fully aware that they are serious,–Harpagon's avarice, for instance. And then, we may as well confess–though somewhat reluctantly–that we laugh not only at the faults of our fellow-men, but also, at times, at their good qualities. We laugh at Alceste. The objection may be urged that it is not the earnestness of Alceste that is ludicrous, but rather the special aspect which earnestness assumes in his case, and, in short, a certain eccentricity that mars it in our eyes. Agreed; but it is none the less true that this eccentricity in Alceste, at which we laugh, MAKES HIS EARNESTNESS LAUGHABLE, and that is the main point. So we may conclude that the ludicrous is not always an indication of a fault, in the moral meaning of the word, and if critics insist on seeing a fault, even though a trifling one, in the ludicrous, they must point out what it is here that exactly distinguishes the trifling from the serious.

The truth is, the comic character may, strictly speaking, be quite in accord with stern morality. All it has to do is to bring itself into accord with society. The character of Alceste is that of a thoroughly honest man. But then he is unsociable, and, on that very account, ludicrous. A flexible vice may not be so easy to ridicule as a rigid virtue. It is rigidity that society eyes with suspicion. Consequently, it is the rigidity of Alceste that makes us laugh, though here rigidity stands for honesty. The man who withdraws into himself is liable to ridicule, because the comic is largely made up of this very withdrawal. This accounts for the comic being so frequently dependent on the manners or ideas, or, to put it bluntly, on the prejudices, of a society.

It must be acknowledged, however, to the credit of mankind, that there is no essential difference between the social ideal and the rule, that it is the faults of others that make us laugh, provided we add that they make us laugh by reason of their UNSOCIABILITY rather than of their IMMORALITY. What, then, are the faults capable of becoming ludicrous, and in what circumstances do we regard them as being too serious to be laughed at?

We have already given an implicit answer to this question. The comic, we said, appeals to the intelligence, pure and simple; laughter is incompatible with emotion. Depict some fault, however trifling, in such a way as to arouse sympathy, fear, or pity; the mischief is done, it is impossible for us to laugh. On the other hand, take a downright vice,–even one that is, generally speaking, of an odious nature,–you may make it ludicrous if, by some suitable contrivance, you arrange so that it leaves our emotions unaffected. Not that the vice must then be ludicrous, but it MAY, from that time forth, become so. IT MUST NOT AROUSE OUR FEELINGS; that is the sole condition really necessary, though assuredly it is not sufficient.

But, then, how will the comic poet set to work to prevent our feelings being moved? The question is an embarrassing one. To clear it up thoroughly, we should have to enter upon a rather novel line of investigation, to analyse the artificial sympathy which we bring with us to the theatre, and determine upon the circumstances in which we accept and those in which we refuse to share imaginary joys and sorrows. There is an art of lulling sensibility to sleep and providing it with dreams, as happens in the case of a mesmerised person. And there is also an art of throwing a wet blanket upon sympathy at the very moment it might arise, the result being

that the situation, though a serious one, is not taken seriously. This latter art would appear to be governed by two methods, which are applied more or less unconsciously by the comic poet. The first consists in ISOLATING, within the soul of the character, the feeling attributed to him, and making it a parasitic organism, so to speak, endowed with an independent existence. As a general rule, an intense feeling successively encroaches upon all other mental states and colours them with its own peculiar hue; if, then, we are made to witness this gradual impregnation, we finally become impregnated ourselves with a corresponding emotion. To employ a different image, an emotion may be said to be dramatic and contagious when all the harmonics in it are heard along with the fundamental note. It is because the actor thus thrills throughout his whole being that the spectators themselves feel the thrill. On the contrary, in the case of emotion that leaves us indifferent and that is about to become comic, there is always present a certain rigidity which prevents it from establishing a connection with the rest of the soul in which it has taken up its abode. This rigidity may be manifested, when the time comes, by puppet-like movements, and then it will provoke laughter; but, before that, it had already alienated our sympathy: how can we put ourselves in tune with a soul which is not in tune with itself? In Moliere's L'Avare we have a scene bordering upon drama. It is the one in which the borrower and the usurer, who have never seen each other, meet face to face and find that they are son and father. Here we should be in the thick of a drama, if only greed and fatherly affection, conflicting with each other in the soul of Harpagon, had effected a more or less original combination. But such is not the case. No sooner has the interview come to an end than the father forgets everything. On meeting his son again he barely alludes to the scene, serious though it has been: "You, my son, whom I am good enough to forgive your recent escapade, etc." Greed has thus passed close to all other feelings ABSENTMINDEDLY, without either touching them or being touched. Although it has taken up its abode in the soul and become master of the house, none the less it remains a stranger. Far different would be avarice of a tragic sort. We should find it attracting and absorbing, transforming and assimilating the divers energies of the man: feelings and affections, likes and dislikes, vices and virtues, would all become something into which avarice would breathe a new kind of life. Such seems to be the first essential difference between high-class comedy and drama.

There is a second, which is far more obvious and arises out of the first. When a mental state is depicted to us with the object of making it dramatic, or even merely of inducing us to take it seriously, it gradually crystallises into ACTIONS which provide the real measure of its greatness. Thus, the miser orders his whole life with a view to acquiring wealth, and the pious hypocrite, though pretending to have his eyes fixed upon heaven, steers most skilfully his course here below. Most certainly, comedy does not shut out calculations of this kind; we need only take as an example the very machinations of Tartuffe. But that is what comedy has in common with drama; and in order to keep distinct from it, to prevent our taking a serious action seriously, in short, in order to prepare us for laughter, comedy utilises a method, the formula of which may be given as follows: INSTEAD OF CONCENTRATING OUR ATTENTION ON ACTIONS, COMEDY DIRECTS IT RATHER TO GESTURES. By GESTURES we here mean the attitudes, the movements and even the language by which a mental state expresses itself outwardly without any aim or profit, from no other cause than a kind of inner itching. Gesture, thus defined, is profoundly different from action. Action is intentional or, at any rate, conscious; gesture slips out unawares, it is automatic. In action, the entire person is engaged; in gesture, an isolated part of the person is expressed, unknown to, or at least apart from, the whole of the personality. Lastly–and here is the essential point–action is in exact proportion to the feeling that inspires it: the one gradually passes into the other, so that we may allow our sympathy or our aversion to glide along the line running from feeling to action and become increasingly interested. About gesture, however, there is something explosive, which awakes our sensibility when on the point of being lulled to sleep and, by thus rousing us up, prevents our taking matters seriously. Thus, as soon as our attention is fixed on gesture and not on action, we are in the realm of comedy. Did we merely take his actions into account, Tartuffe would belong to drama: it is only when we take his gestures into consideration that we find him comic. You may remember how he comes on to the stage with the words: "Laurent, lock up my hair-shirt and my scourge." He knows Dorine is listening to him,

but doubtless he would say the same if she were not there. He enters so thoroughly into the role of a hypocrite that he plays it almost sincerely. In this way, and this way only, can he become comic. Were it not for this material sincerity, were it not for the language and attitudes that his long-standing experience as a hypocrite has transformed into natural gestures, Tartuffe would be simply odious, because we should only think of what is meant and willed in his conduct. And so we see why action is essential in drama, but only accessory in comedy. In a comedy, we feel any other situation might equally well have been chosen for the purpose of introducing the character; he would still have been the same man though the situation were different. But we do not get this impression in a drama. Here characters and situations are welded together, or rather, events form part and parcel with the persons, so that were the drama to tell us a different story, even though the actors kept the same names, we should in reality be dealing with other persons.

To sum up, whether a character is good or bad is of little moment: granted he is unsociable, he is capable of becoming comic. We now see that the seriousness of the case is of no importance either: whether serious or trifling, it is still capable of making us laugh, provided that care be taken not to arouse our emotions. Unsociability in the performer and insensibility in the spectator–such, in a word, are the two essential conditions. There is a third, implicit in the other two, which so far it has been the aim of our analysis to bring out.

This third condition is automatism. We have pointed it out from the outset of this work, continually drawing attention to the following point: what is essentially laughable is what is done automatically. In a vice, even in a virtue, the comic is that element by which the person unwittingly betrays himself–the involuntary gesture or the unconscious remark. Absentmindedness is always comical. Indeed, the deeper the absentmindedness the higher the comedy. Systematic absentmindedness, like that of Don Quixote, is the most comical thing imaginable: it is the comic itself, drawn as nearly as possible from its very source. Take any other comic character: however unconscious he may be of what he says or does, he cannot be comical unless there be some aspect of his person of which he is unaware, one side of his nature which he overlooks; on that account alone does he make us laugh. [When the humorist laughs at himself, he is really acting a double part; the self who laughs is indeed conscious, but not the self who is laughed at.] Profoundly comic sayings are those artless ones in which some vice reveals itself in all its nakedness: how could it thus expose itself were it capable of seeing itself as it is? It is not uncommon for a comic character to condemn in general terms a certain line of conduct and immediately afterwards afford an example of it himself: for instance, M. Jourdain's teacher of philosophy flying into a passion after inveighing against anger; Vadius taking a poem from his pocket after heaping ridicule on readers of poetry, etc. What is the object of such contradictions except to help us to put our finger on the obliviousness of the characters to their own actions? Inattention to self, and consequently to others, is what we invariably find. And if we look at the matter closely, we see that inattention is here equivalent to what we have called unsociability. The chief cause of rigidity is the neglect to look around–and more especially within oneself: how can a man fashion his personality after that of another if he does not first study others as well as himself? Rigidity, automatism, absent-mindedness and unsociability are all inextricably entwined; and all serve as ingredients to the making up of the comic in character.

In a word, if we leave on one side, when dealing with human personality, that portion which interests our sensibility or appeals to our feeling, all the rest is capable of becoming comic, and the comic will be proportioned to the rigidity. We formulated this idea at the outset of this work. We have verified it in its main results, and have just applied it to the definition of comedy. Now we must get to closer quarters, and show how it enables us to delimitate the exact position comedy occupies among all the other arts. In one sense it might be said that all character is comic, provided we mean by character the ready-made element in our personality, that mechanical element which resembles a piece of clockwork wound up once for all and capable of working automatically. It is, if you will, that which causes us to imitate ourselves. And it is also, for that very reason, that which enables others to imitate us. Every comic character is a type. Inversely, every resemblance to a type has something comic in it. Though we may long have associated with an individual without discovering anything about him to laugh at, still, if advantage is t taken of some accidental analogy to dub him with the name of a famous hero of

romance or drama, he will in our eyes border upon the ridiculous, if only for a moment. And yet this hero of romance may not be a comic character at all. But then it is comic to be like him. It is comic to wander out of one's own self. It is comic to fall into a ready-made category. And what is most comic of all is to become a category oneself into which others will fall, as into a ready-made frame; it is to crystallise into a stock character.

Thus, to depict characters, that is to say, general types, is the object of high-class comedy. This has often been said. But it is as well to repeat it, since there could be no better definition of comedy. Not only are we entitled to say that comedy gives us general types, but we might add that it is the ONLY one of all the arts that aims at the general; so that once this objective has been attributed to it, we have said all that it is and all that the rest cannot be. To prove that such is really the essence of comedy, and that it is in this respect opposed to tragedy, drama and the other forms of art, we should begin by defining art in its higher forms: then, gradually coming down to comic poetry, we should find that this latter is situated on the border-line between art and life, and that, by the generality of its subject-matter, it contrasts with the rest of the arts. We cannot here plunge into so vast a subject of investigation; but we needs must sketch its main outlines, lest we overlook what, to our mind, is essential on the comic stage.

What is the object of art? Could reality come into direct contact with sense and consciousness, could we enter into immediate communion with things and with ourselves, probably art would be useless, or rather we should all be artists, for then our soul would continually vibrate in perfect accord with nature. Our eyes, aided by memory, would carve out in space and fix in time the most inimitable of pictures. Hewn in the living marble of the human form, fragments of statues, beautiful as the relics of antique statuary, would strike the passing glance. Deep in our souls we should hear the strains of our inner life's unbroken melody,–a music that is ofttimes gay, but more frequently plaintive and always original. All this is around and within us, and yet no whit of it do we distinctly perceive. Between nature and ourselves, nay, between ourselves and our own consciousness a veil is interposed: a veil that is dense and opaque for the common herd,–thin, almost transparent, for the artist and the poet. What fairy wove that veil? Was it done in malice or in friendliness? We had to live, and life demands that we grasp things in their relations to our own needs. Life is action. Life implies the acceptance only of the UTILITARIAN side of things in order to respond to them by appropriate reactions: all other impressions must be dimmed or else reach us vague and blurred. I look and I think I see, I listen and I think I hear, I examine myself and I think I am reading the very depths of my heart. But what I see and hear of the outer world is purely and simply a selection made by my senses to serve as a light to my conduct; what I know of myself is what comes to the surface, what participates in my actions. My senses and my consciousness, therefore, give me no more than a practical simplification of reality. In the vision they furnish me of myself and of things, the differences that are useless to man are obliterated, the resemblances that are useful to him are emphasised; ways are traced out for me in advance, along which my activity is to travel. These ways are the ways which all mankind has trod before me. Things have been classified with a view to the use I can derive from them. And it is this classification I perceive, far more clearly than the colour and the shape of things. Doubtless man is vastly superior to the lower animals in this respect. It is not very likely that the eye of a wolf makes any distinction between a kid and a lamb; both appear t o the wolf as the same identical quarry, alike easy to pounce upon, alike good to devour. We, for our part, make a distinction between a goat and a sheep; but can we tell one goat from another, one sheep from another? The INDIVIDUALITY of things or of beings escapes us, unless it is materially to our advantage to perceive it. Even when we do take note of it–as when we distinguish one man from another–it is not the individuality itself that the eye grasps, i.e., an entirely original harmony of forms and colours, but only one or two features that will make practical recognition easier.

In short, we do not see the actual things themselves; in most cases we confine ourselves to reading the labels affixed to them. This tendency, the result of need, has become even more pronounced under the influence of speech; for words–with the exception of proper nouns–all denote genera. The word, which only takes note of the most ordinary function and commonplace aspect of the thing, intervenes between it and ourselves, and would conceal its form from our eyes, were that form not already masked beneath the necessities that brought the word into

existence. Not only external objects, but even our own mental states, are screened from us in their inmost, their personal aspect, in the original life they possess. When we feel love or hatred, when we are gay or sad, is it really the feeling itself that reaches our consciousness with those innumerable fleeting shades of meaning and deep resounding echoes that make it something altogether our own? We should all, were it so, be novelists or poets or musicians. Mostly, however, we perceive nothing but the outward display of our mental state. We catch only the impersonal aspect of our feelings, that aspect which speech has set down once for all because it is almost the same, in the same conditions, for all men. Thus, even in our own individual, individuality escapes our ken. We move amidst generalities and symbols, as within a tilt-yard in which our force is effectively pitted against other forces; and fascinated by action, tempted by it, for our own good, on to the field it has selected, we live in a zone midway between things and ourselves, externally to things, externally also to ourselves. From time to time, however, in a fit of absentmindedness, nature raises up souls that are more detached from life. Not with that intentional, logical, systematical detachment–the result of reflection and philosophy–but rather with natural detachment, one innate in the structure of sense or consciousness, which at once reveals itself by a virginal manner, so to speak, of seeing, hearing or thinking. Were this detachment complete, did the soul no longer cleave to action by any of its perceptions, it would be the soul of an artist such as the world has never yet seen. It would excel alike in every art at the same time; or rather, it would fuse them all into one. It would perceive all things in their native purity: the forms, colours, sounds of the physical world as well as the subtlest movements of the inner life. But this is asking too much of nature. Even for such of us as she has made artists, it is by accident, and on one side only, that she has lifted the veil. In one direction only has she forgotten to rivet the perception to the need. And since each direction corresponds to what we call a SENSE–through one of his senses, and through that sense alone, is the artist usually wedded to art. Hence, originally, the diversity of arts. Hence also the speciality of predispositions. This one applies himself to colours and forms, and since he loves colour for colour and form for form, since he perceives them for their sake and not for his own, it is the inner life of things that he sees appearing through their forms and colours. Little by little he insinuates it into our own perception, baffled though we may be at the outset. For a few moments at least, he diverts us from the prejudices of form and colour that come between ourselves and reality. And thus he realises the loftiest ambition of art, which here consists in revealing to us nature. Others, again, retire within themselves. Beneath the thousand rudimentary actions which are the outward and visible signs of an emotion, behind the commonplace, conventional expression that both reveals and conceals an individual mental state, it is the emotion, the original mood, to which they attain in its undefiled essence. And then, to induce us to make the same effort ourselves, they contrive to make us see something of what they have seen: by rhythmical arrangement of words, which thus become organised and animated with a life of their own, they tell us–or rather suggest–things that speech was not calculated to express. Others delve yet deeper still. Beneath these joys and sorrows which can, at a pinch, be translated into language, they grasp something that has nothing in common with language, certain rhythms of life and breath that. are closer to man than his inmost feelings, being the living law–varying with each individual–of his enthusiasm and despair, his hopes and regrets. By setting free and emphasising this music, they force it upon our attention; they compel us, willy-nilly, to fall in with it, like passers-by who join in a dance. And thus they impel us to set in motion, in the depths of our being, some secret chord which was only waiting to thrill. So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself. It is from a misunderstanding on this point that the dispute between realism and idealism in art has arisen. Art is certainly only a more direct vision of reality. But this purity of perception implies a break with utilitarian convention, an innate and specially localised disinterestedness of sense or consciousness, in short, a certain immateriality of life, which is what has always been called idealism. So that we might say, without in any way playing upon the meaning of the words, that realism is in the work when idealism is in the soul, and that it is only through ideality that we can resume contact with reality.

Dramatic art forms no exception to this law. What drama goes forth to discover and brings to light, is a deep-seated reality that is veiled from us, often in our own interests, by the necessities of life. What is this reality? What are these necessities? Poetry always expresses inward states. But amongst these states some arise mainly from contact with our fellow-men. They are the most intense as well as the most violent. As contrary electricities attract each other and accumulate between the two plates of the condenser from which the spark will presently flash, so, by simply bringing people together, strong attractions and repulsions take place, followed by an utter loss of balance, in a word, by that electrification of the soul known as passion. Were man to give way to the impulse of his natural feelings, were there neither social nor moral law, these outbursts of violent feeling would be the ordinary rule in life. But utility demands that these outbursts should be foreseen and averted. Man must live in society, and consequently submit to rules. And what interest advises, reason commands: duty calls, and we have to obey the summons. Under this dual influence has perforce been formed an outward layer of feelings and ideas which make for permanence, aim at becoming common to all men, and cover, when they are not strong enough to extinguish it, the inner fire of individual passions. The slow progress of mankind in the direction of an increasingly peaceful social life has gradually consolidated this layer, just as the life of our planet itself has been one long effort to cover over with a cool and solid crust the fiery mass of seething metals. But volcanic eruptions occur. And if the earth were a living being, as mythology has feigned, most likely when in repose it would take delight in dreaming of these sudden explosions, whereby it suddenly resumes possession of its innermost nature. Such is just the kind of pleasure that is provided for us by drama. Beneath the quiet humdrum life that reason and society have fashioned for us, it stirs something within us which luckily does not explode, but which it makes us feel in its inner tension. It offers nature her revenge upon society. Sometimes it makes straight for the goal, summoning up to the surface, from the depths below, passions that produce a general upheaval. Sometimes it effects a flank movement, as is often the case in contemporary drama; with a skill that is frequently sophistical, it shows up the inconsistencies of society; it exaggerates the shams and shibboleths of the social law; and so indirectly, by merely dissolving or corroding the outer crust, it again brings us back to the inner core. But, in both cases, whether it weakens society or strengthens nature, it has the same end in view: that of laying bare a secret portion of ourselves,–what might be called the tragic element in our character.

This is indeed the impression we get after seeing a stirring drama. What has just interested us is not so much what we have been told about others as the glimpse we have caught of ourselves–a whole host of ghostly feelings, emotions and events that would fain have come into real existence, but, fortunately for us, did not. It also seems as if an appeal had been made within us to certain ancestral memories belonging to a far-away past–memories so deep-seated and so foreign to our present life that this latter, for a moment, seems something unreal and conventional, for which we shall have to serve a fresh apprenticeship. So it is indeed a deeper reality that drama draws up from beneath our superficial and utilitarian attainments, and this art has the same end in view as all the others.

Hence it follows that art always aims at what is INDIVIDUAL. What the artist fixes on his canvas is something he has seen at a certain spot, on a certain day, at a certain hour, with a colouring that will never be seen again. What the poet sings of is a certain mood which was his, and his alone, and which will never return. What the dramatist unfolds before us is the life-history of a soul, a living tissue of feelings and events–something, in short, which has once happened and can never be repeated. We may, indeed, give general names to these feelings, but they cannot be the same thing in another soul. They are INDIVIDUALISED. Thereby, and thereby only, do they belong to art; for generalities, symbols or even types, form the current coin of our daily perception. How, then, does a misunderstanding on this point arise?

The reason lies in the fact that two very different things have been mistaken for each other: the generality of things and that of the opinions we come to regarding them. Because a feeling is generally recognised as true, it does not follow that it is a general feeling. Nothing could be more unique than the character of Hamlet. Though he may resemble other men in some respects, it is clearly not on that account that he interests us most. But he is universally accepted and regarded as a living character. In this sense only is he universally true. The same holds good

of all the other products of art. Each of them is unique, and yet, if it bear the stamp of genius, it will come to be accepted by everybody. Why will it be accepted? And if it is unique of its kind, by what sign do we know it to be genuine? Evidently, by the very effort it forces us to make against our predispositions in order to see sincerely. Sincerity is contagious. What the artist has seen we shall probably never see again, or at least never see in exactly the same way; but if he has actually seen it, the attempt he has made to lift the veil compels our imitation. His work is an example which we take as a lesson. And the efficacy of the lesson is the exact standard of the genuineness of the work. Consequently, truth bears within itself a power of conviction, nay, of conversion, which is the sign that enables us to recognise it. The greater the work and the more profound the dimly apprehended truth, the longer may the effect be in coming, but, on the other hand, the more universal will that effect tend to become. So the universality here lies in the effect produced, and not in the cause.

Altogether different is the object of comedy. Here it is in the work itself that the generality lies. Comedy depicts characters we have already come across and shall meet with again. It takes note of similarities. It aims at placing types before our eyes. It even creates new types, if necessary. In this respect it forms a contrast to all the other arts.

The very titles of certain classical comedies are significant in themselves. Le Misanthrope, l'Avare, le Joueur, le Distrait, etc., are names of whole classes of people; and even when a character comedy has a proper noun as its title, this proper noun is speedily swept away, by the very weight of its contents, into the stream of common nouns. We say "a Tartuffe," but we should never say "a Phedre" or "a Polyeucte."

Above all, a tragic poet will never think of grouping around the chief character in his play secondary characters to serve as simplified copies, so to speak, of the former. The hero of a tragedy represents an individuality unique of its kind. It may be possible to imitate him, but then we shall be passing, whether consciously or not, from the tragic to the comic. No one is like him, because he is like no one. But a remarkable instinct, on the contrary, impels the comic poet, once he has elaborated his central character, to cause other characters, displaying the same general traits, to revolve as satellites round him. Many comedies have either a plural noun or some collective term as their title. "Les Femmes savantes," "Les Precieuses ridicules," "Le Monde ou l'on s'ennuie," etc., represent so many rallying points on the stage adopted by different groups of characters, all belonging to one identical type. It would be interesting to analyse this tendency in comedy. Maybe dramatists have caught a glimpse of a fact recently brought forward by mental pathology, viz. that cranks of the same kind are drawn, by a secret attraction, to seek each other's company. Without precisely coming within the province of medicine, the comic individual, as we have shown, is in some way absentminded, and the transition from absent-mindedness to crankiness is continuous. But there is also another reason. If the comic poet's object is to offer us types, that is to say, characters capable of self-repetition, how can he set about it better than by showing us, in each instance, several different copies of the same model? That is just what the naturalist does in order to define a species. He enumerates and describes its main varieties.

This essential difference between tragedy and comedy, the former being concerned with individuals and the latter with classes, is revealed in yet another way. It appears in the first draft of the work. From the outset it is manifested by two radically different methods of observation.

Though the assertion may seem paradoxical, a study of other men is probably not necessary to the tragic poet. We find some of the great poets have lived a retiring, homely sort of life, without having a chance of witnessing around them an outburst of the passions they have so faithfully depicted. But, supposing even they had witnessed such a spectacle, it is doubtful whether they would have found it of much use. For what interests us in the work of the poet is the glimpse we get of certain profound moods or inner struggles. Now, this glimpse cannot be obtained from without. Our souls are impenetrable to one another. Certain signs of passion are all that we ever apperceive externally. These we interpret–though always, by the way, defectively–only by analogy with what we have ourselves experienced. So what we experience is the main point, and we cannot become thoroughly acquainted with anything but our own heart–supposing we ever get so far. Does this mean that the poet has experienced what he depicts, that he has gone through the various situations he makes his characters traverse, and lived the whole of their inner life? Here, too,

the biographies of poets would contradict such a supposition. How, indeed, could the same man have been Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and many others? But then a distinction should perhaps here be made between the personality WE HAVE and all those we might have had. Our character is the result of a choice that is continually being renewed. There are points–at all events there seem to be–all along the way, where we may branch off, and we perceive many possible directions though we are unable to take more than one. To retrace one's steps, and follow to the end the faintly distinguishable directions, appears to be the essential element in poetic imagination. Of course, Shakespeare was neither Macbeth, nor Hamlet, nor Othello; still, he MIGHT HAVE BEEN these several characters if the circumstances of the case on the one hand, and the consent of his will on the other, had caused to break out into explosive action what was nothing more than an inner prompting. We are strangely mistaken as to the part played by poetic imagination, if we think it pieces together its heroes out of fragments filched from right and left, as though it were patching together a harlequin's motley. Nothing living would result from that. Life cannot be recomposed; it can only be looked at and reproduced. Poetic imagination is but a fuller view of reality. If the characters created by a poet give us the impression of life, it is only because they are the poet himself,–multiplication or division of the poet,–the poet plumbing the depths of his own nature in so powerful an effort of inner observation that he lays hold of the potential in the real, and takes up what nature has left as a mere outline or sketch in his soul in order to make of it a finished work of art.

Altogether different is the kind of observation from which comedy springs. It is directed outwards. However interested a dramatist may be in the comic features of human nature, he will hardly go, I imagine, to the extent of trying to discover his own. Besides, he would not find them, for we are never ridiculous except in some point that remains hidden from our own consciousness. It is on others, then, that such observation must perforce be practised. But it; will, for this very reason, assume a character of generality that it cannot have when we apply it to ourselves. Settling on the surface, it will not be more than skin-deep, dealing with persons at the point at which they come into contact and become capable of resembling one another. It will go no farther. Even if it could, it would not desire to do so, for it would have nothing to gain in the process.

To penetrate too far into the personality, to couple the outer effect with causes that are too deep-seated, would mean to endanger and in the end to sacrifice all that was laughable in the effect. In order that we may be tempted to laugh at it, we must localise its cause in some intermediate region of the soul. Consequently, the effect must appear to us as an average effect, as expressing an average of mankind. And, like all averages, this one is obtained by bringing together scattered data, by comparing analogous cases and extracting their essence, in short by a process of abstraction and generalisation similar to that which the physicist brings to bear upon facts with the object of grouping them under laws. In a word, method and object are here of the same nature as in the inductive sciences, in that observation is always external and the result always general.

And so we come back, by a roundabout way, to the double conclusion we reached in the course of our investigations. On the one hand, a person is never ridiculous except through some mental attribute resembling absent-mindedness, through something that lives upon him without forming part of his organism, after the fashion of a parasite; that is the reason this state of mind is observable from without and capable of being corrected. But, on the other hand, just because laughter aims at correcting, it is expedient that the correction should reach as great a number of persons as possible. This is the reason comic observation instinctively proceeds to what is general. It chooses such peculiarities as admit of being reproduced and consequently are not indissolubly bound up with the individuality of a single person,–a possibly common sort of uncommonness, so to say,–peculiarities that are held in common. By transferring them to the stage, it creates works which doubtless belong to art in that their only visible aim is to please, but which will be found to contrast with other works of art by reason of their generality and also of their scarcely confessed or scarcely conscious intention to correct and instruct. So we were probably right in saying that comedy lies midway between art and life. It is not disinterested as genuine art is. By organising laughter, comedy accepts social life as a natural environment, it even obeys an impulse of social life.

And in this respect it turns its back upon art, which is a breaking away from society and a return to pure nature.

II

Now let us see, in the light of what has gone before, the line to take for creating an ideally comic type of character, comic in itself, in its origin, and in all its manifestations. It must be deep-rooted, so as to supply comedy with inexhaustible matter, and yet superficial, in order that it may remain within the scope of comedy; invisible to its actual owner, for the comic ever partakes of the unconscious, but visible to everybody else, so that it may call forth general laughter, extremely considerate to its own self, so that it may be displayed without scruple, but troublesome to others, so that they may repress it without pity; immediately repressible, so that our laughter may not have been wasted, but sure of reappearing under fresh aspects, so that laughter may always find something to do; inseparable from social life, although insufferable to society; capable–in order that it may assume the greatest imaginable variety of forms–of being tacked on to all the vices and even to a good many virtues. Truly a goodly number of elements to fuse together! But a chemist of the soul, entrusted with this elaborate preparation, would be somewhat disappointed when pouring out the contents of his retort. He would find he had taken a vast deal of trouble to compound a mixture which may be found ready-made and free of expense, for it is as widespread throughout mankind as air throughout nature.

This mixture is vanity. Probably there is not a single failing that is more superficial or more deep-rooted. The wounds it receives are never very serious, and yet they are seldom healed. The services rendered to it are the most unreal of all services, and yet they are the very ones that meet with lasting gratitude. It is scarcely a vice, and yet all the vices are drawn into its orbit and, in proportion as they become more refined and artificial, tend to be nothing more than a means of satisfying it. The outcome of social life, since it is an admiration of ourselves based on the admiration we think we are inspiring in others, it is even more natural, more universally innate than egoism; for egoism may be conquered by nature, whereas only by reflection do we get the better of vanity. It does not seem, indeed, as if men were ever born modest, unless we dub with the name of modesty a sort of purely physical bashfulness, which is nearer to pride than is generally supposed. True modesty can be nothing but a meditation on vanity. It springs from the sight of others' mistakes and the dread of being similarly deceived. It is a sort of scientific cautiousness with respect to what we shall say and think of ourselves. It is made up of improvements and after-touches. In short, it is an acquired virtue.

It is no easy matter to define the point at which the anxiety to become modest may be distinguished from the dread of becoming ridiculous. But surely, at the outset, this dread and this anxiety are one and the same thing. A complete investigation into the illusions of vanity, and into the ridicule that clings to them, would cast a strange light upon the whole theory of laughter. We should find laughter performing, with mathematical regularity, one of its main functions–that of bringing back to complete self-consciousness a certain self-admiration which is almost automatic, and thus obtaining the greatest possible sociability of characters. We should see that vanity, though it is a natural product of social life, is an inconvenience to society, just as certain slight poisons, continually secreted by the human organism, would destroy it in the long run, if they were not neutralised by other secretions. Laughter is unceasingly doing work of this kind. In this respect, it might be said that the specific remedy for vanity is laughter, and that the one failing that is essentially laughable is vanity.

While dealing with the comic in form and movement, we showed how any simple image, laughable in itself, is capable of worming its way into other images of a more complex nature and instilling into them something of its comic essence; thus, the highest forms of the comic can sometimes be explained by the lowest. The inverse process, however, is perhaps even more common, and many coarse comic effects are the direct result of a drop from some very subtle comic element. For instance, vanity, that higher form of the comic, is an element we are prone to look for, minutely though unconsciously, in every manifestation of human activity. We look for it if only to laugh at it. Indeed, our imagination often locates it where it has no business to be. Perhaps we must attribute to this source the altogether coarse comic element in certain effects which psychologists have very inadequately explained by contrast: a short man bowing his head to pass beneath a large door; two individuals, one very tall the other a mere dwarf, gravely walking along arm-in-arm, etc. By scanning narrowly this latter image, we shall probably find that the shorter of the two persons seems as though he were trying TO RAISE HIMSELF to the height of the taller, like the frog that wanted to make itself as large as the ox.

III

It would be quite impossible to go through all the peculiarities of character that either coalesce or compete with vanity in order to force themselves upon the attention of the comic poet. We have shown that all failings may become laughable, and even, occasionally, many a good quality. Even though a list of all the peculiarities that have ever been found ridiculous were drawn up, comedy would manage to add to them, not indeed by creating artificial ones, but by discovering lines of comic development that had hitherto gone unnoticed; thus does imagination isolate ever fresh figures in the intricate design of one and the same piece of tapestry. The essential condition, as we know, is that the peculiarity observed should straightway appear as a kind of CATEGORY into which a number of individuals can step.

Now, there are ready-made categories established by society itself, and necessary to it because it is based on the division of labour. We mean the various trades, public services and professions. Each particular profession impresses on its corporate members certain habits of mind and peculiarities of character in which they resemble each other and also distinguish themselves from the rest. Small societies are thus formed within the bosom of Society at large. Doubtless they arise from the very organisation of Society as a whole. And yet, if they held too much aloof, there would be a risk of their proving harmful to sociability.

Now, it is the business of laughter to repress any separatist tendency. Its function is to convert rigidity into plasticity, to readapt the individual to the whole, in short, to round off the corners wherever they are met with. Accordingly, we here find a species of the comic whose varieties might be calculated beforehand. This we shall call the PROFESSIONAL COMIC.

Instead of taking up these varieties in detail, we prefer to lay stress upon what they have in common. In the forefront we find professional vanity. Each one of M. Jourdain's teachers exalts his own art above all the rest. In a play of Labiche there is a character who cannot understand how it is possible to be anything else than a timber merchant. Naturally he is a timber merchant himself. Note that vanity here tends to merge into SOLEMNITY, in proportion to the degree of quackery there is in the profession under consideration. For it is a remarkable fact that the more questionable an art, science or occupation is, the more those who practise it are inclined to regard themselves as invested with a kind of priesthood and to claim that all should bow before its mysteries. Useful professions are clearly meant for the public, but those whose utility is more dubious can only justify their existence by assuming that the public is meant for them: now, this is just the illusion that lies at the root of solemnity. Almost everything comic in Moliere's doctors comes from this source. They treat the patient as though he had been made for the doctors, and nature herself as an appendage to medicine.

Another form of this comic rigidity is what may be called PROFESSIONAL CALLOUSNESS. The comic character is so tightly jammed into the rigid frame of his functions that he has no room to move or to be moved like other men. Only call to mind the answer Isabelle receives from Perrin Dandin, the judge, when she asks him how he can bear to look on when the poor wretches are being tortured: Bah! cela fait toujours passer une heure ou deux. [Bah! it always helps to while away an hour or two.]

Does not Tartuffe also manifest a sort of professional callousness when he says–it is true, by the mouth of Orgon: Et je verrais mourir frere, enfants, mere et femme, Que je m'en soucierais autant que de cela! [Let brother, children, mother and wife all die, what should I care!]

The device most in use, however, for making a profession ludicrous is to confine it, so to say, within the four corners of its own particular jargon. Judge, doctor and soldier are made to apply the language of law, medicine and strategy to the everyday affairs of life, as though they had became incapable of talking like ordinary people. As a rule, this kind of the ludicrous is rather coarse. It becomes more refined, however, as we have already said, if it reveals some peculiarity of character in addition to a professional habit. We will instance only Regnard's Joueur, who expresses himself with the utmost originality in terms borrowed from gambling, giving his valet the name of Hector,

and calling his betrothed Pallas, du nom connu de la Dame de Pique; [Pallas, from the well-known name of the Queen of Spades.] or Moliere's Femmes savantes, where the comic element evidently consists largely in the translation of ideas of a scientific nature into terms of feminine sensibility: "Epicure me plait..." (Epicurus is charming), "J'aime les tourbillons" (I dote on vortices), etc. You have only to read the third act to find that Armande, Philaminte and Belise almost invariably express themselves in this style.

Proceeding further in the same direction, we discover that there is also such a thing as a professional logic, i.e. certain ways of reasoning that are customary in certain circles, which are valid for these circles, but untrue for the rest of the public. Now, the contrast between these two kinds of logic–one particular, the other universal–produces comic effects of a special nature, on which we may advantageously dwell at greater length. Here we touch upon a point of some consequence in the theory of laughter. We propose, therefore, to give the question a wider scope and consider it in its most general aspect.

IV

Eager as we have been to discover the deep-seated cause of the comic, we have so far had to neglect one of its most striking phenomena. We refer to the logic peculiar to the comic character and the comic group, a strange kind of logic, which, in some cases, may include a good deal of absurdity.

Theophile Gautier said that the comic in its extreme form was the logic of the absurd. More than one philosophy of laughter revolves round a like idea. Every comic effect, it is said, implies contradiction in some of its aspects. What makes us laugh is alleged to be the absurd realised in concrete shape, a "palpable absurdity";–or, again, an apparent absurdity, which we swallow for the moment only to rectify it immediately afterwards;–or, better still, something absurd from one point of view though capable of a natural explanation from another, etc. All these theories may contain some portion of the truth; but, in the first place, they apply only to certain rather obvious comic effects, and then, even where they do apply, they evidently take no account of the characteristic element of the laughable, that is, the PARTICULAR KIND of absurdity the comic contains when it does contain something absurd. Is an immediate proof of this desired? You have only to choose one of these definitions and make up effects in accordance with the formula: twice out of every three times there will be nothing laughable in the effect obtained. So we see that absurdity, when met with in the comic, is not absurdity IN GENERAL. It is an absurdity of a definite kind. It does not create the comic; rather, we might say that the comic infuses into it its own particular essence. It is not a cause, but an effect–an effect of a very special kind, which reflects the special nature of its cause. Now, this cause is known to us; consequently we shall have no trouble in understanding the nature of the effect.

Assume, when out for a country walk, that you notice on the top of a hill something that bears a faint resemblance to a large motionless body with revolving arms. So far you do not know what it is, but you begin to search amongst your IDEAS–that is to say, in the present instance, amongst the recollections at your disposal–for that recollection which will best fit in with what you see. Almost immediately the image of a windmill comes into your mind: the object before you is a windmill. No matter if, before leaving the house, you have just been reading fairy-tales telling of giants with enormous arms; for although common sense consists mainly in being able to remember, it consists even more in being able to forget. Common sense represents the endeavour of a mind continually adapting itself anew and changing ideas when it changes objects. It is the mobility of the intelligence conforming exactly to the mobility of things. It is the moving continuity of our attention to life. But now, let us take Don Quixote setting out for the wars. The romances he has been reading all tell of knights encountering, on the way, giant adversaries. He therefore must needs encounter a giant. This idea of a giant is a privileged recollection which has taken its abode in his mind and lies there in wait, motionless, watching for an opportunity to sally forth and become embodied in a thing. It IS BENT on entering the material world, and so the very first object he sees bearing the faintest resemblance to a giant is invested with the form of one. Thus Don Quixote sees giants where we see windmills. This is comical; it is also absurd. But is it a mere absurdity,–an absurdity of an indefinite kind?

It is a very special inversion of common sense. It consists in seeking to mould things on an idea of one's own, instead of moulding one's ideas on things,–in seeing before us what we are thinking of, instead of thinking of what we see. Good sense would have us leave all our memories in their proper rank and file; then the appropriate memory will every time answer the summons of the situation of the moment and serve only to interpret it. But in Don Quixote, on the contrary, there is one group of memories in command of all the rest and dominating the character itself: thus it is reality that now has to bow to imagination, its only function being to supply fancy with a body. Once the illusion has been created, Don Quixote develops it logically enough in all its consequences; he proceeds with the certainty and precision of a somnambulist who is acting his dream. Such, then, is the origin of his delusions, and such the particular logic which controls this particular absurdity. Now, is this logic peculiar to Don Quixote?

We have shown that the comic character always errs through obstinacy of mind or of disposition, through absentmindedness, in short, through automatism. At the root of the comic there is a sort of rigidity which compels its victims to keep strictly to one path, to follow it straight along, to shut their ears and refuse to listen. In Moliere's plays how many comic scenes can be reduced to this simple type: A CHARACTER FOLLOWING UP HIS ONE IDEA, and continually recurring to it in spite of incessant interruptions! The transition seems to take place imperceptibly from the man who will listen to nothing to the one who will see nothing, and from this latter to the one who sees only what he wants to see. A stubborn spirit ends by adjusting things to its own way of thinking, instead of accommodating its thoughts to the things. So every comic character is on the highroad to the above-mentioned illusion, and Don Quixote furnishes us with the general type of comic absurdity.

Is there a name for this inversion of common sense? Doubtless it may be found, in either an acute or a chronic form, in certain types of insanity. In many of its aspects it resembles a fixed idea. But neither insanity in general, nor fixed ideas in particular, are provocative of laughter: they are diseases, and arouse our pity.

Laughter, as we have seen, is incompatible with emotion. If there exists a madness that is laughable, it can only be one compatible with the general health of the mind,–a sane type of madness, one might say. Now, there is a sane state of the mind that resembles madness in every respect, in which we find the same associations of ideas as we do in lunacy, the same peculiar logic as in a fixed idea. This state is that of dreams. So either our analysis is incorrect, or it must be capable of being stated in the following theorem: Comic absurdity is of the same nature as that of dreams.

The behaviour of the intellect in a dream is exactly what we have just been describing. The mind, enamoured of itself, now seeks in the outer world nothing more than a pretext for realising its imaginations. A confused murmur of sounds still reaches the ear, colours enter the field of vision, the senses are not completely shut in. But the dreamer, instead of appealing to the whole of his recollections for the interpretation of what his senses perceive, makes use of what he perceives to give substance to the particular recollection he favours: thus, according to the mood of the dreamer and the idea that fills his imagination at the time, a gust of wind blowing down the chimney becomes the howl of a wild beast or a tuneful melody. Such is the ordinary mechanism of illusion in dreams.

Now, if comic illusion is similar to dream illusion, if the logic of the comic is the logic of dreams, we may expect to discover in the logic of the laughable all the peculiarities of dream logic. Here, again, we shall find an illustration of the law with which we are well acquainted: given one form of the laughable, other forms that are lacking in the same comic essence become laughable from their outward resemblance to the first. Indeed, it is not difficult to see that any PLAY OF IDEAS may afford us amusement if only it bring back to mind, more or less distinctly, the play of dreamland.

We shall first call attention to a certain general relaxation of the rules of reasoning. The reasonings at which we laugh are those we know to be false, but which we might accept as true were we to hear them in a dream. They counterfeit true reasoning just sufficiently to deceive a mind dropping off to sleep. There is still an element of logic in them, if you will, but it is a logic lacking in tension and, for that very reason, affording us relief from intellectual effort. Many "witticisms" are reasonings of this kind, considerably abridged reasonings, of which we are given only the beginning and the end. Such play upon ideas evolves in the direction of a play upon words in proportion as the relations set up between the ideas become more superficial:

gradually we come to take no account of the meaning of the words we hear, but only of their sound. It might be instructive to compare with dreams certain comic scenes in which one of the characters systematically repeats in a nonsensical fashion what another character whispers in his ear. If you fall asleep with people talking round you, you sometimes find that what they say gradually becomes devoid of meaning, that the sounds get distorted, as it were, and recombine in a haphazard fashion to form in your mind the strangest of meanings, and that you are reproducing between yourself and the different speakers the scene between Petit-Jean and The Prompter. [Les Plaideurs, Racine]

There are also COMIC OBSESSIONS that seem to bear a great resemblance to dream obsessions. Who has not had the experience of seeing the same image appear in several successive dreams, assuming a plausible meaning in each of them, whereas these dreams had no other point in common. Effects of repetition sometimes present this special form on the stage or in fiction: some of them, in fact, sound as though they belonged to a dream. It may be the same with the burden of many a song: it persistently recurs, always unchanged, at the end of every verse, each time with a different meaning.

Not infrequently do we notice in dreams a particular CRESCENDO, a weird effect that grows more pronounced as we proceed. The first concession extorted from reason introduces a second; and this one, another of a more serious nature; and so on till the crowning absurdity is reached. Now, this progress towards the absurd produces on the dreamer a very peculiar sensation. Such is probably the experience of the tippler when he feels himself pleasantly drifting into a state of blankness in which neither reason nor propriety has any meaning for him. Now, consider whether some of Moliere's plays would not produce the same sensation: for instance, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, which, after beginning almost reasonably, develops into a sequence of all sorts of absurdities. Consider also the Bourgeois gentilhomme, where the different characters seem to allow themselves to be caught up in a very whirlwind of madness as the play proceeds. "If it is possible to find a man more completely mad, I will go and publish it in Rome." This sentence, which warns us that the play is over, rouses us from the increasingly extravagant dream into which, along with M. Jourdain, we have been sinking.

But, above all, there is a special madness that is peculiar to dreams. There are certain special contradictions so natural to the imagination of a dreamer, and so absurd to the reason of a man wide-awake, that it would be impossible to give a full and correct idea of their nature to anyone who had not experienced them. We allude to the strange fusion that a dream often effects between two persons who henceforth form only one and yet remain distinct. Generally one of these is the dreamer himself. He feels he has not ceased to be what he is; yet he has become someone else. He is himself, and not himself. He hears himself speak and sees himself act, but he feels that some other "he" has borrowed his body and stolen his voice. Or perhaps he is conscious of speaking and acting as usual, but he speaks of himself as a stranger with whom he has nothing in common; he has stepped out of his own self. Does it not seem as though we found this same extraordinary confusion in many a comic scene? I am not speaking of Amphitryon, in which play the confusion is perhaps suggested to the mind of the spectator, though the bulk of the comic effect proceeds rather from what we have already called a "reciprocal interference of two series." I am speaking of the extravagant and comic reasonings in which we really meet with this confusion in its pure form, though it requires some looking into to pick it out. For instance, listen to Mark Twain's replies to the reporter who called to interview him:

QUESTION. Isn't that a brother of yours?
ANSWER. Oh! yes, yes, yes! Now you remind me of it, that WAS a brother of mine. That's William–BILL we called him. Poor old Bill!
Q. Why? Is he dead, then?
A. Ah! well, I suppose so. We never could tell. There was a great mystery about it.
Q. That is sad, very sad. He disappeared, then?
A. Well, yes, in a sort of general way. We buried him.
Q. BURIED him! BURIED him, without knowing whether he was dead or not? A. Oh no! Not that. He was dead enough.
Q. Well, I confess that I can't understand this. If you buried him, and you knew he was dead–
A. No! no! We only thought he was.
Q. Oh, I see! He came to life again?
A. I bet he didn't.
Q. Well, I never heard anything like this. SOMEBODY was dead. SOMEBODY was buried. Now, where was the mystery?
A. Ah! that's just it! That's it exactly. You see, we were twins,–defunct and I,–and we got mixed in the bath-tub when we were only two weeks old, and one of us was drowned. But we didn't know which. Some think it was Bill. Some think it was me.
Q. Well, that is remarkable. What do YOU think? A. Goodness knows! I would give whole worlds to know. This solemn, this awful tragedy has cast a gloom over my whole life. But I will tell you a secret now, which I have never revealed to any creature before. One of us had a peculiar mark,–a large mole on the back of his left hand: that was ME. THAT CHILD WAS THE ONE THAT WAS DROWNED! ... etc., etc.

A close examination will show us that the absurdity of this dialogue is by no means an absurdity of an ordinary type. It would disappear were not the speaker himself one of the twins in the story. It results entirely from the fact that Mark Twain asserts he is one of these twins, whilst all the time he talks as though he were a third person who tells the tale. In many of our dreams we adopt exactly the same method.

V

Regarded from this latter point of view, the comic seems to show itself in a form somewhat different from the one we lately attributed to it. Up to this point, we have regarded laughter as first and foremost a means of correction. If you take the series of comic varieties and isolate the predominant types at long intervals, you will find that all the intervening varieties borrow their comic quality from their resemblance to these types, and that the types themselves are so many models of impertinence with regard to society. To these impertinences society retorts by laughter, an even greater impertinence. So evidently there is nothing very benevolent in laughter. It seems rather inclined to return evil for evil.

But this is not what we are immediately struck by in our first impression of the laughable. The comic character is often one with whom, to begin with, our mind, or rather our body, sympathises. By this is meant that we put ourselves for a very short time in his place, adopt his gestures, words, arid actions, and, if amused by anything laughable in him, invite him, in imagination, to share his amusement with us; in fact, we treat him first as a playmate. So, in the laugher we find a "hail-fellow-well-met" spirit–as far, at least, as appearances go–which it would be wrong of us not to take into consideration. In particular, there is in laughter a movement of relaxation which has often been noticed, and the reason of which we must try to discover. Nowhere is this impression more noticeable than in the last few examples. In them, indeed, we shall find its explanation.

When the comic character automatically follows up his idea, he ultimately thinks, speaks and acts as though he were dreaming. Now, a dream is a relaxation. To remain in touch with things and men, to see nothing but what is existent and think nothing but what is consistent, demands a continuous effort of intellectual tension. This effort is common sense. And to remain sensible is, indeed, to remain at work. But to detach oneself from things and yet continue to perceive images, to break away from logic and yet continue to string together ideas, is to indulge in play or, if you prefer, in dolce far niente. So, comic absurdity gives us from the outset the impression of playing with ideas. Our first impulse is to join in the game. That relieves us from the strain of thinking. Now, the same might be said of the other forms of the laughable. Deep-rooted in the comic, there is always a tendency, we said, to take the line of least resistance, generally that of habit. The comic character no longer tries to be ceaselessly adapting and readapting himself to the society of which he is a member. He slackens in the attention that is due to life. He more or less resembles the absentminded. Maybe his will is here even more concerned than his intellect, and there is not so much a want of attention as a lack of tension; still, in some way or another, he is absent, away from his work, taking it easy. He abandons social convention, as indeed–in the case we have just been considering–he abandoned logic. Here, too, our first impulse is to accept the invitation to take it easy. For a short time, at all events, we join in the game. And that relieves us from the strain of living.

But we rest only for a short time. The sympathy that is capable of entering into the impression of the comic is a very fleeting one. It also comes from a lapse in attention. Thus, a stern father may at times forget himself and join in some prank his child is playing, only to check himself at once in order to correct it.

Laughter is, above all, a corrective. Being intended to humiliate, it must make a painful impression on the person against whom it is

directed. By laughter, society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it. It would fail in its object if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness.

Shall we be told that the motive, at all events; may be a good one, that we often punish because we love, and that laughter, by checking the outer manifestations of certain failings, thus causes the person laughed at to correct these failings and thereby improve himself inwardly?

Much might be said on this point. As a general rule, and speaking roughly, laughter doubtless exercises a useful function. Indeed, the whole of our analysis points to this fact. But it does not therefore follow that laughter always hits the mark or is invariably inspired by sentiments of kindness or even of justice.

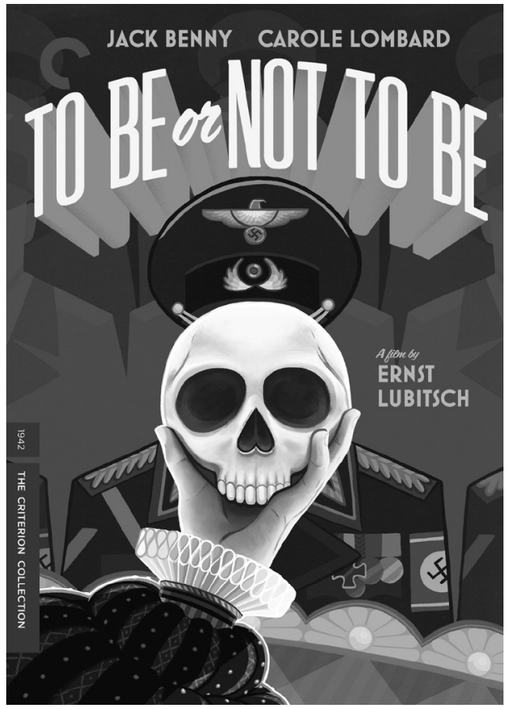
To be certain of always hitting the mark, it would have to proceed from an act of reflection. Now, laughter is simply the result of a mechanism set up in us by nature or, what is almost the same thing, by our long acquaintance with social life. It goes off spontaneously and returns tit for tat. It has no time to look where it hits. Laughter punishes certain failing's somewhat as disease punishes certain forms of excess, striking down some who are innocent and sparing some who are guilty, aiming at a general result and incapable of dealing separately with each individual case. And so it is with everything that comes to pass by natural means instead of happening by conscious reflection. An average of justice may show itself in the total result, though the details, taken separately, often point to anything but justice.

In this sense, laughter cannot be absolutely just. Nor should it be kind-hearted either. Its function is to intimidate by humiliating. Now, it would not succeed in doing this, had not nature implanted for that very purpose, even in the best of men, a spark of spitefulness or, at all events, of mischief. Perhaps we had better not investigate this point too closely, for we should not find anything very flattering to ourselves. We should see that this movement of relaxation or expansion is nothing but a prelude to laughter, that the laugher immediately retires within himself, more self-assertive and conceited than ever, and is evidently disposed to look upon another's personality as a marionette of which he pulls the strings. In this presumptuousness we speedily discern a degree of egoism and, behind this latter, something less spontaneous and more bitter, the beginnings of a curious pessimism which becomes the more pronounced as the laugher more closely analyses his laughter.

Here, as elsewhere, nature has utilised evil with a view to good. It is more especially the good that has engaged our attention throughout this work. We have seen that the more society improves, the more plastic is the adaptability it obtains from its members; while the greater the tendency towards increasing stability below, the more does it force to the surface the disturbing elements inseparable from so vast a bulk; and thus laughter performs a useful function by emphasising the form of these significant undulations. Such is also the truceless warfare of the waves on the surface of the sea, whilst profound peace reigns in the depths below. The billows clash and collide with each other, as they strive to find their level. A fringe of snow-white foam, feathery and frolicsome, follows their changing outlines. From time to time, the receding wave leaves behind a remnant of foam on the sandy beach. The child, who plays hard by, picks up a handful, and, the next moment, is astonished to find that nothing remains in his grasp but a few drops of water, water that is far more brackish, far more bitter than that of the wave which brought it. Laughter comes into being in the self-same fashion. It indicates a slight revolt on the surface of social life. It instantly adopts the changing forms of the disturbance. It, also, is afroth with a saline base. Like froth, it sparkles. It is gaiety itself. But the philosopher who gathers a handful to taste may find that the substance is scanty, and the after-taste bitter.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)

Thalia - Muse of Comedy



Ernst Lubitsch, *To be or not to be* (1942)

Hassan Melehy

LUBITSCH'S TO BE OR NOT TO BE: The Question of Simulation

Questions of representation

Given Ernst Lubitsch's contribution to cinema, the amount of critical writing on his work has been disproportionately low. There are a number of primarily admiring books: among others, Weinberg, Harvey, and Eyman. Although these studies reflect a growing interest in Lubitsch and provide valuable insights on conditions surrounding production and reception of his films, they do not engage these films with concern for recent theorization on the representational functions of cinema. Poague and Paul begin such engagement in interesting ways. But on the subject of To Be or Not to Be (1942), they tend not to advance the questions of the play between reality and simulation as far as Lubitsch himself does; they rather tend to remain within the terms set by the attacks on the movie at its initial release, which concern the appropriateness and effectiveness of mixing farce and horror. They tend to say little more than Lubitsch himself did in a brilliant and oft-quoted response to Bosley Crowther's scathing review of To Be or Not to Be in the New York Times: "It is tree that I have tried to break away from the traditional moving-picture formula. I was tired of the two established, recognized recipes: drama with comedy relief and comedy with dramatic relief. I had made up my mind to make a picture with no attempt to relieve anybody from anything at any time; dramatic when the situation demands it, satire and comedy whenever it is called for. One might call it a tragical farce or a farcical tragedy – I do not care and neither do the audience." (Eyman provides a fine account of the hostility to To Be or Not to Be and its repercussions) Above all, the critical works have not tended to draw out the ways in which Lubitsch's questions are specific to the representational apparatus of National Socialism. In addition to writings by some of the Cahiers du cinema critics, the recent studies by Tifft and Rosenberg do so very effectively. What I wish to add to the discussion is an explicit theorization, in view of recent theoretical insights on simulation and by way of close analyses of a few sequences, of the procedures by which the film addresses and deploys a problematic of representation.

I would like to address two major aspects of the movie here. The first involves its incorporation of the theater – the protagonists belong to a troupe of actors in Warsaw during the German occupation – as a means of reflecting on the cinema's capacity to produce images and on its relation to the objects and situations these images represent. At issue is whether cinematic representation involves simulation rather than mimesis: is the apperception of objects through the cinema conditioned by a process of recording, which would respect the integrity of an original, or by one of simulation, in which the original is of little or no importance, or perhaps even effectively nonexistent? In the latter case, an object within the cinema's frame would actually be produced by the process of cinematic representation; in accord with contemporary theorization, I will refer to such objects as simulacra. Through this investigation, I will arrive at the second major aspect of the movie: Lubitsch's examination of the propagation and propaganda of Nazism as functions of image-production. As Lubitsch engages with aspects of the visual and auditory rhetoric of propaganda, both National Socialist and Allied, I will also consider the possibilities put forth in To Be or Not to Be for a critique of this rhetoric.

Theatrical and cinematic image

Cinema and theater, viewed in a rudimentary perspective, share a preoccupation with producing an image, with simulating a picture of an actual situation that, in a certain context and for a certain duration, will be substituted for that situation. To achieve their respective effects, both media depend on practices that might conveniently be termed techniques of representation and addressed together as such. In this respect, cinema and theater share a concern with reflecting on strategies of producing the simulated image or simulacrum that each type of spectacle constitutes. Lubitsch establishes a link between the theater and his film through both the title and the play to which it refers, Hamlet. Shakespeare's Hamlet, of course, will employ a play to "catch the conscience of the king", or to

unmask repressive forces through their doubling or simulation on the stage. In the case of this movie, the stage offers the occasion to examine, through an effective doubling of an image that depends heavily on theatrics, the means by which the real Nazi presence maintains itself in Warsaw. But far from trying to transfer the high-cultural glow of the theater to the cinema, Lubitsch gives us actors in the Teatr Polski who usually come off as at best second-rate and bombastic – or, to use a word that plays an important role in the movie, as "hams." In thus situating the theater, with its overdone and thereby flawed efforts to present what one character terms "realistic drama," Lubitsch is able to reveal what is "behind the scenes," as it were – the forces that produce the images one sees in public spectacle, whether in the theater, at the movies, or in the aestheticized political arena. In this movie, the stage is doubled on the screen, and this doubling becomes a self-reflexive strategy in which the screen is then itself doubled.

To Be or Not to Be offers a direct and vicious parody of the manners and comportments of the German occupiers of Warsaw. By presenting these officers and operatives as players in the great second-rate and bombastic performance of the twentieth century, Lubitsch raises the question of whether Nazism is already a self-parody: even as it enacts its horrific program, the rhetoric and spectacles of the National Socialist state display a wealth of farcical elements. As Jean Domarchi remarks, "Open Steiner's book on Treblinka and read on the flyleaf Himmler's speech to his `SS comrades.' In spite of the monstrosity of the statements (or perhaps because of them), it is difficult not to laugh. Accordingly Lubitsch returns to the primary sources by aiming for the grotesque, that is, farce" (my translation). Very much in the foreground and deep in the background of this movie are the images, theatrics, rhetoric, and cinema of National Socialist Germany. These were familiar to English-language audiences of the time through newsreels, photographs, newspaper and magazine accounts, and the 1934 release of Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will – all of which continue to resonate strongly in the present day. Moreover, the machinations of Nazism were all too well known to German expatriates in the U.S. film industry, a group to which Lubitsch belonged. Lubitsch's brilliance here is to capture the bizarre and discomforting intersection of horror and farce, not to shy away from it on the screen. Hence he offers a stumbling block to Nazi image propagation by revealing the strategies by which it produces itself, creating its own image as simulacrum. To Be or Not to Be suggests at every moment the insecurity that these strategies reveal with respect to the anchoring of National Socialism in concrete reality. When an agency other than the National Socialist apparatus also produces Nazi propaganda images, albeit in ways that twist and redirect their force, this agency pushes the insecurity to the forefront. And, correlatively, if Nazism must couple the force of arms with that of images, the movie raises the question of whether an opposition to Nazism may also take place in the domain of images, whose primary arena, in the early 1940s, is the cinema. In To Be or Not to Be the theater stands in for the cinema; the film thereby self-reflexively questions the effectiveness of the actors' theatrical opposition to the Nazi occupation. Hamlet's decision to "act" through the theater, so to speak, is thus transported to both the narrative and the production of the film.

One of the lead characters in the film, Joseph Tura (played by Jack Benny in what many have called his best performance), the lead actor for the Teatr Polski, shows himself to be a truly bad actor in his handling of Shakespeare. The exceptionally hamlike quality of Tura's acting is outdone perhaps only by his vanity – that is, by his insistence that his person be viewed by the public as a spectacular image or double of himself. The bad actor, especially the vain one, who signals his or her quality as poorly anchored image, calls attention to the fact that one is viewing a simulation: usually risible, this actor is continually breaking the illusion of a well- grounded representation of reality. As a bad copy, this actor is a simulacrum who reveals the simulated quality of the spectacle as such. Within the viewed frame of To Be or Not to Be, Lubitsch strictly maintains the illusion of Benny as bad actor; Benny himself, under Lubitsch's astutely theatrical direction, acts with a rare perfection the role of bad actor. Through the vanity of its main characters, the movie points to the simulation that it involves: at work is a system of cinematic technique by which the authenticity of each on-screen image is thrown askew. As an image on the screen during much of the film, Benny functions as an index of this system. In this respect, Lubitsch's cinematic devices quite effectively exploit Benny's ethnic background. Though once called Benny Kubelski, Jack Benny does not look right in Warsaw, even this Hollywood Warsaw. He is especially jarring on his first appearance early in the movie, in a Gestapo uniform, because of both the characteristics associated with him as a media personage and those he shows in the film. As Joel Rosenberg points out, Benny's Jewishness was always "present in subtle ways in his radio character, ... a perfect fusion of the classic schlemiel with the Main Street American". These aspects are also dominant traits of Joseph Tura's character. As soon as Benny appears in To Be or Not to Be, there seems to be something wrong with the picture.

Pictures of Hitler

This quality of wrongness, bound up with the inauthenticity of the film's images, has been present from the moment following the opening credit sequence. The scene opens on an overdone Warsaw, a montage of names on storefronts that signify "Poland" a little too strongly. The voice-over narration utters each of them as they appear: "Lubinski, Kubinski, Lominski, Rozanski, and Poznanski." This is the first instance in the movie of the use of an exaggerated metonymy: the suffix - ski in abrupt, monotonous repetition takes spectators of the film to an insecurely represented Poland, one that must be signified by the thrusting forward of an easily recognizable visual and acoustic image. This series also points to two other names. The first derives from Lubinski – without the suffix -ski, we are left with Lubin, which borders on the name Lubitsch. Both sound and image thereby signify the director's name: this composite signifier is his signature, a repetition of the handwritten signature that opens the credit sequence, and his identification with the people of Poland. Lubitsch thus reinscribes the border between his native Germany and Poland through an internationalism, which suggests an affirmation, during the rise of National Socialism, of his own Jewish background. The second name to which the series points is a close neighbor of Kubinski: Kubelski, the name Jack Benny left behind in order to place himself on Main Street America rather than in a Jewish Eastern Europe. Even in retaining his Jewish identity by references to it in his humor, Benny displaced himself from the place signified in the opening shots of To Be or Not to Be. His displacement is all the more notable in light of the name of his father, who becomes absent by the absence of the original family name. By its very displacement, the Jewishness of both Lubitsch and Benny underlies the first few seconds of the film. Hence, the opening shots and voice-over signify Poland itself as displaced rather than present on-screen.

When the scene cuts to an establishing shot of a city square that is obviously a sound stage with a backdrop painting, the narrator insists, "We're in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. It's August 1939. Europe is still at peace." This is a movie ostensibly about Poland, but at this point Poland is very clearly the product of Hollywood effects. But even a false image of Poland, subtended by the narrator's insistent tone, suggests newsreels of Europe and wartime propaganda as seen in the U.S. The U.S. entered the war while the film was in production – a cutaway shot of a calendar later in the movie bearing the date December 16, 1941, locates the action in a present and brutal reality for the audiences of early 1942. This romantic comedy is punctuated with traits borrowed from the genre of propaganda. Stephen Tifft advances that the movie's "comic rhetoric – burdened with imputations of coercion and reductiveness – seems to have been conceived from the outset in terms of its vexing affinity to propaganda". This rhetoric is evident in the film's dependence on an authoritative voice-over narration and a presentation of signifiers that, through an artificial transparency, signal a serene Warsaw in which "life is going on as normally as ever" just before the outbreak of war. The pristine appearance of the set is further emphasized by its sharp contrast with the newsreel and propaganda footage of destroyed European cities familiar to American audiences in 1942. The movie presents itself as a comedy, a Hollywood fantasy. The opening shots, following a credit sequence in which the names of Lubitsch, Benny, and Lombard figure, might induce expectations of a light Hollywood comedy. But I would like to suggest that the relationship of the film to the newsreel and propaganda genres, put forth in the first shots, disrupts such expectations.

Once again, something is wrong with this picture; the narrator and images tell us as much in the next moment. The excitement in the voice rises by a notch as we see a montage of wide-eyed faces in close-up, "staring in one direction": "Are those Poles seeing a ghost?" That is, Warsaw, or at least this somewhat cheesy version of it, may be

haunted. Something that does not belong here is here, further calling into question the authenticity and grounding in concrete reality of what appears on-screen. The unnamed off-screen thing disrupts the serenity and pristine quality of the image: an expectation arises that what the people on-screen are seeing will become visible. These witnesses are then also standing in, on-screen, for the spectators of To Be or Not to Be: the first sounds and images are haunted by an insecurity, the threat of inauthenticity, and the latter attracts the wondering eyes of the film's spectators. These eyes are about to be granted at least a momentary satisfaction, which will itself be seen as haunted and hence lead to further wondering. The out-of-place element in Warsaw – all the more out-of-place in this simulacrum of Warsaw that has not yet been overrun by the National Socialist juggernaut – is of course "the man with the little mustache, Adolf Hitler."

The resemblance of the actor, Tom Dugan, to Hitler is remarkable here. The little mustache functions as unifying center of the resemblance, and hence as the metonymic signifier of Adolf Hitler; Dugan's uniform also contributes to the picture. When Dugan begins to walk, imitating Hitler's deliberate swagger, the simulation approaches perfection. But the perfection is tenuous for a number of reasons. An authentic-looking Hitler stands in this artificial setting, this Hollywood Warsaw. And as the narrator mentions, an essential Hitlerian element is missing: the entourage with which his propaganda machine always represents him. According to this machine, which perhaps achieves its strongest expression in Triumph of the Will, Hitler is at every moment the one to be followed. Within the diegesis, this Hitler, not quite knowing where to stand or what to look at, appears to be an actor playing Hitler. Largely through the on-screen audience by way of whom he is introduced, this on-screen Hitler constitutes the sign that points to the extradiegetic fact that he is played by an actor. Even before the narrative enters the Teatr Polski, it foregrounds theatricality.

The Fuhrer himself becomes a spectator when he looks through the window of Mr. Mazlowski's delicatessen. But as soon as Mr. Mazlowski reacts by widening his eyes, Hitler resumes his role as spectacle. Signaled here is a theme that will run throughout the movie, that of the reversibility of the roles of spectator and actor. The correlative suggestion, which extends to the cinema audience, is that spectatorship itself constitutes a role, a role that either grants legitimacy to or refuses the spectacle. Mr. Mazlowski refuses the spectacle of Hitler by closing the curtain of his shop window; at this moment the window strongly resembles a stage. The spectators to the film are left, as it were, behind the scenes with Hitler; along with the spectators represented on-screen, they are cued to wonder what has produced this image of the presence of Hitler in Warsaw. The opening sequence establishes the relationship between the on-screen and the off-screen spectators: each group looks at a spectacle that is insecure in its authenticity. At the moment the curtain beyond Hitler closes, the narrator poses a question on behalf of both groups: "How did he get here? What happened?" Again, the continual suggestion is that something is wrong with this picture – whether it is a romantic comedy, a contribution to the campaign against Hitler that begins by placing him in this ridiculous situation, or a discomforting mixture of both.

The image of Hitler that first appears in To Be or Not to Be is a simulacrum: it partakes of the series of simulacra that Hitler constituted, at one end by his production of an image of himself and at the other end by the rampant reproduction and caricaturing of this image in the media. The Führer himself belongs to this series, insecure in his authenticity, aware that he has invented his own image, and for these reasons forestalling efforts at reproducing that image. The image of the Fuhrer that Hitler and his propaganda apparatus attempt to control is indeed a simulacrum: but it is the simulacrum that prescribes itself as representative of absolute reality, imposing itself on reality and committing violence to the latter. Lubitsch's film offers a vastly important critical insight in its examination of the procedure by which the simulacrum of Hitler is instituted as reality, and hence as centerpiece of the world as National Socialist propaganda would have it. Indeed, later in the movie Maria Tura (Carole Lombard) presents this procedure as central to the program of violence carried out by the Nazi state apparatus. Using her histrionic capacities to insinuate herself into the Nazi hierarchy, she responds to the claim of the ideologue Professor Siletsky (Stanley Ridges) that Nazism is purely and simply the attempt "to create a happy world": "And people who don't want to be happy have no place in this happy world – well, that makes sense." That is, those who do not conform to the imposed image of the good world are simply removed from the world that the image aims to occupy.

In response to the question "How did he get here?" the voice-over narration promises an explanation of the insecure appearance of Hitler on the streets of Warsaw: "Well, it all started in the general headquarters of the Gestapo in Berlin," a place where the images of Nazism may perhaps be anchored. As the ensuing sequence shows this sentence to be at best misleading and at worst downright false, the authority of the narrator's voice is further undercut; so is the image of Hitler and the series in which it partakes. By way of explanation, the scene dissolves from Hitler to Gestapo Headquarters, signaled by a door opening to reveal a swastika banner in a corridor. An adjutant (George Lynn) enters carrying a dossier. The camera follows him to the desk of Jack Benny, displaced and misplaced in a Gestapo uniform and seated beneath a large portrait of Hitler; the adjutant greets his superior with the "Heil Hitler" salute. We then see a close-up of Benny returning the salute with a yawn, a comic undermining of the standard image of the unflaggingly rigid and disciplined Gestapo officer. Benny's character then himself "gets in character," correcting the flaw in his image with a clipped, serious "Heil Hitler." He repeats the first gesture, which appears as a kind of rehearsal for the second: the second is a repetition or copy of the first, but the first is a poor copy of the model of the Hitler salute, properly enacted in its second instance. Benny's double repetition places in question the groundedness of any original or correct Hitler salute through the suggestion that the original may subsist only in its copies or repetitions. Lubitsch thereby accentuates the suspicion that Nazi discipline is a matter of histrionics. The impeccability with which Lubitsch's actors portray bumbling actors offers a contrast that underscores the insecure nature of the actors who, in Europe, are putting on the show that constitutes Nazi propaganda and propagation.

The sequence moves further into farce, a parody of Nazism. The scene increases its farcical tone until the illusion must burst and display what is creating it. The two officers proceed to the interrogation of a young boy (Peter Caldwell) whose father has been telling a joke about Hitler. The joke, which trivializes Hitler by placing him in a series of memorial caricatures of dictators, is incorporated into the comedy of the farce. The boy reports his father's words: "Well, he said they named a brandy after Napoleon, and they made a herring out of Bismarck, and Hitler's going to end up as...." The boy does not finish the joke because the adjutant does so for him: "A piece of cheese." This stealing of the punch line has a twofold effect: it makes spectators aware that a German officer might also tell forbidden jokes about Hitler, and it thereby prompts the superior officer, also a spectator and brought to the same awareness, to ask, "How did you know?" The adjutant who has been farcically caught off guard fumbles for an answer: "Well, it's – it's a natural thought." Presumably, Hitler may naturally be conceived as a piece of cheese because of his cheesy, overdone nature. In response to the superior's anger, the adjutant continues to fumble until he finds the right response: "Heil Hitler!" Given the requirement that this phrase be answered by its repetition, the exchange is brought to an end. "Heil Hitler" is first repeated by Benny, then the boy – and then three more times by cries from the corridor, which take the three on-screen characters by surprise. This surprise is a cue to spectators to wonder at the extensive repetition of the two words and to hear them, through such overuse, as emptied of meaning. The words become distant from authenticity and the figure in which they ostensibly originate.

Just as this emptying occurs, another officer steps through the door to announce, as though to re-anchor the repeated phrase in a meaning, "Der Fuhrer!" None other than the Fuhrer himself then appears – the insecure Fuhrer from the streets of Warsaw, rendered more insecure by the travesty of Nazism by which he has been introduced. In response to the frantic, choral "Heil Hitler" of the three characters, Hitler raises his right arm and responds in an utterly inauthentic manner: "Heil myself." The real Hitler would never say "Heil myself," for in order to be the real Hitler he must represent himself as an image repeatable, within strict controls, outside himself. If Hitler were to say "Heil myself," he would deflate the image of the Fuhrer and render himself an undoubled self, an ordinary man – what he absolutely cannot be if he is to oversee the propaganda and propagation of Nazism.

The next shot completely destroys the anchor that the location of Gestapo Headquarters initially promised. A man in a suit (Charles Halton), not a uniform, sits at a desk with theater seats behind him, commanding in posture and tone: "That's not in the script." This man is a director; the action of the opening sequence reveals itself to be the

rehearsal of a farcical play about the Gestapo. The farce of the sequence is augmented by the uneven aspects of the rehearsal. The director of the play directs the director of the Nazi spectacle; he is a civilian in charge of this spectacle of militarism, and thereby himself a theatrical simulacrum. This shot shifts the signification of the entire sequence. The movie has not quite offered a farcical representation of Gestapo Headquarters but rather a representation of such a representation, which in turn becomes a farce. When the scene cuts back to "Hitler," it is not Hitler but rather an actor playing Hitler, an actor who does not have command over his own role or even his own person, in that the director has the right to command him. The military trappings of the set transform into an effect of theatricality. In the ensuing exchange the director and actor call each other by name, Dobosh and Bronsky, respectively. The scene, then, appears to be back in Poland – not only neither Gestapo Headquarters nor the military, but not even Germany. The following shot, in which Dobosh and Bronsky approach each other, merges the previously distinct spaces of the Polish Theater and Gestapo Headquarters. In keeping with the film's self-reflexivity, Bronsky insists that his words will "get a laugh." Dobosh responds, "I don't want a laugh."

The argument between the two directors, "Hitler" and Dobosh, takes place with the imposing portrait of Hitler lined by swastikas in the background – the theater brings together these disparate elements. Another actor, Greenberg (Felix Bressart), intervenes to unsettle Dobosh's authority even further with a remark that somewhat grotesquely juxtaposes two bodily functions: "A laugh is nothing to be sneezed at." The images of very serious military authority clash sharply with Dobosh's inability to maintain the seriousness of his own authority over the spectacle he is directing. He insists, in the chaos, "This is a serious play – a realistic drama." Lubitsch self-reflexively raises questions of whether comedy can convey seriousness and of the appropriateness of mixing the two; he deliberately cues the expectation that the two genres be kept separate in order to broadside it. He advances the possibility that the conquest of Europe, which depends on the absolutely serious transmission of an authority centralized in Hitler, may be combated when images borrowed from that transmission are turned into comedy by cinematic technique. Within the film, comedy ensues because the seriousness of authority, and thereby authority itself, cannot be maintained. The authority in the voice-over narration erodes through the revelation of its dishonesty, since the story of Hitler's appearance on the streets of Warsaw did not, after all, start in Gestapo Headquarters in Berlin. This voice loses its authority, the on-screen Hitler has lost his authority, and the director of this Hitler cannot maintain his authority. That is, these images are entirely insecure in their authenticity insofar as the latter is integral to the transmission of authority.

Before Lubitsch's direction returns the scene to the explanation, the argument among the personnel expands. Maria Tura insists that the elegant, luxurious dress she has selected for the concentration camp torture scene will further underscore the horror, while her expressions suggest that the dress will promote her vain image of herself. Greenberg, who has just been designated as Jewish through a play on the word ham in connection with a blustery actor, remarks that the incongruity will get a "terrific laugh." Along the lines of Bronsky's shattered image of Hitler, this incongruity will get a laugh because it suddenly erupts to disturb the seriousness of the ostensibly true image. As the character who most intensely faces the prospect of his own existence and identity being wiped out by the imposition of the Nazi simulacrum as representative of reality – whose existence and identity are accorded no place in that representation – Greenberg sees incongruity as an effective subversion of the imposition, since it becomes comic in an extreme situation. Farcical incongruity, of course, is not what the serious director wants in his "realistic drama," his "document of Nazi Germany."

Dobosh's attitude is mocked not only by the actors but also more generally by the continuation of events, which refuse to return to documentary seriousness. When the chaos subsides to give way to the promised explanation, the latter is left in shambles, along with the cohesiveness of the image of Hitler in Warsaw. In the course of the argument, Dobosh finds fault with Bronsky's make-up and raises problems with the actor's capacity to represent Hitler convincingly. He says, "I just can't smell Hitler in him." To this remark, Greenberg retorts, "I can." In light of the earlier cheese joke, this exchange suggests that this simulacrum of Hitler is not sufficiently cheesy to give off the odor of Hitler and hence to pass for him. Greenberg, whose Jewishness may lead him to take this image more seriously, and to do so by way of mockery, does find sufficient cheesiness in it. He is the one character so far who affirms the effectiveness of blending horror and farce. In this respect, Greenberg's attitudes most closely represent Lubitsch's. Rosenberg points out that Greenberg's references to the nasal functions of sneezing and smelling, along with the repeated visual intrusion of his nose when he intervenes in an argument, further signal his, and Lubitsch's, Jewishness – that is, that more seriousness concerning the European situation, the literal representation of a Jew, quietly appears on-screen.

Dobosh continues to defend his view, pointing to the oversized, rather cheesy portrait of Hitler that decorates the stage. The portrait is fully imposing, framed in a separate shot in the sequence: it is a picture of the Fuhrer that to Dobosh looks right. But when the shot comes back to Dobosh and Bronsky, Bronsky protests, "But that picture was taken of me." Again, Lubitsch's montage renders completely inauthentic one element that appeared fully authentic, the portrait of Hitler. Bronsky is effectively declaring that he, as an image of Hitler, is the original of the image designated by directorial authority as the original image of Hitler. When Dobosh snaps back that the picture is then also wrong, he is advancing the discovery that the image he is seeking and the series of images that constitute Hitler and his power have a fleeting essence. In order to prove the authenticity of his impersonation of Hitler, Bronsky then goes out to the street to "see what happens" – he will be a spectator to the spectators who will see him playing Hitler. The narrator tells us definitively, introducing the dissolve back to the shot of Hitler on the street, "And that's how Adolf Hitler came to Warsaw in August, 1939."

Through dividing the shot of Hitler on the street in dissolves to and from the explanatory sequence, Lubitsch has completely transformed what the shot signifies. It began by signifying Hitler in the process of conquering Poland, albeit in insecure fashion, and finishes by signifying an actor playing Hitler in order to conquer his director's opinion of him. There is no propagandistic or documentary authority left in the voice-over nor any in the image of Hitler in Warsaw. To Be or Not to Be turns out to be an effective piece of antipropaganda: it combats serious, imposing, and authoritative images of Hitler with farcical ones, even as it presents a serious critique of the very underpinnings of the propaganda genre. Lubitsch later appears to dip seriously back into propaganda, when the voice-over, paired with newsreel footage of bombers in flight, speaks in highly laudable fashion of the Polish Squadron of the RAF. The effect is that the propaganda and antipropaganda effects of the movie stand in relation to one another so that it cannot definitively be said what one is watching.

Repeating situations

A relationship of two or more signs that call each other's status into question runs throughout the movie. Such a relationship governs the montage of the opening sequence. Each sign – whether it consists of an element in a shot, an entire shot, or a sequence – points to at least one other; in so doing it jostles the latter's capacity to signify clearly. Rather than signifying a reality by representing it in a picture, these signs advance their own incapacity to signify through such representation. Functioning together as a system, they are indices of their overall incapacity to transmit authentic reality. I have underscored a juxtaposition of shots that introduces a great distance between two situations that may be signified by the same sign – that is, "Hitler" may signify either Hitler in Warsaw or a second-rate actor playing Hitler. Gilles Deleuze remarks that through this procedure Lubitsch presents irresolvable images: the director extends the strategy through the entire movie to constitute parallel sequences. In their appearance these sequences are quite similar, but in the progress of the plot they turn out to be vastly different. In the next section I will address the film's most important pair of sequences.

The plot develops when the Polish government cancels the production of the play in rehearsal, Gestapo, in order to appease Hitler on the eve of the invasion. The company instead continues to stage Hamlet. After the invasion, responding to a particularly dire situation for the Warsaw underground, the actors use their stage uniforms to impersonate members of the Gestapo, with the result that they end up cueing the behavior of the ostensibly real Gestapo. Once again the movie points to the theatricality of the National Socialist apparatus. In the film's most important pair of sequences, Joseph Tura plays both roles in a repeated situation in which the Warsaw Gestapo commander, Colonel Ehrhardt (Sig Rumann), interviews the Gestapo operative,

Professor Siletsky. The two repeat and extend the rehearsal of Gestapo in the opening sequence. Siletsky has infiltrated the exiled Polish military in London and now plans to use the information he has gathered to wipe out the Polish resistance, through the agency of Colonel Ehrhardt. Of course, Tura cannot resist overplaying the role, nor can he fend off his own vanity; among actors, he is not alone. Everyone involved becomes an actor and every situation dramatic when the Teatr Polski is transformed into Gestapo Headquarters.

Siletsky, having acted the role of the sympathetic Allied propagandist in London, has now switched to his "true" role of Gestapo operative. The interaction with Tura, playing the role of Colonel Ehrhardt, underscores the theatricality of Siletsky's role: Tura's dramatic gifts are in force and his manner oddly harmonizes with Siletsky's Gestapo behavior. Siletsky offers the ersatz Ehrhardt a compliment: "You know, you re quite famous in London, Colonel: they call you `Concentration Camp Ehrhardt. He is indicating to "Ehrhardt" that he has a reputation, an image that goes beyond his person, a theatrical aura. And Tura, soon running out of dialogue, repeats the epithet with feigned pride, falteringly playing the role of the pleased actor, and he continues to repeat it, as though in rehearsal. But of course he can not help playing Joseph Tura, bringing his own vanity into the conversation and hence calling attention to the simulated nature of his role as Gestapo officer. He has rehearsed this role in the theater and is now acting it. He speaks of himself in the third person, producing himself as an image outside himself: he asks Siletsky if he has heard of "that great, great Polish actor, Joseph Tura." Tura's behavior in this regard repeats that of Hitler, who played the Fuhrer as someone other than himself: out of vanity, Tura plays a character whose authenticity depends on his spectators not knowing that he is the vain Joseph Tura.

But the actual Gestapo agent never escapes the drama: he is trapped in the theater, pursued by the theater company, the spotlight on him as he runs across the stage. By affinity with an earlier sequence in which soldiers deploy a searchlight to apprehend the young and heroic Lieutenant Sobinski (Robert Stack), the film offers the relationship of spotlight and searchlight, along with the broader one of drama and militarism – as propaganda and coercion – both involving image production. When Sobinski pursues Siletsky in the theater, we see the most unequivocally dramatic moment of the movie so far: the curtain rises as though on the final act of a drama, and Siletsky dies a death that is very real but at the same time quite theatrical. It is on stage and thus constitutes a spectacle for the actors who have now been transformed into spectators. It is a death accompanied by dull screams and downplayed blood of the sort that Hollywood has often avoided because they may be more disturbing than their exaggerated, sensationalized simulacra. Siletsky makes one final gesture, a Hitler salute, apparently for the benefit of his newfound audience. Even as the drama of To Be or Not to Be points to brute reality, in the form of a death, it strongly discourages forgetting, even for a moment, that representation involves the production of an image rather than the simple reproduction of an object in an image.

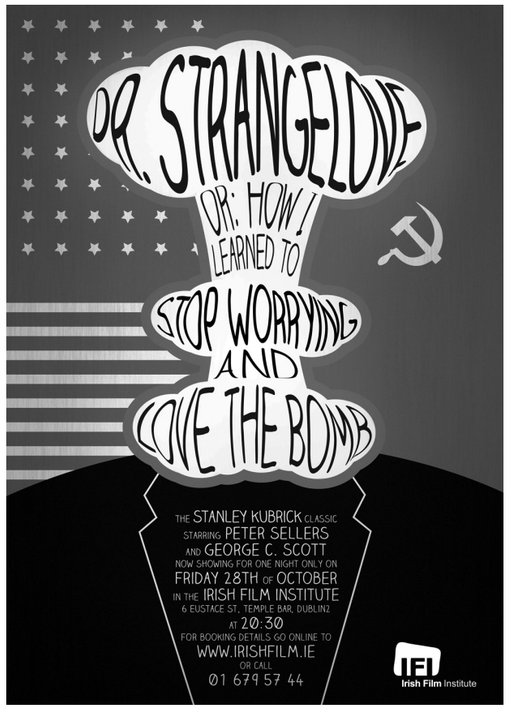
Now that Siletsky is dead, the actors must wrap up business with the Gestapo. In the meeting with the ostensibly real Ehrhardt, Tura impersonates Siletsky: the meeting is a repetition or simulacrum of the first. But as the first is dramatic, a product of theatricality, it is not the authentic original of which the second would be an image or reproduction. Rather, there is a reversibility between the two sequences, as each is the image of the other. In this sense, the first is as much a repetition of the second as the second is of the first. But the first is also a repetition in the sense that it is a rehearsal for the second. The second, representing a meeting with the ostensibly real Gestapo colonel, is the more effectively real of the two in that it is the more consequential for the actor- protagonists. The first repetition offers the actors the occasion to rehearse for the second, which completes the real, or consequential, infiltration of the Gestapo. Not only does the Gestapo colonel have the same sense of theatricality about himself that Tura gave to the role he played, but the way that he reveals his own theatrical quality has also been foretold in the theater company's play. The situation has progressed from the first rehearsal of Gestapo behavior in the theater, through repetition in the theater with an actual Gestapo agent, to another repetition in Gestapo headquarters. The difference between the situations is the increase in the proximity of death. As for Hamlet, the question is "to be or not to be" – a question that signals the transformation of theatrical death into real death, and hence the nature of the relation between simulacrum and reality.

The image of the efficient Gestapo officer – presented in the adjutant Captain Schultz (Henry Victor), a big man who plays a little Hitler by refusing to drink, smoke, or eat meat – is shown to be an act when Ehrhardt tells "Siletsky" the "funny story" about the Fuhrer ending up as a piece of cheese. The Nazi shows a sense of humor about Hitler's cheesiness or overdone theatricality; he must then cover for his having revealed this theatricality by "getting in character" as the serious Gestapo officer. And he is prompted to do so by the actor, Tura, playing the more serious Siletsky. Lubitsch continues to represent Nazi seriousness as the effect of histrionics and image production. Tura is able to react appropriately, as an ostensibly real Gestapo agent, because he has already rehearsed the part in the theater. And this story that reveals the Gestapo colonel's persona to be an act began circulating in the theater. Colonel Ehrhardt has momentarily forgotten his role; he can escape his dramatic predicament only by taking recourse to the dramatic gesture of saying "Heil Hitler" – it ends the exchange and saves him. And it is a cue that has been cued by the play we saw at the beginning of the film. Tura, overplaying his role as a Gestapo agent, nonetheless plays it perfectly. Even when Tura's vanity arises, Lubitsch seizes the occasion for comic incongruity, that between the actor's self-image and the way he is perceived by others. The third time that Tura mentions that "great, great Polish actor, Joseph Tura," he finds someone who has actually seen him on stage. Colonel Ehrhardt's characterization of Tura immediately deflates the latter's vanity: "What he did to Shakespeare we are doing now to Poland." Lubitsch renders the National Socialist performance as a ham-and-cheese act that, through imposing itself as absolute reality, engages in the most extreme violence.

The end of propaganda

To Be or Not to Be puts forth images of Nazism and calls into question their authenticity and authority. Lubitsch incorporates theater into cinematic technique so as to arrive at this effect. Propagandistic images that would be seriously imposed relentlessly fall into farcical ruin. To Be or Not to Be is a product of Hollywood in the heyday of the grand studio system, and Lubitsch was among the consummate producers and directors of this system. By bringing the propagandistic elements of his own film into close proximity with those of National Socialism, he shows an awareness that Hollywood is at once a parallel to and a refuge from the cinematic segment of the Nazi state apparatus. Although Lubitsch himself left Berlin in 1922, in the 1930s Hollywood saw an influx of escapees from the film industry Hitler had commandeered for the National Socialist cause. The on-screen appearance of two of them (Felix Bressart and Sig Rumann) contributes to the quasi-authenticity of the images questioned in To Be or Not to Be. Although Lubitsch recognizes the importance of propaganda film for the Allied cause, he equally suggests that Hollywood's strategies of image propagation must be placed in question. The questioning goes to the heart of the cinema, to what renders possible a propagandistic image and its coercive powers. If the response to Hamlet's tragic question is a valorization of the simulacrum, then the resulting comedy, the ludic of Lubitsch, works toward disarming these powers.

Hassan Melehy, *Lubitsch's To Be or Not to Be: the question of simulation in cinema* (2001)



Stanley Kubrick, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

Jeremy Boxen

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED
Cold War Purging, Political Dissent, and the Right Hand of Dr. Strangelove

"The truth is bad enough – but nowhere near as bad as you probably think. The truth will do away with a lot of silly ideas, a lot of completely wrong notions, which millions of people now believe about the atomic bomb. These ideas could easily cause great panic. And right now the possibility of panic is one of the best weapons any enemy could use against us." (Gerstell, How to Survive an Atomic Bomb, p.1)

"Why should the bomb be approached with reverence? Reverence can be a paralyzing state of mind. For me the comic sense is the most eminently human reaction to the mysteries and the paradoxes of life. I just hope some of them are illuminated by the exaggerations and the style of the film. And I don't see why an artist has to do any more than produce an artistic experience that reflects his thinking." (Stanley Kubrick quoted in Wainright, p.15)

In the third decade of the Cold War, less than two years after the United States population had been scared half-way to death by te Cub invaded the nation's movie theatres and showed the country the end of the world. Touted by critics then and now as the film of the decade, Dr. Strangelove savagely mocked the President, the entire military defense establishment, and the rhetoric of the Cold War. To a nation that was living through the stress of the nuclear arms race and had faced the real prospect of nuclear war, the satiric treatment of the nation's leaders was an orgasmic release from deep fears and tensions. Its detractors argued that the film was juvenile, offensive, and inaccurate. Viewed, however, in its context of the Cold War and nuclear proliferation, Dr. Strangelove represents to the United States a purging of Cold War rhetoric and anxiety and the beginning of the wave of political and cultural dissent that would climax in the late 1960s.

Dr. Strangelove opened in January 1964, denouncing the nuclear arms race and its players only a few months after American President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev signed a treaty banning the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons (Time 2 Aug. 1963). More importantly, these same two leaders had been on the verge of taking their countries to war only two years before in a showdown over Cuba, so the American people were well aware of how it felt to be on the edge of nuclear disaster. In October 1962 President Kennedy threatened Soviet Premier Khrushchev with war if Soviet missile bases on Cuba were not dismantled and shipments of arms bound for the island were not aborted. The country waited for one tense week for the nuclear bombing to begin – but it never happened. Khrushchev blinked and prevented the end of civilization. Dr. Strangelove did not. Rather, Dr. Strangelove created a nightmarish scenario of atomic annihilation in which the mad Strategic Air Force (SAC) general Jack D. Ripper seals off his base and orders his bombers to attack their Russian targets. He acts under the provisions of "Plan R," a contingency plan that authorizes lower-level military officers to launch a nuclear strike in the event that the President is unable to do so himself. The men who must deal with this rogue general and his threat to civilization are satirically portrayed: the head of Joint-Chiefs-of- Staff, General Buck Turgidson, is a gum-chewing, childishly aggressive lover of military might; Dr. Strangelove, the brains of the American weapons program, is an ex-Nazi scientist whose right hand alternates between trying to choke its owner and snapping out in a fascist salute. Higher up in power, the President seems sadly overwhelmed by events and comes across as an effeminate ineffectualist while his Soviet counterpart, Premier Kissov, is a drunken womanizer. In the end none of them can prevent a lone American bomber from penetrating Russian defences and dropping its load to trigger the Soviet Doomsday Device, which releases enough radiation over the world to make it uninhabitable for ninety-nine years. The film is a humorous yet scathing and timely indictment of the military and the Cold War nuclear arms race. It broke attendance records across the United States, causing a jubilant-sounding Columbia Pictures to shout in bold-face capitals on the

front page of Variety, "FLASH! STANLEY KUBRICK'S DR. STRANGELOVE BREAKS EVERY OPENING-WEEK RECORD IN HISTORY OF VICTORIA THEATRE (NEW YORK), BARONET THEATRE (NEW YORK), COLUMBIA THEATRE (LONDON)" and placing it on Variety's January 1965 list of "All-Time Top Grossers" (5 Feb. 1964; 6 Jan. 1965). This box-office success suggests that the film's satirical dissent appealed to a society that was beginning to question its blind faith in government policies and actions.

From the end of World War II until the 1960s, national sentiment vigorously supported both the government's animosity toward Soviet Russia and its accompanying military nuclear development program. Joyce Nelson argues in The Perfect Machine that the American government followed a strategy of censorship and compartmentalization of knowledge to manipulate the media and the public in the late 1940s and 1950s into accepting this policy of anti-communism and nuclear arms stockpiling, which was used to maintain the war economy that the U. S. had enjoyed during World War II. From the earliest stages of its development, secrecy veiled the nuclear bomb. Nelson explains that the U. S. Manhattan Project was hidden from the public, and its goal of producing a nuclear weapon was hidden even from most of the project's thousands of employees. When the bomb was dropped on Japan, information about its effects on human beings was censored by the U.S. government, which concentrated its publicity campaign on the bomb as a "technological spectacle" Television emerged at the same time as the bomb and, Nelson argues, helped to direct attention away from fears about nuclear radiation to the threat of communism by transmitting the communist witch-hunts of the House Committee of Un-American Activities. Moreover, companies such as General Electric, Westinghouse, and Du Pont had defence contracts with the government while they also provided major sponsorship for television. They "were just a few of the corporations likely to gain from a political climate that was simultaneouly hunting down the major enemy in communism and building up 'the sunny side of the atom'". Television, Nelson explains, broadcast live nuclear test explosions to dispel fears about radiation and display the awesome power which the U.S. had at its command. Thus, government control of knowledge and television's portrayals of communism and the bomb aroused support for the funding of the military's nuclear program.

The Government also had help from Hollywood in promoting the bomb. While Government-sponsored publications like How to Survive a Nuclear Bomb tried to create a public that was passively receptive to the bomb with reassurances such as, "Scientists say it would take almost a million atomic bombs all exploded in a very short time to 'doom' the earth. So don't worry about that. Just keep facts in mind, and forget the fairy stories. Follow the safety rules. Avoid panic. And you'll come through all right" – Hollywood was producing pro-military films. According to Lawrence Suid, "during the 1950s, with the exception of a few science fiction movies, Hollywood had portrayed the bomb as the instrument that had brought peace to the world and had helped maintain it duing the height of the Cold War". Before the 1960s, films, almost without exception, portrayed a positive image of the American military. Hollywood had little reason not to do so. Both World Wars and Korea showcased the effectiveness of the armed forces, while such pillars of the Hollwyood studio system as "Frank Capra, John Huston, George Stevens, John Ford and Darryl Zanuck" had formed friendships within the military during their service in the Second World War. Furthermore, by making pictures of which the armed forces approved, productions could save money by using military equipment, and writers who knew little of the details of the military could submit scripts to the armed forces for procedural and technical advice. Hollywood thus ended up as a sort of public relations department for the military.

Kubrick was not limited by any of these considerations. By 1964 the studio system had given way to independent producers, resulting in the disintegration of Hollywood's personal bonds to the military. A trend of anti-militarism, which would split the nation by the latter part of the decade, was also building in strength. Columbia, the film's distributor, thus felt confident enough to provide the project's reported $2 million budget. In addition, Kubrick had done his own research on nuclear warfare by consuming some seventy books on the subject, thus the military's refusal even to look at his script was not a stumbling block. As for equipment, apart from some jeeps, the only large piece of military machinery in the film is the B-52 bomber that flies its way over the icy desert of Siberia. The interior of the plane, based on a photograph of a B-52 cockpit in a magazine, was built in a studio, while the image of the plane in flight was achieved with special effects. All these factors let Kubrick have the freedom to voice his opinion on the madness of nuclear proliferation.

Dr. Strangelove was not alone in its denunciation of the military. The early 1960s were conducive to "antiestablishment, antimilitary movies" A special double-length issue of Life magazine from 1963 showcased two upcoming anti-military films: The Victors (1964), which satirized the previously untouchable image of the U. S. military in World War II, and Dr. Strangelove. Both films were portrayed in a favorable light: "Morally, both films are right on the line in making their bid for peace ... Dr. Strangelove through fearful mockery of it". Moreover, the editor's note at the front of the magazine suggests that the nation was growing weary of patriotic fare: "The enthronement of the director has focused responsibility on an individual artistic conscience, where it should have been all along ...movies, as an art, have matured beyond the point where they need to be considered instruments of national policy". The climate for Dr. Strangelove seemed favourable.

There was, of course, resistance to the film from conservative elements. Kubrick's vision ruffled a lot of patriotic feathers, as is evident from two letters written to the New York Times at the time of the film's release. "Dr. Strangelove is straight propaganda, and dangerous propaganda at that," wrote Jeanne McQuade. "It is an anti-American tract unmatched in invective by even our declared enemies." Michael Getler added that the film "indulges in the most insidious and highly dangerous form of public opinion tampering concerning a vital sector of our national life, a sector which needs public funds, public understanding and public support to do its job." Some of the actual reviews expressed sentiments similar to these two letters. Bosley Crowther, writing for the New York Times, voiced his own frustration with the film in two separate reviews. In the first he protested, "When virtually everybody turns up stupid or insane – or, what is worse, psychopathic – I want to know what this picture proves" (31 Jan. 1964). In the second review he added that the film was "a bit too contemptuous of our defense establishment for my comfort and taste". Other attacks on the film accused it of inaccurately portraying those in charge of the bomb as complete fools and of misrepresenting accidental nuclear war safe guard procedures. "A professional foreign policy expert" wrote that "had [Kubrick] so cared he could have easily ascertained the publicly available facts under the command and control of our nuclear forces". The satire of Dr. Strangelove appeared to have been taken quite seriously by patriots and military experts. Despite its factual inaccuracies, many reviewers of the film praised its believability. The review in Newsweek described the scenario of the film as one "which Kubrick makes perfectly plausible," and Brendan Gill in The New Yorker described it as a film that contains "horrors that, though outrageous, ring absolutely true". Tom Milne, writing for Sight and Sound, remarked that the criticisms of its implausibility echo those of The Manchurian Candidate, a film whose fear of a presidential assasination conspiracy was justified by the murder of President Kennedy in December, 1963. Just to show that reality was sometimes as ridiculous as the world of Dr. Strangelove, the end of the film bears a striking resemblance to thoughts that were actually voiced. As the world is erupting in nuclear radiation General Turgidson insists that it is the President's duty to retreat into a mine shaft cum bomb shelter – he warns that the Soviet leaders undoubtedly have their own shelters ready, and will wait in these shelters until the time is suitable to resume their quest for domination of the world. Finishing off his remarks, Turgidson warns that they must not allow the development of a "mine-shaft gap." As exaggerated as this scene seems, Ralph E. Lapp, in his 1962 book Kill and Overkill states that "there can be no doubt that a large-scale shelter program would intensify the arms race, leading to Russian shelter-building and the pyramiding of more and bigger weapons by both sides. Shelters would then become part of a vicious circle in strategic thinking". While some details within the film were inaccurate then, the certain events within the film could be perceived as realistic.

More than anything, the plausibility of the film rested on its ability to tap into the deep fears and anxieties that emerged in a society that shared its existence with the hydrogen bomb. In 1953, at the beginning of his presidency, Eisenhower spoke to the American Society of Newspaper Editors and remarked that even if the nightmare

of a nuclear holocaust never came to pass, the Cold War would provide, in the very least, "a life of perpetual fear and tension; a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all peoples; a wasting of strength that defies the American system". The toll that the nuclear culture took on the nation shows in letters to Time in an issue that hit the newstands immediately after the Cuban Missile Crisis. "I shall save your cover story of Aug. 23," wrote Barry B. Clark. "It will be useful for scaring my grand-children – if I ever live to have any grandchildren" (6 Sept. 1962). Dr. Strangelove seemed plausible because its exaggerations were based on rhetoric and also events, such as the missile crisis, that already had an air of horrific exaggeration about them.

The film's first satiric thrust is directed at the anti-Communist rhetoric that created the need for massive defense funding. Time's villainous description of the Soviets, contained in an issue that was published shortly after the historic signing of the test-ban treaty, neatly summarized the distrust that they inspired:

The fact that Nikita Khrushchev is speaking more softly does not mean that he has abandoned his aim to seek the expansion of Communist power, a goal so deeply rooted and institutionalized that Soviet leaders will feel almost a historical duty to exploit gaps in the capacity, unity and will of the West. (2 Aug. 1963) Letters to Time show that this attitude was ingrained in the nation's psyche. One such letter compared the treaty to the Kellog- Briand Pact with Japan in the 1920s that "did not deter the Japanese from building a fleet," while another compared Khrushchev's disarmament rhetoric to Hitler's "'Peace Speech,' a masterpiece of deceptive propaganda" (16 Aug. 1963; 9 Aug. 1963). Kubrick treats such sentiments as paranoid and childish. Mad General Ripper launches his nuclear strike because he is convinced of a communist plot to fluoridate America's water and poison the "precious bodily fluids" of the country's citizens. Later, in an effort to prevent the impending nuclear war, the President invites Soviet ambassador De Sadesky to the War Room, but General Turgidson, unable to focus beyond his own distrust, protests, "He'll see the Big Board!"

Next Kubrick attacks the militaristic glee that characterized the supporters of a policy of nuclear deterrence. Coming into power, Kennedy announced his intentions to "restore America's declining military might and stem the Communist advance across the developing world". The national pride that was associated with the military was not even diminished by the Cuban scare. "Everyone knows – or should – that the U.S., with its nuclear arsenal, is the mightest nation in human history," bragged Time in an issue following the signing of the test-ban treaty. "But few people really realize the staggering dimensions of that might ... the destructive power possessed by the U. S. simply beggars imagination." Time continued to comment that Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's comments were "profoundly encouraging" when he explained that "the U. S. is vastly superior to the Soviet Union in its nuclear arsenal and it is increasing its lead every day." The huge article on the U. S. arsenal estimated that there were 30'000 warheads on hand for launching. It went on to describe the different types of warheads and their purposes with accompanying photos of each and even a launch sequence of a polaris missile rising out of the sea (16 Aug. 1963). This glorification of the military is severly attacked by the humour of the film. Most insidiously, Kubrick satirizes this love of military might by placing Dr. Strangelove, an ex-Nazi scientist, in charge of American weapons research. Some of the rhetoric of the cold war that demonized the Soviets compared Soviet Russia to Nazi Germany. In the fifties, however, under President Truman, the U.S. decided to adopt the so-called "methods of its adversary." Instead of containing communism through diplomacy, the U.S. adopted a militant position in reducing Soviet power around the world while pursuing the ultimate goal of toppling the Soviet government. In terms of guilt by association, by adopting Russian policies, the U.S. was adopting Nazi policies as well. Thus, having Strangelove, the ex-Nazi scientist, as the brains behind the U.S. missile program makes perfect sense, especially when he erroneously calls the president "mein Fuhrer." Lewis Mumford in a letter to The New York Times agreed, praising Kubrick for "making 'Dr. Strangelove' the central symbol of this scientifically organized nightmare of mass extermination". Mr. Kubrick has not merely correctly related it to its first great exponent, Hitler, he has likewise identified the ultimate strategy of nuclear gamesmanship of precisely what it would be: an act of treason against the human race". Perhaps it was the association of the American military with the "evil" of the Nazis, who had existed only twenty years back in history, that offended so many patriots.

As the character who is directly responsible for the events leading up to the destruction of civilization, General Ripper is perhaps the scariest exaggeration in the film. And yet out of all the characters in the film, he bears the strongest resemblance to a real-life personality, namely SAC Commander Thomas Sarsfield Power. During the Kennedy administration he had command over the nuclear force of the United States, an estimated "90% of the free- world's firepower." His stance against the test-ban treaty and his willingness to fight with his superiors point to a hard-line anti- communist approach that was as individualistic as Ripper's. He fought with a congressional committee for increased funding for bombers and missiles with the conviction that a powerful deterrent was necessary "as long as our very existence is threatened by an untrustworthy, unpredictable and unreasonable power." He is known to have stated, "It is invariably the weak, not the strong, who court aggression and war," but "in 1959 he completed a book advocating, under certain conditions, a pre- emptive first strike against Russia" (30 Aug. 1963). Seen in the context of the world on the edge of war, this man is quite frightening, especially since in Kill and Overkill Lapp wrote that "with the diffusion of control of nuclear weapons to more and more hands, the chances of someone breaking under the stress are multiplied". Whether or not a real "Plan R" existed to give Power the ability to launch a nuclear strike on his own initiative is not as relevant as the fact that the public saw that this aggressive person was involved at a high level with the nuclear bomb program.

Through its mockery of Cold War people and attitudes, Dr. Strangelove gave the public scapegoats for their tension. The film allowed audiences to feel superior to the leaders of the two nations while enjoying the purging effects of primal modes of expression: laughter and tears. Describing his experience of watching the film in his youth, David Rabe writes, "It was in a state of near hysteria that I watched the great white plumes of towering nuclear devastation erupting in gyres one upon the other". Robert Brustein, writing at the time of its release, remarked that the film "is a plague experienced in the nerves and the funny bone". "I found myself at the edge of tears as I watched a series of nuclear explosions fill the screen," wrote Loudon Wainright, adding, " This happened at the very end of Dr. Strangelove ... and I had been laughing wildly for an hour and a half". Thus, part of the success of Dr. Strangelove was its appeal to base emotions in its treatment of a tense issue.

Part of the cultural revolution of the 1960s was a purveyance of sexual liberation. In this context the sexual imagery of Dr. Strangelove rises above being merely "puerile" to become part of the purging process itself, to link with the humour and terror in an orgasm – the 'little death' of the 1950s. Critics like F. Anthony Macklin pointed out that the film from beginning to end is "a sex allegory". The sexual imagery begins with the names of the characters: Buck Turgidson, Jack T. Ripper, Officer Mandrake – the mandrake root, an aphrodesiac, resembles a penis – Ambassador de Sadesky, Premier Kissov, bomber pilot Major King Kong, and President Merkin Muffley. As explained by Macklin, Merkin "means female pudendum". Layered on these names are the sexual images of the film, from the opening credits in which two planes mate in a mid-air refueling to the tune of "Try a Little Tenderness," to General Ripper's phallic cigar, machine-gun, and hydrogen bombs, to General Turgidson's liason with his secretary, played by real-life Playboy centerfold Tracey Reed. The images of the mushroom clouds make up the orgasmic finale of a film filled with the same tension that gripped the nation during the days of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Rather than depicting sexual intercourse, however, the film seems to function on levels akin to masturbation. The men in the film, unable to connect with women, find self-gratification through the bomb. General Ripper explains to Mandrake that he first hit upon the Soviet fluoridation scheme during love-making when he experienced the sense of "a loss of essence," what we can interpret as impotency. General Turgidson abandons his secretary in the middle of a tryst to meet with the President in the War Room, where in one scene Turgidson delights himself by enacting the evasive manoevres of a B-52 bomber. Finally, King Kong, shown in the start of the film looking at a centerfold of Tracey Reed, rides the hydrogen bomb down to its target, waving his cowboy hat in the air and crying out in excitement/pleasure until the moment of the climactic explosion. It is no coincidence that an unused shot from the film features Dr. Strangelove masturbating with his wayward hand.

While the bomb is a masturbation tool for the characters, the film acts as a device for the audience, the critics, and even Stanley Kubrick himself. Psychoanalytically, as described by Peter

Baxter in Wide Angle, the film arouses a sexual desire in the viewer through the only scene that features a woman, which is displaced onto the military-sexual images within the film.

Furthermore, in 1964 Stephen Taylor argued that Dr. Strangelove was a bad piece of cinema, but it allowed people who had seen it to engage in self-gratifying description of the film's humour and imagery. He continued to point out that even the critics were engaging in a manner of masturbation, maximizing their own pleasure by spouting glowing rhetoric and raving about its plot twists. In support of his argument, most of the reviews of Dr. Strangelove, from The New York Times to Newsweek to Esquire divulged the entire movement of the plot, right up until the film's final scenes. One review even called the film a piece of self- indulgent farce on the part of Kubrick. Keeping in mind that George Orwell once said that "political thought, especially on the left, is a sort of a masturbation fantasy in which the world of fact hardly matters", it is safe to say that Kubrick derived some amount of self-gratification from his dissenting tale. With audience members, critics, and director all releasing their own anxieties about the Cold War and nuclear Armageddon, Dr. Strangelove appears to have been a large circle- jerk giving pleasure and relief to its participants.

Dr. Strangelove expresses a purging of both the anxiety and the blind following of government military and foreign policies that distinguished the 1940s and 1950s. Lewis Mumford said as much in his popularly quoted letter to the Times defending Dr. Strangelove: "This film is the first break in the catatonic cold war trance that has so long held our country in its rigid grip" Dr. Strangelove was an indicator of the times, for "by 1965 America was a changed country. Commitment, idealism, and dissent had come to replace the patriotic apathy of the 1950s". Furthermore, the film's appeal to an emerging group of socially aware, university-educated young adults was noted by many critics. In his book Medium Cool, Ethan Mordden describes Dr. Strangelove as belonging to the category of "High Maestro Film," which is defined by him as "aritistically and culturally hip ... appealing to the intelligentsia but generally popular as well, so the intellectuals have a major topic to address when they discuss it". Susan Sontag's review of a 1962 preview of the film confirms this classification: "Intellectuals and adolescents both love it. But the 16-year olds who are lining up to see it understand the film and its real virtues, better than the intellectuals, who vastly overpraise it". In the later part of the decade, these sixteen-year-olds would become the university students who dominated the movement of political protest and counter-culture lifestyle that resulted in the large anti-war demonstrations in New York, Chicago, and Washington. 500'000 of these young adults would turn up for the Woodstock concert of 1969, which was as much of a defining event of the late 1960s as the Vietnam protest in Washington, occurring a few months later in the same year and drawing the same number of people. As much as any film can claim to influence a society, Dr. Strangelove helped to fuel a generation of dissent.

Dr. Strangelove, then, effectively addressed the rational and irrational fears of the American public concerning the hydrogen bomb and marked the beginning of the anti-military movement of the 1960s. Taylor, while panning the film, stated that "it is a milestone. It promises a beginning to large-scale consideration of the folly of American and Soviet nuclear policy". Kubrick, dipping into the reservoir of icons and rhetoric of the Cold War, exorcised the demons of nuclear culture from the nation's collective unconcious and encouraged dissent. Just as the right hand of Dr. Strangelove had the capacity to salute a totalitarian regime or to bring sexual release to its owner, the United States of the mid-1960s was caught between right-wing militarism and the emerging generation of pacifists, whose slogan of "Make love, not war" would make the decade a turning point in American culture.

Jeremy Boxen, *Just what the Doctor ordered* (1997)

Robert Altman, *M*A*S*H* (1970)

THREE REVIEWS

Pauline Kael
The New Yorker
January 24, 1970

M*A*S*H is a marvellously unstable comedy, a tough, funny, and sophisticated burlesque of military attitudes that is at the same time a tale of chivalry. It's a sick joke, but it's also generous and romantic - an erratic episodic film, full of the pleasures of the unexpected. I think it's the closest an American movie has come to the kind of constantly surprising mixture in Shoot the Piano Player, though M*A*S*H moves so fast that it's over before you have time to think of comparisons. While it's going on, you're busy listening to some of the best overlapping comic dialogue ever recorded. The picture has so much spirit that you keep laughing - and without discomfort, because all the targets should be laughed at. The laughter is at the horror and absurdities of war, and, specifically, at people who flourish in the military bureaucracy. The title letters stand for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital; the heroes, played by Donald Sutherland and Elliot Gould, are combat surgeons patching up caualties a few miles from the front during the Korean war. They do their surgery in style, with humor; they're hip Galahads, saving lives while ragging the military bureaucracy. They are so quick to react to bull - and in startling and unpredictable ways - that the comedy is, at times, almost a poetic fantasy. There's a surreal innocence about the movie; though the setting makes it seem a "black" comedy, it's a cheery "black" comedy. The heroes win at everything. It's a modern kid's dream of glory: Holden Caulifield would, I think, approve of them. They're great surgeons, athletes, dashing men of the world, sexy, full of noblesse oblige, but ruthless to those with pretensions and lethal to hypocrites. They're so good at what they do that even the military brass admires them. They're winners in the war with the Army.

War comedies in the past have usually been about the little guys who foul things up and become heroes by accident (Chaplin in Shoulder Arms, Danny Kaye in Up in Arms). In that comedy tradition, the sad sack recruit is too stupid to comprehend military ritual. These heroes are too smart to put up with it. Sutherland and Gould are more like an updated version of Edmund Lowe's and Victor McLaglen's Sergeant Quirt and Captain Flagg from What Price Glory and The Cockeyed World - movies in which the heroes retain their personal style and their camaraderie in the midst of blood and muck and the general insanity of war. One knows that though what goes on at this surgical station seems utterly crazy, it's only a small distortion of actual wartime situations. The pretty little helicopters delivering the bloody casualties are a surreal image, all right, but part of the authentic surrealism of modern warfare. The joke the surgeons make about their butchershop work are a form of plain talk. The movie isn't naive, but it isn't nihilistic, either. The surgery room looks insane and is presented as insane, but as the insanity in which we must preserve the values of sanity and function as sane men. An incompetent doctor is treated as a foul object; competence is one of the values the movie respects - even when it is demonstrated by a nurse (Sally Kellerman) who is a pompous fool. The heroes are always on the side of decency and sanity - that's why they're contemptous of the bureaucracy. They are heroes because they're competent and sane and gallant, and in this insane situatiion their gallantry takes the form of scabrous comedy. The Quirt and Flagg films were considered highly profane in their day, and I am happy to say that M*A*S*H, taking full advantage of the new permissive rating system, is blessedly profane. I've rarely heard four-letter words used so exquisitely well in a movie, used with such efficacy and glee. I salute M*A*S*H for its contribution to the art of talking dirty. The profanity, which is an extension of adolescent humor, is central to the idea of the movie. The silliness of adolescents - compulsively making jokes, seeing the ridiculous in everything - is what makes sanity possible here. The doctor who rejects adolescent behavior flips out. Adolescent pride in skills and games - in mixing a Martini or in devising a fishing lure or in golfing - keeps the men from becoming maniacs. Sutherland and Gould, and Tom Skerritt, as a third surgeon, and a lot of freakishly talented new-to-movies actors are relaxed and loose in their roles. Their style

of acting underscores the point of the picture, which is that people who aren't hung up with pretensions, people who are loose and profane and have some empathy - people who can joke about anything - can function, and maybe even do something useful, in what may appear to be insane circumstances. There's also a lot of slapstick in the movie, some of it a little like Operation Mad Ball, a fifties service comedy that had some great moments but was still tied to a sanctimonious approach to life and love. What holds the disparate elements of M*A*S*H together in the precarious balance that is the movie's chief charm is a free-for-all, throwaway attitude. The picture looks as if the people who made it had a good time, as if they played with it and improvised and took some chances. It's elegantly made, and yet it doesn't have that overplanned rigidity of so many Hollywood movies. The cinematography, by Harold E. Stine, is very fine - full of dust and muddy olive- green tones; it is immediacy and the clarity possible in Panavision. The editing and the sound engineering are surprisingly quick-witted. When the dialogue overlaps, you hear just what you should, but it doesn't seem all worked out and set; the sound seems to bounce off things so that the words just catch your ear. The throwaway stuff isn't really thrown away; it all helps to create the free, graceful atmosphere that sustains the movie and keeps it constantly funny. The director, Robert Altman, has a great feel for low- keyed American humor. With the help of Ring Lardner, Jr.'s script (from a novel by a combat surgeon), Altman has made a real sport of a movie which combines traditional roustabout comedy with modern attitudes. As in other good comedies, there's often a mixture of what seems perfectly straight stuff and what seems incredible fantasy, and yet when we try to say which is which we can't. M*A*S*H affects us on a bewildering number of levels, like the Radio Tokyo versions of American songs on the camp loudspeaker system. All this may sound more like a testimonial than a review, but I don't know when I've had such a good time at a movie. Many of the best recent American movies leave you feeling that there's nothing to do but get stoned and die, that that's your proper fate as an American. This movie heals a breach in American movies; it's hip but it isn't hopeless. A surgical hospital where the doctors' hands are lost in chests and guts is certainly an unlikely subject for a comedy, but I think M*A*S*H is the best American war comedy since sound came in, and the sanest American movie of recent years.

Variety Review
January 20, 1970

A Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (M.A.S.H.), two minutes from bloody battles on the 38th Parallel of Korea, is an improbable setting for a comedy, even a stomach-churning, gory, often tasteless, but frequently funny black comedy. The result is an uneven brew with director Robert Altman committing excesses that should provoke controversy and some loudly negative reaction. However, if played selectively to allow word of mouth to build and not for a quick play-off, "M.A.S.H." could do very well at the boxoffice.

Elliott Gould, Donald Sutherland and Tom Skerritt head an extremely effective, low-keyed cast of players whose skillful subtlety eventually rescue an indecisive union of script and technique. In Gould as the totally unmilitary but arrogantly competent, supercool young battlefield surgeon, a reluctant draftee whose credo is let's get the job done and knock off all this Army muck, the film finds its focus and its statement, after an uneven start.

Problem is the mixture of realism with the old style broad comedic technique that has lately scuttled a succession of unfunny comedies. The scenes in the hospital tent, with surgeons and nurses in blood- soaked operating gowns like assembly butchers, sent several viewers at a studio screening fleeing from the theatre. The sardonic, cynical comments of the doctors and nurses patching and stitching battle- mangled bodies and casually amputating limbs before sending their anonymous patients on to the area hospitals further behind the lines will be extremely distasteful to many. But it has the sharp look of reality when professionals become calloused from working 12 hours at a stretch to keep up with the stream of casualties from the battlefield.

That reality jars with the caricatures presented by Sally Kellerman as Major Hot Lips, the officious head nurse; Robert Duvall as a super-pious surgeon, and J. B. Douglas, the colonel in charge of an Army hospital in Japan.

John Schuck is quietly convincing as the student dentist who is contemplating suicide because he suspects that he is really a latent homosexual after reading a book on psychology. But director Altman is tastelessly over-reaching for targets for satire when he stages the farewell party as "The Last Supper." The part of the Catholic chaplain named Dago Red is only saved from being an insulting absurdity by the skillful playing of Rene Auberjonois, whose padre is a sincere but ineffective bumbler who knows his flock is morally amiss but doesn't know quite what to do about it.

A service football game is a comic travesty on American sportsmanship, but then that is often the reality of service sports competition. The opening title sequence shows a train of helicopters with the battlefield wounded strapped outside arriving at the M.A.S.H. while Mike Altman and Johnny Mandel's sardonic ballad "Suicide Is Painless" plays. It effectively sets the confused mood and style of the film.

Ring Lardner Jr.'s screenplay is based on the novel by Richard Hooker, supposedly a pseudonym for a surgeon. There is the feeling that Lardner, Altman and the actors never were agreed on what the film's final approach should be. Comparison of the trade-screened version with a studio synopsis suggests that editor Danford B. Greene did some very effective editing. A little more discreet editing to make the Kellerman-Duvall affair less slapstick and take out an opening fiasco with an M.P. and the Last Supper tableau would make the overall film more effectively realistic. For today's more sophisticated audience, comedy in films, unlike that for television, works best when it remains within the realm of believability.

In the end "M.A.S.H." succeeds, in spite of its glaring faults, because Gould, Sutherland, Skerritt, Jo Ann Pflug as the delicious Lt. Dish, and Roger Bowen, as the goof-off commanding officer who is bright enough to recognize his junior officers' medical competence and stay out of their way, are all believable and bitingly funny in their casual disdain for the Army

Roger Greenspun
New York Times Review
October 29, 1971

To my knowledge Robert Altman's M*A*S*H is the first major American movie openly to ridicule belief in God—not phony belief; real belief. It is also one of the few (though by no means the first) American screen comedies openly to admit the cruelty of its humor. And it is at pains to blend that humor with more operating room gore than I have ever seen in any movie from any place.

All of which may promote a certain air of good feeling in the audience, an attitude of self-congratulation that they have the guts to take the gore, the inhumanity to appreciate the humor, and the sanity to admire the impiety—directed against a major who prays for himself, his Army buddies, and even "our Commander in Chief."

Actually M*A*S*H, which opened yesterday at the Baronet, accepts without question several current pieties (for example, concern for a child's life, but not a grown man's soul), but its general bent is toward emotional freedom, cool wit, and shocking good sense.

Based upon a barely passable novel of the same name (the title stands for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, but "MASH," of course, stands for a few other things as well). M*A*S*H takes place mostly in Korea during the war. However, aside from the steady processing of bloody meat through the operating room, the film is not so much concerned with the war as with life inside the Army hospital unit and especially with the quality of life created by the three hot-shot young surgeons (Donald Sutherland, Elliott Gould, and Tom Skerritt) who make most things happen.

But, unlike Catch-22, with which it has already been incorrectly compared (I mean the novel, not the legendary unfinished movie), M*A*S*H makes no profoundly radical criticism either of war or of the Army. Although it is impudent, bold, and often very funny, it lacks the sense of order (even in the midst of disorder) that seems the special province of successful comedy. I think that M*A*S*H, for all its local virtues, is not successful. Its humor comes mostly in bits and pieces, and even in its climax, an utterly unsporting football game between the MASH unit and an evacuation hospital, it fails to build toward either significant confrontation or recognition. At the end, the film simply runs out of steam, says good-bye to its major characters, and calls final attention to itself as a movie—surely the saddest and most overworked of cop-out devices in the comic film repertory.

Robert Altman's method has been to fill the frame to a great depth with overlapping bits of action and strands of dialogue. The tracking camera serves as an agent of discovery. To a very great degree, M*A*S*H substitutes field of view for point of view, and although I think this substitution has a lot to do with the movie's ultimate weakness, the choice is not without its intelligent rewards. Insane announcements over the hospital's intercom system, Japanese- accented popular American songs from Armed Forces Radio in Tokyo, bungling corpsmen, drivers, nurses—and again and again the brilliantly understood procedures of the operating room—come together to define the spirit of the film.

In one brief night scene, some MASH-men and the chief nurse meet to divide the winnings of the football game. In the distance, a jeep drives by, carrying a white-shrouded corpse. The nurse glances at it for a second, and then turns back to her happy friends—and we have a momentary view of the ironic complexities of life that M*A*S*H means to contain. The entire cast seems superb, partly, I think, because Altman (whose previous work, largely on television, I do not know) knows exactly where to cut away. Among the leads, Elliott Gould suggests the right degree of coolly belligerent self-containment, but Donald Sutherland (in a very elaborate performance) supports his kind of detachment with vocal mannerisms that occasionally become annoying. Sally Kellerman plays the chief nurse, Major Hot Lips Houlihan—and how she earns her name is the funniest and nastiest sequence of the film. Her character changes—from comic heavy to something like romantic lead—but M*A*S*H really has no way of handling character change, so she mostly fades into the background.

Early in the film she is the butt of some dreadfully humiliating gags, and with her expressive, vulnerable face, she is disturbing to laugh at. It is as if she had returned from some noble-nonsense war movie of the 1940's to suggest an area of human response that the masterly sophistications of M*A*S*H are unaware of.

Buster Keaton, *The Goat* (1921)

Addendum

F. Keller, *The Modern Messiah - Oscar Wilde in California* (1881)

Horace M. Kallen

THE AESTHETIC PRINCIPLE IN COMEDY

Although it is fashionable nowadays to praise the 'sense of humor,' there is a traditional role for critics of art which consists in deploring and cavilling at the human love of laughter. To pursue the laughable is almost invariably, according to this tradition, to sacrifice the high for the low, the excellent for the perverse. Supremacy, in art as in all walks of life, is taken to be isolated and sorrowful; beauty's majesty must wear the buskin. The marriage of esthetic excellence with tragedy is indeed not only a legend of the elect, it is a commonplace of popular culture. The acclaimed art of our human inheritance has the power to awaken sadness; the acclaimed masters are masters of the mournful note, – Aeschylus, Euripides, Michael Angelo, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and who else you will, – their best is their most funereal. Nevertheless increase in humane quality may be fairly gauged by gain in the scope of laughter. While it is untrue that savages are without a sense of humor, it is true that their derision has a narrow range and fixes itself upon the more fleshly if profounder aspects of the common lot, – upon the pursuit and capture of food, upon the business of marriage and childbearing, upon the enhancement and glory of the self. These great central interests are, no doubt, the piteous matter of amusement for civilization also, and our populace has hardly attained a wide vision of the comedy in the residual world; but it nevertheless has such a vision, and is appreciative of the range of the comic through institutions and ideas, through the sacred and the.lofty, as well as through the natural and the instinctive. Civilized mankind has gainecd on the unsophisticated in so far as it can laugh and command where the savage trembles and is afraid, while the greatest master of life seems to be he who, like Democritus, understanding the world's nature, laughs at its manners.

A profound and vital reason exists for this human love of the comic, for this increasing power to find and to place it, for the fact that the majority pursue it. if not more eagerly, as eagerly as they pursue beauty; for the fact that the cult of the 'sense of humor' has perhaps more shrines and a greater body of worshippers than the institutional cult of beauty. The love of beauty is the love of happiness; its possession in the aesthetic experience is the joy of successful self-conservation. Beauty is the directly-felt goodness of the environment. The environment arrests you as you plod or scurry in your daily routine; it holds you, brings all the faculties of your organic self to play upon it instantaneously, integrates them, sums them, until you attain whatever enduring optimum of value the environment offers. Beauty is this optimum of value, this realized entelechy of harmonious and instant interplay in adaptation of your whole self with that particular environment. Now the behavior of the comic is much the same. It, too, comes upon you suddenly during the affair of living; it, too, arrests and deploys your life, compelling it to take hold of the comic essence it offers you, and to it also you are adapted in the instant, harmoniously, completely, directly. On the other hand, there are certain well-marked differences between the experience of the comic and the experience of the beautiful. The former seems more complex, both with regard to your own state and the condition of the object. Their elements are harder to grasp and more difficult to hold. For yourself, – you smile, at the very least; ordinarily, you laugh. For the object, there is something that corresponds to your own condition, – an uncertainty, a movement, in character and in form.

Consider these differences more closely, of course only so far as they are ordinary, healthy and normal; the transnormal marvels of laughter are not our affair. In your own attitude the most striking point is the fact that it is an action; this smiling and laughing is something doing, and it is a doing which you love, which you prefer and persist in. To laugh is a privilege and a delight; and to be laughed at is, significantly, a degradation and a pain. It is not so with beauty; to be beautiful is even more agreeable than to enjoy beauty. This irreversible direction of laughter, well-exemplified in its contagion, becomes still more significant when we observe its details. There is first the smile; the corners of the upper lip are drawn up, the canines and the incisors, the renders and the cutters, are laid bare, wrinkles form under the eyes, which narrow and brighten; there is a slight heightening of the respiration. There is also, perhaps, a barely perceptible outward movement of the hands. Very little is needed to pass from this

smile, which may of course be reduced to mere upward twitch of the lips or a mere wrinkling of the eyes, to the quiet, audible laugh, –just a deep, not frequently noticed inspiration, then expiration in short, quick puffs, or chuckles or gurgles, accompanied by more noticeable wider expansive movements of hands and legs. If the laughter grows farther, is less restrained, then the head is thrown back as when swallowing a very agreeable morsel, the alternating inspiratory and expiratory processes grow more and more obvious and prolonged, the explosion of sounds louder, of varying pitch; the eyes are narrowed to a frown, tears come, the limbs are thrown far out, or the body sways back and forth rhythmically, in wider and wider arcs, the hands are extended and slapped together. If the occasion or witness of the laughter is a person, he may be slapped on the back, poked in the ribs, or even embraced. Withal the blood-vessels are dilated, the blood comes faster through the system, more oxygen reaches it. In a word, the general vitality is heightened, the basis of being extended. The whole phenomenon of laughter seems expansive, enlarging, vitalizing; all its movements appear as if intended to embrace and absorb their occasion.

And that occasion, – supplied by nature, created and modified by art? However it occurs, it must be given whole before it can evoke its laughing response. The maker of an unpremeditated joke does not laugh when he makes it, he cannot; he laughs like his auditors, after he has heard it, after he has taken in the comic substance for what it is. And the apparently frequent anticipatory laughter of the auditor, that is in no sense directed upon what is not yet but will be; it is directed upon a content already offered and found comic. The essential condition of laughter, – paradoxical, commonplace as it may be, –is the actual apprehension of the concretely present laughable.

This, both in nature and in art, has many forms, widely diverse, disparate and difficult of comprehension under a single rubric. In nature there is earliest of all, the eleemosynary 'laugh' of the well-fed, replete, resting child repeating in its contentment the pleasurable movements of sucking,so much like laughter, so essentially a smile. The object which especially evokes it is said to be the rise of the food in the gullet, so that the action would be like chewing a vicarious cud. But this is the mere beginning of laughter, and its occasion is problematic. A far more certain occasion is tickling. Now tickling seems to be a pleasure both sought and dreaded. The child's responsive actions to the tickling stimulus are partly defensive, opposing, mainly expansive and embracing. It seems to contain two elements uncertainly mixed, alternating, undirected, carrying both menace and safety, with the element of safety predominating. Under favorable conditions the whole or any portion of the body responds to it. An expected contact of an unknown and thus far discomforting stimulus turns out to be a contact of pleasure and delight. There is an essential conflict and titillation between two diverse elements of which the personality-feeling, whatever that be, finally finds itself free and master.

The daily life offers many instances which are determinable as complications of the characteristic contents of tickling. The laughter which follows fear, emotional or intellectual tension, is such. So when a child laughs after having been frightened by a dog, a woman after having heard bad news or on the shock of some vision or encounter, the terrifying object bas seized on the mind, disorganized it, upset its equilibrium, emotionally or otherwise, is a menace to its proper character. When for whatever reason, it lapses, when this process dies down, when the organism has, with temporary or permanent success, resisted and vanquished its enemy, the engaged energies are released, the disturbed equilibrium is restored, the organism is again in possession of itself, and in a single instant or a longer period, it does not matter, apprehends the whole of the lapsed situation with the failure of its enemy and laughs, spontaneously, instinctively. Literature affords many instances of the same thing,–the typical laughter of mad Ophelia, Hamlet's curious ironical play with the ghost:

"Well said, old mole.
Canst work i' the ground so fast?
A worthy pioneer"

are instances. The preceding experience seems, so to speak, to break off and to constitute an object in which an element formerly a menace or a terror, exalted above the protagonist, has been thrown in the dust and made of low degree.

The laughter of sheer health might seem to be almost antithetical to this, –frequent, free, easy, evoked by the most trifling instances, – the sight of food, of friends, of strangers, the most ordinary events and actions. But it is not intrinsically different. Joyous though this laughter is, it is most prone to break out upon sudden stimuli, the overflowing energy of health seizes its unsuspecting object, is master of it ab initio, and perverts its natural and proper relations to the world in which it belongs. The apparently meaningless laughter of sturdy children is such an action, the laughter of savages who are sufficiently familiar with strangers no longer to fear them, the very confident laughter of crowds, the careless laughter of people in power. Health, which is self-assured, stable, optimistic, finds everything grist for its mill of laughter, that is in the least different from it, –that is less stable than it. Health is literally wholeness, a self-sufficiency and completeness. The laughable, in so far as it is like tickling, is conversely not sufficient in itself, nor complete nor balanced nor stable. It seems less than health, and at its mercy.

This is perhaps nowhere so apparent as in play and makebelieve. Those who have watched children at it must remember pleasantly how; wherever this play is collective, it is punctuated by continual bursts of laughter, sometimes accompanied by screams of it. Those who have questioned children about the persons and objects of their simulation, the characters they and their playthings assume, will not fail to recognize how deep a sense of the stability and reality of their customary environment children really have, and how· rare are illusions on their part concerning the status of their fictions. For most of them, even the youngest, there is nothing magical or strange even in the most mechanical toys. Their sense of mechanism, indeed, seems stronger than their sense of mystery, of personality, of faerie. They do with their make-believes what suits their convenience; and what essentially suits their convenience is the domination and supremacy of the person they are. If they "play school" they insist either on being teacher, or on being victoriously troublesome pupils; if they personate characters, they insist on being the gloating all-vanquishing champion; Tom Sawyer as bold Robin Hood must kill the sheriff of Nottingham, but then Bill Harper, who was the dead sheriff of Nottingham, must also subdue Robin Hood. He cannot endure to be dead, even imaginatively. The laughter of play, then, apart from the physiological elements which like tickling depend upon titillation of expectancies, of physical contacts aimed and missed, of purposes crossed and f rustrated, is a laughter directed upon an immediately apprehended difference between fiction and reality; and is the sense of vital power of control over both. In that more malicious form of play known as teasing, this becomes still more evident, – for teasing is play on the edge of earnest, pleasure on the edge of pain. Both the teaser and the teased laugh, – the teaser because he sees the contrast between the expectations of his victim and the character of his own intentions, because in that respect his victim is at ills mercy; the teased, because he recognizes the deceitful nature of ills ostensible danger, because in ills alarm at its on-coming he can still take it for what it is and so cause it to fall short of its intent. If he succeeds in doing so utterly, he turns the tables on ills persecutor who thereby himself becomes the victim; if he fails in doing so, he becomes angered and the situation turns from fun to gravity. And with what ease, so often! A wink, a look, a word, may serve to turn a play of wit into a quarrel, a friendly game at cross purposes into a struggle for life.

Laughter, indeed, is intimately and often the clearest expression of victory in such vital struggles. The shouting laughter of partisans at great spectacular games in willch their sides are successful, the wide, expansive, absorbing movements of throwing arms and limbfar out into the air, swinging hats and dancing attest this relation. It is evinced in the traditional report of the sucessful prize-fighter who toward the end of his combat 'comes up smiling.' Usage indicates it in 'the self-confident smile' attributed to any one who is master of an art or of a situation. Popular wisdom expresses it in the proverb 'He laughs best who laughs last.' Victory in combat of any sort whatsoever may be accompanied by laughter, – when the tension of the combat is relaxed, when the mind erects itself and surveys the event and the prostrate enemy. The laughter does not occur during the battle; during the battle there is silence, grim absorptior.I in the business at hand. The occasion of laughter is not the combat, but the fallen in combat, the vanquished enemy, the mighty laid low, the peer reduced, the apparent strength unmasked and laid bare for the weakness it really is, while the victor remains firm, unshaken and laughing in ills might. The denudation or exposure of things, the inversion of appearance by reality before a witness whose own 'reality' remains firm, whose seeming and being are by contrast one, is indeed the basis,

together with tills envisagement of the defeated enemy, of the most universal matter of laughter nature supplies, –the laughter of sex. Fully nine-tenths of the witticisms of daily life, and more than half the wit of literature plays on sex. Sex is laughable because social life requires that it be hidden, set aside, submerged; while the natural endowment of man impels the instinct to raise its head out of the darkness, to peer into the light of day. This traditional throwing-off of linguistic, sartorial or customary convention causes laughter. The peasant and the boor, by use of language, do so directly, –the mere mention of matters allied to the reproductive function brings laughter; the moretrained, self-controlled, sophisticated individual is indirect.

He proceeds by innuendo, ambiguities, covert references. The submerged intent has farther to travel, more inhibitions to vanquish, in order to reach the open field of consciousness. But all classes of society laugh at suddenly discovered lovers, at amatory irregularities, directly and without thought. When they take thought they condemn them; and often, even in condemning, laugh.

Something like denudation or exposure is involved in the laughable character of novelties. The comedy of newness is almost universal. Even if the newness is circular and seasonal, it is still funny, –so the 'first straw hat' is every season an object of derision; a boy's first 'long trousers,' or first dress-coat. Savages are said to laugh continually at their first white visitor and his appurtenances; children and even adults will tease and persecute people with an unaccustomed beard, a different cut of clothes,another accent. The new is new just because it is distinctive, different, a variation from the habitual and customary. It is a little thing, isolate, against a massive tradition, a universal manner, a cumulative habit. It is a deviation from the type, a deformity like the traditionally laughable hunch-back, club-foot, magnified nose or hare-lip. At the moment of its appearance, it is at an evident disadvantage. It is an intruder, without the power to make its intrusion good. It islaughed at. To it may be assimilated the whole assemblage of little drolls which people and diversify the daily life-irruptions of irregularity, violations of the pervasive conventions which constitute the economy of social intercourse, –such are wearing the wrong clothes, using the wrong utensil, petty misfortunes, clumsiness of manner or of speech, – the whole host of disharmonies and incongruities at which we laugh. Of these the essence is the irruption of an unexpected, a new and discordant yet impotent factor into a harmonious and well-balanced situation.

The occasions of laughter, then, as they naturally arise in the events of the daily life are occasions which contain at least two elements, not in harmony with each other. In tickling we have given the dual nature of a stimulus; in terror the sudden fall or breaking-off and lapse of a dominating tension; in pure health, the weakness of other things; in play and teasing and battle and victory, the contrast between makebelieve and actuality, apparent strength and real weakness; in sex and novelty, the conflict of the natural flux and the social order. In each case the occasion offers us a contrast or conflict between two elements in which the spectator does not participate. In the course of life they appear impure, a,dulterate with extraneous elements, not altogether detached from the residual flux. Their arrestive and vitalizing power is restrained by other and ulterior conditions, by almost equally potent simultaneous impetus from interests looking in other directions, toward other ends. The art of comedy consists in abstracting these essentially comic complexes from their habitations in the flux, in freeing them of extraneities, and throwing them into relief. The comic of art, hence, has a rather different character from the comic of life, – it accumulates a certain desiderative value which is akin to beauty. In art, the comic might, indeed, be called the beauty of disintegration.

Although comedy has chiefly been associated with letters and the stage, there is no telling with what degree of adequacy it might not be expressed in the other arts. A limit is suggested in the fact that movement, action, invariably intensifies comic effect, but the least degree of movement required is perhaps impossible of determination. It is certain, however, that painted and carved objects are more laughable either when they are very simple, or when they occur in a progressive series. They appear either to tell stories, which need to be supplemented by verbal rubrics, or to present very obvious direct contrasts, exaggerations, novelties, whimsicalities, oddities. They involve an essential paradox which is, at one of its extremes, caricature, at another, grotesque symbolism. Animals with human expressions on their features; human beings with bestial characteristics; inanimate objects with

some of the attributes of life; living beings with the appurtenances of the non-living; inverted natural proportions; and so on to no end, – these constitute the material of the plastic comic. Sculpture is one of the arts perhaps least amenable to the comic ideal. Most laughable sculpture is caricature, often caricature by accident, not by intention. The material of sculpture, in spite of modern practice and ambition,does not readily lend itself to the representation of that disintegrating essence which is the comic material. It is more adequate to the representation of repose than of action, and the movements it most successfully represents are the integrative and co-operative movements that enhance poise and stability, not those that express inner diversity and disintegration. Grotesque sculpture is not, by nature, comic; for the genuinely grotesque is the harmony of the extraordinary. Comic sculpture, when intentional, is caricature; when unintentional is maladroitness of the sculptor. That it has a larger capacity for comic expression than it has thus far exhibited must nevertheless be admitted. But such larger expression would need to be serial and cumulative, not instantaneous. It would require explanatory legend, and would approximate very closely to the comic of painting. Painting which shall be intrinsically comic by virtue of its coloring or design is not ordinarily conceived. There is no inherent exclusion 1of such laughableness; the famous Schopenhauerian example of the comic, –the curve and its tangent, –indicate that in one instance, at any rate, pure geometrical form was apprehended as laughable. There is no reason why minds habituated to the apprehension of forms and colors as such should not discover an infinite deal of the laughable in them. There might be a pure comedy of design and of landscape, as well as of human feature and action. Hogarth, indeed, approximates some such thing in his ludicrous example of the consequences that follow on ignorance of the laws of perspective. But taken as a whole, comic pictures are mainly caricatures; they have a social subject-matter, and are most effective in series. Our 'humorous' literature is full of illustrations of this principle; the daily newspapers teem with them; they are the essence of the "comic supplement." They appear, significantly, to be studies of manners. The rich comedy of such series as Hogarth's 'Hudibras,' 'The Rake's Progress,' 'The Good and the Idle Apprentice' seems to lie in the cumulative integration of cross-intentions with caricature; and it is doubtful whether this integration would be so funny without the attached verbal legends, and the presence of laughing or smiling human faces. The latter constitute a very important element in the comic effect of pictures; and their presence is usually a drawback to the determination of intrinsic comic quality.

The enhancing effect of movement on comic quality indicates clearly why comedy is more frequently a matter for literature and the drama than for the plastic arts. Literature and the drama are intrinsically serial and climactic; while painting and sculpture are simultaneous and sudden. Music, the other temporal art, whose very essence is time, is not so often said to contain or to offer comic content. Nevertheless music has its distinctly comic material and method, and its characteristic comedy. This seems mainly to be provided by a combination of light, staccato instrumentation with deeppitched notes, by the use of uncompleted phrases, and latterly by imitative natural noises like the crowing of cocks, the cries of children, the whistling of birds, –all in careful 'harmony' with the theme of the composition. That the first two devices are musically amusing may be granted. But whether the comedy of the last device springs from the nature of the art itself or from the more apparent intrusion of a foreign element into the musical complex is an open question, though barely so. But whatever the basis of the laughter, the laughter is indubitable.

In drama and literature, the nature of the mirth-provoking object is less open to question. The material of laughter is here purely human, purely relevant to complex or simple human interests. Indeed, according to one writer the human is the only material that laughter can have. This material may be internal or external; it may offer itself in the individual solely, or in the confrontation of individuals with each other or with their environments. The outer marks of the comic individual may be merely clumsiness or deformity; may be speech incompatible with gesture, gesture with speech, the merest physiological malapropism, the lisp, the stutter, the bare misuse of language. Any one of these may be amusing; all of them taken together constitute the representative comic figure, Mr. Punch. Falstaff is funny by his mere avoirdupois, Bardolph by his flaming nose, Pistol by his rhodomontade. Bring them into action, and these

purely external traits may distort purpose, and throw the most excellent intention out of gear. A fat man makes a shadowy trooper; a ranting rascal cannot tell a straight story.

But this derailing of a swift-moving intention need not depend merely upon the external characteristics of the comic protagonist. Loosely interpreted, it is the essence of every comic situation, which is in Aristotle's excellent simile "in the nature of the missing of a mark." The situation is created by the fact that the characters do not hit it off. Its clearest type is perhaps Mr. Pickwick chasing his wind-blown hat. The situation has come upon him suddenly, out of the blue. The orderly march of his life has been broken up. His hat, which properly belongs on his head and should protect him from the wind and weather, has betrayed him to the wind and weather; and to add insult to injury, leads him a sorry dance away from his proper affairs, for the purpose of restoring the disturbed balance without which they do not easily go on. The hat musbe back on the man's head before the man can return to his business. This is very laughable; but normally the laughter is killed if the man is compelled to return hatless to the routine of his life. Where hatlessness begins, tragedy begins; and this is a very significant feature in all comedy. The hat may not be utterly lost if the laughter is to be saved.

The hat-hunt runs over us from practically every cranny of the comic scene. Its principle is an inversion of the ordinary, – an inversion shocking, fresh and unexpected. Instead of a trick or perversity of things, it may be an encounter of limps or persons. The runner who trips over his own feet is funny; but the clown whose running is brought to a sudden stop by the identically similar running of an identically similar clown is funnier. The classic comedy, so well represented by the 'Comedy of Errors,' is based fundamentally upon this sort of inversion, –the kind of inversion that a person undergoes in a mirror. He is there, he is himself; yet he is not there, he is another, opposed and inimical. The alter-ego is the source of the deeds for which the ego suffers or is rewarded. The Syracusan and Ephesian Dromios are so related in practical life that the mere mirrored image of the one, having different history, different antecedents, and a different status pays for the defects of the other. It is as if the image in the mirror were beaten for the impudence of the grimace it reflected. It is the "sudden glory" of the insignificant, the irruption and domination of the irrational.

Still another variant of it is the direct inversion of catastrophe, as the sudden and unprophesiable ups-and-downs of Face and his crew in the 'Alcheinist,' the reversals of Epicoene, the inversions of the 'School for Scandal.' This is so obvious that more than to mention it is superfluous. The persistent repetition of such an inversion, always reconstituting the same situation, is another typical mode of the comic process. The battle between Punch and the devil is its keyform. Punch strikes the devil down with a blow that should deal him his eternal quietus; and the obstinate devil rises unharmed again and again and yet again to return to the attack as horrible as ever. Or perhaps the condition of the protagonist is that of the jumping-jack. Its limbs appear to move so spontaneously, so freely, so irresponsibly, wll.ile in reality they obey the inexorable leverage of strings and pulleys. I cannot think of a better instance of this type of inversion than Malvolio, so apparently pursuing his own freely-chosen purpose, so clearly the dupe and the toy of Maria and her fellow-conspirators. The comedies of Ben Jonson are full of such types, from the La Fooles, the Dappers the Druggers, to the Voltores and Moscas and Volpones.

Seek where you will in the comic of the stage or of letters, and invariably you will find something corresponding to one of these forms of inversion. If it is the comedy of mere incident, it will consist of the irruption of the unusual, an upset or reversal, of some sort, in nature essentially a disharmony like that of the man chasing his hat. In the comedy of manners, one ,finds private habit opposed to public usage, the mode to good sense, the individual preference to the social sanction: the comedy consists of the titillation, the see-sawing of the one with the other. In the comedy of character one finds no less the same thing, with another emphasis. The individual idiosyncrasies which are the deep-sunk well-springs of motive, pressing up action after action, with inexorable consistency, are exhibited in conflict with social norms and conventional preferences. Here we are face to face with the comic object whose ludicrousness is internal first of all. It is the source of all else that is laughable, infecting with its distortions all that it touches. The comic of character is the internal homologue of the comic of person. It is founded on the internal disharmony of traits, on malproportion, moral deformity, as the other is based on physical deformity. The theory of humors, on which Ben

Jonson has based all his comic pieces, fantastic and untrue though it be, has nevertheless grasped the secret of ludicrous character. It offers as the standard excellence the nature in which each of the four humors is present in right measure, just sufficiently choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine and melancholic to be of nice balance, poised for any flight you will. But change the proportion of any one of these humors, and you upset this excellent balance, and destroy the fine poise. The greater humor is at war with the others, perverts them to its own uses, interferes in their business, and ultimately breaks up the nature it distorts. The inner disharmony is expressed outwardly in a thousand ways, and this outer expression is comedy of character. Now multiply these humors a thousand fold, consider the relation of any one of the numberless preferences, habits, desires, intellections, tricks of speech, manner and gesture as well as of soul, to the remainder, and you cannot help seeing that this relation is identical with the relation between the weightier humor and the others. It is a combat, a distortion, a disintegrative maladjustment. The consuming passion for silence in Morose, the self-conceit of Malvolio, the didacticising stupidity of Polonius, the avarice of Harpagon, the magniloquent aimlessness of Mr. Micawber, the hypocrisy of Tartuffe, the subtly rigid self-worship of Willoughby Patteroe, and I care not what other trait of what other person you will,each is a trait which is comic only because disproportionate, and hence, wherever it appears, disorganizing. Harpagon loses his wealth because he loves it so; and, by the way, is made altogether ridiculous because his moral deformity intrudes and operates where it should not. Had Shylock loved revenge less, he would have suffered less; and Malvolio, certainly an efficient steward, had nothing but his cancerous self-love to thank for his degradation and misfortune. Hypertrophy of imagination over common sense in the Knight of La Mancha, the atrophy of imagination in Sancho, the fleshly weakness in Falstaff, –such are the fountains of comedy in these heroes of the sock. Whenever any one quality is called into play, this forestalls it, snatches its action from it, or spoils it by its influence. Perhaps all comic traits are no more than the love of life, the instinct for self-preservation, no more than the spontaneous and natural egoism of mankind, taking a perverted direction, so eager to live well as to belie fantastically the most fundamental conditions as well as the most subtle of right living. The greatest of all ruinous misproportions is, of course, that of self-deception. Invariably by its means diverse social and natural antagonisms are exhibited and made explicit, whether in the adventure on Gadshill, the wind-mill tilt, the tantalizing dinner, or the cross-gartering. What "moves men merrily" is the far-spreading infectious disharmony.

This patent malproportion in character which is the prime source of comedy has led to an opinion, variously held, that the comic figure is an abstraction, that he is less individual and more 'universal' than the protagonist of tragedy; and that the function of comedy is that of social correction. There are some grounds for this inference. The practice of the Greeks in the use of types and type-names, –names like Phidippides, Dicceopolis, Mania of the Aristophanic comedy, or Glycerium, Palaestra, Bombomachides of the Plautan comedy, the Voltores and Corbaccios, the La Fooles and Moroses, the Mammons, Subtles, Faces of Jonson, the similar practice of his successors far into the eighteenth century, attest that dramatists seemed to be dramatizing moral qualities and types rather than persons. The very titles of the comedies: "Wasps," "Birds," "Volpone," "Epicoene," "L'Avare," "Les Precieuses" bespeak traits rather than persons. But moral tragedies like "Everyman" and "Ghosts" are no less typically and abstractly named; and there is scarcely a tragic character that cannot, as properly as any protagonist of comedy, be labelled by the peculiar trait which constitutes his tragic nature. In point of fact, comedy has no monopoly over these forms of art in the chastisement of the anti-social. And what, moreover, is anti-social? A convention, a mode or habit which has attained universality is as often the object of laughter as an isolated individual, a group as often as a habit. And these are as frequently condemned by tragedy as by comedy. Satire and irony, indeed, are correctives. But the corrective principle of these is not their comic quality, but their tragic earnestness. Satire is a battle, not a joke; comedy turns the battle into a joke. Where comedy becomes corrective it is no longer truly comic. For the subject of a joke there can be no sting if he is to laugh; and if it stings he cannot laugh. The Iaugher can have no portion in the ruin which moves him to mirth.

That it is a ruin which moves to mirth, and that the merry man must have no share in it, is most patent in the comic of words. Civilized comedy is at its highest in words. These alone can render the very refinements of mal-adjustment, the delicate

disharmonies of the spirit. They reveal the range of battle between mind and mind as nothing else can. Yet what target of a poisoned verbal dart ever responded to the impact with laughter or admired the accuracy of the aim or the sharpness of the missile? Invariably his first action is the aggression or withdrawal of defence. A return shot, scornful silence, –but no broadside of laughter. The play of wit has always imminent over it the play of the sword. The quip becomes the stab with a turn of the hand, and this just because the object of witty play is a ruin, or like to be one in that play. Recall by way of example that superb witticism of Heine's at a certain· Parisian salon, where he, Soulie and an enormously wealthy parvenu were guests. The parvenu naturally received more attention than the two men of letters, –which moved Soulie to remark: "Even in the nineteenth century, they still worship the golden calf." "Yes," assented Heine, "but this one is much older." This characteristic Heinesque remark makes of its subject an ox; and 'ox' is the German Schimpfwort for stupidity, dullness, maladroit idiocy. To call a man an ox is to insult and to degrade him; it is, by a stretch of meaning, to ruin his reputation for intelligence, to destroy his human dignity, and to make him like the beasts of the field. This Heine has done. Moreover, he has not done it by a direct aggression. He has ostensibly referred only to the age of the parvenu; he has ostensibly even defended him against attack. He has said nothing overtly insulting, yet he has called the man a calf of advanced years. In the phrase, "much older," therefore, there are two ideas not compatible, not belonging together, titillating the attention of the auditor. And this enhances the excellence of the witticism. Of wit which is impersonal, which is the play of ideas as such, and has no moral lilt against another person, the essence is this unstable union of thoughts, this conflict, incongruity, crush, and interference of two or more ideas, struggling for place in one word. The pun is, of course, the most obvious example of this fact; but it may be brought about in many ways, –by a slight difference in emphasis, metonymy, inversion, metaphor. Invariably there is an ambiguity between denotation and connotation, between figurative and literal meaning, which is the soul of the double entendre, as well as of the bald disharmony of ideas or of objects. Much of its quality is evident in the reply of one soldier to another who had called his attention to the bold escape and the immediate pursuit of a spy. "lie is running for dear life" said the one, and the other replied "He'll never buy it at that rate." It will be seen here that the literal and the figurative intention are jammed together in a strange and not incongruous contact. The pleasure and the taste of it are due to the jam. Still more potent does this become where there is no relevance whatever between objects, as in the wide perversion of the Twainesque humor, or in the attempt of the Scotchman to make his friend understand the meaning of 'Iniracle.' Tam had tried hard to teach him, butwith ill-success. Finally he resorted to parable. "Look ye," he said, "when ye see a coo sittin' doon, that's no' a mirrecl. When ye see a thistle standin' up, that's no' a mirrecl neither. An' it's no' Inirrecl when ye hear the throstle whistlin' in the tree. But when ye see the coo sittin' on the thistle, and singin' like the throstle, that's a mirrecl mon, that's a mirrecl." The incongruities are here obvious. Their violent refusal to hang harmoniously together is the strength whereby they "move men merrily." A most subtle form of it is the famous " 'T was brillig ... " in 'Through the Looking Glass.'

From the coarse and obvious comedy of the clown with his falls and tumbles, to subtle and recondite plays of wit the material of the laughable remains invariably a disharmony, a maladjustment ranging from the impact of bodies to the clash of souls. No less do the depth and scope of philosophy, where surely there should be little place for laughter, offer the great and eternal disharmony, a spectacle which, as poets have more than once sung, moves the gods merrily. But men are so moved no less than gods. The cosmic vision may stir the thinker to cosmic laughter. History offers us one strange and wonderful figure, isolate among his kind, whom tradition names"the laughing philosopher." Democritus of Abdera saw the great contrast between man's hopes and his condition, his conceit of himself, his belief in his own power, his headlong passion and pursuit of his petty ends as though they were the world's will and the world's purposes, as though his struggle were the cosmic joy and sorrow. But the cosmos is a void, and a burly-burly of atoms. Against the volume of their inexorable tumult, man's cries are as utter silence; against the background of their fatal onward rush his willings and achievings, but the uncouth jerkings of the jumpingjack's limbs when the strings are pulled. Man is the ruined victim of his own illusions. His destiny is death because it is self-deception. Therefore Democritus

laughed. Laughter, cheerfulness, is a restoration of the true proportions. It rests upon a recognition of the narrow limits and the eternal conditions of human well-being. It is a turning of destiny to scorn by accepting it, as one destroys the sting of rebuke and the violence of anger by offering them no resistance. They are turned to derision because they are spent on a void, losing meaning and purpose. Thus the laughter of the sage is a double laughter. Its subject is the self-deception of man which combats the inexorable cosmos, but its subject is also the rage of the cosmos spent upon nothing at all. In both cases there is an inversion, a disintegrating disharmony, outside of which the sage stands, and the master of which he feels himself to be. He is upon the Lucretian rock, watching and enjoying the storm and the shipwreck below.

The range of the comic scene, we gather, is no less than the cosmos itself. The occasion of the laughter may be the compass of one small baby's toe, or the unbounded universe. It plays over the whole gamut of human relationship and cosmic disharmony. Nothing may escape it, from the attenuated malproportions of abstract mathematics to the terribly weighted deflections of the universe. But of laughter two things seem true. The first is the fact that it cannot endure. Custom kills comedy. What is habitual, what we are welladapted to, what is for a long time a part of our own lives cannot move us merrily. To do so, it must exclude us, make us foreign to it. It must become something in which we no longer have a portion, and which for the time, has no portion in us. The traveller is likely to feel this most keenly; that is, if he is a Iaugher, rather than a creator of laughter. The creator of laughter, the professional humorist, can scarcely be a Iaugher. He is not a humorist because he sees the comedy in things, but because he twists things and distorts them so as to make them comical. He is invariably a preternaturally solemn person. Laughter must be free, but the cause of laughter is always bond. The maker of the laughable is the servant of his vocation; he cannot laugh and render service at the same time. The Iaugher is served, but serves not. Hence, then, the traveller who can laugh finds all things in a new country ludicrous at the beginning. Customs and modes, habits of life and manners, the very scenery move him to laughter. But as his stay is prolonged, the disharmonies seem to rub off; the articulation of life becomes smoother and less noisy. He himself has now become, to some degree, a part of the structure; speech, manners, dress,his own have somehow become confluent with them, have set him at their centre, where he once was at the periphery. He can no longer laugh; nor can he understand his original laughter. This process is true no less of an oft-repeated game, a witticism, a relieved nervous tension or a philosophy. Familiarity breeds seriousness or indifference before it breeds contempt. The second characteristic of laughter is that it enhances or preserves the laugher's implicit values, not always obviously or directly, but invariably. The outcome of the comic situation is an alterative outcome, not a destructive outcome. The disintegration which is the object of laughter leads to re-distribution, re-adjustment, harmony, not to real human loss. The upshot of any comedy shows a harmony attained by attrition and ehmination of excrescences, by the reduction of the evil, by a restoration, even if only a momentary one, of things to their normal, –one may even say, to their normative, –relationships. The inversion of the natural order in which most comedy begins, proceeds in the course of the action, by the mere inertia of the comic disharmony, to right itself. Don Quixote is led by the effects of his madness to realize and see it truly. Harpagon is led by the operation of his avarice to comprehend its evil nature; Willoughby Patterne loses some of his selflove, Volpone passes from his dishonorable bandages to his more dishonorable chains. The new harmony may not be enduring, but it ends the comedy. And it is, of course, true that not always are the normal social standards re-asserted and the habitual conceptions of virtue victorious. In Epicoene the punishment of Morose is to our modern sense perhaps harder than his deformity of spirit deserves; the enrichment of Sir Dauphine by a swindler's trick, our contemporary moral sense will hardly stomach. But, notoriously, nothing is so variable as the actual social standard of mankind from period to period. Whenever we look more closely at the postcomedial harmony, we find that the standards of the age to which the comedy belongs have been vindicated. The standards of all time have little to do with comedy. It is sufficient that any prized thing shall be preserved or enhanced, that any distortion or evil shall be destroyed or decreased, even if for the moment only, not alone in the drama but wherever the comic occurs in sculpture, in painting, in the events and routine of daily life. The hat-chaser must recover his hat if he is to remain merely a comic figure.

Considering all of these facts together, what do they yield as the resthetic principle in comedy? What is there identical between the tickled toe of a suckling infant and the philosophy of a Democritus? Students of the comic have given this question widely varying answers. There has been perhaps as much confusion in the definition of the comic, as in the definition of the beautiful. Theories may be roughly divided into three classes, yielding a certain minimum of unanimity.

The first group of theories may be called "degradation theories." They conceive the object of laughter as reduced in worth; and the Iaugher as enhanced therein. As Hobbes has it: "Laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmities our own formerly.... (It) proceedeth from a sudden conception of some ability in himself that laugheth. Men laugh at the infirmities of others, by comparison of which their own abilities are set off and illustrated." Laughter here is self-enhancement at the cost of one's fellow. The self-enhancement is as important as the degradation of the other. Other writers, however, take only the degradation to be significant. So Bain finds the "occasion of the ludicrous" to be "the degradation of some person or interest possessing dignity, in circumstances that arouse no other strong emotion." The dignities, moreover, must not "command serious homage;" and Groos finds the comic object to be one in a topsy-turvy condition, and hence regarded with a feeling of superiority. But for all three the object of laughter has in some way been reduced from its high estate. Something of the same sort may have been in Spencer's mind when he wrote that laughter naturally comes when there is "a descending incongruity," a turning from great things to small, a degradation.

The theory of degradation fails, however, tosquare with the obvious fact that degradation is a matter of geography, inclination, breeding and incidental affection. As one man's meat is another man's poison, so what may seem degradation to one may be exaltation to another. The mental state of the Iaugher is hardly one which feels the sentiment implied in degradation. It does not seem, in most cases, to possess what the Germans call Tendenz or Schadenfreude. As comic sense it carries detachment and f reedom rather than malicious intention. The correct envisagement of fact which the theory offers is more simply because more freely offered in those explanations of the comic whose key-word is "contrast." The "contrast" theories emphasize differently the elements contrasted, but their intent is the same throughout. One author finds the contrast to. consist in the complete exposure of weakness through the presence of a superior power. Schopenhauer sees it as the "unexpected subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it." Hence he infers that "the phenomenon of laughter always means the sudden apprehension of an incongruity between such a conception, and the real object thought under it, thus between the abstract and the concrete object of perception." Bergson finds it in the opposition of the suppleness of life with the stiffness of mechanism, the substitution of one for the other; Freud in the release of repressed and submerged – chiefly sexual – complexes. And there are many other ways of specifying contrasts. But they are, it will be seen, no more than specifications; their common element is the "contrast."

The contrast theory of the comic defines the comic by considering its objective nature. Aristotle's description of it as "in the nature of a missing of the target" stands between this objective description and the more directly psychological theory of Kant and his followers. This theory might be called the theory of "disappointed expectation." "Laughter," writes Kant, "is an affection arising from a sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing. A jest must be capable of deceiving for a moment. Hence when the illusion is dissipated, the mind turns back to try it once again, and thus through a rapidly alternating tension and relaxation, it is jerked back and put into a state of oscillation." The first of these Kantian suggestions is hardly more than paraphrased by Lipps for whom "the comic arises, if in place of something expected to be important and striking, something else comes up (of course under the assumption of the ideas we were expecting) which is of lesser significance." The other half of the Kantian description has been more popular. We might call it the "oscillation theory' ' although it is essentially a form of contrast. It has received the endorsement of Hecker and of Wundt, and has been attached by them to the term "contrast."

The variations in these fundamental notions are innumerable. Writers have found the comic to be only that which violates social usage, or only that which conflicts with established moral,

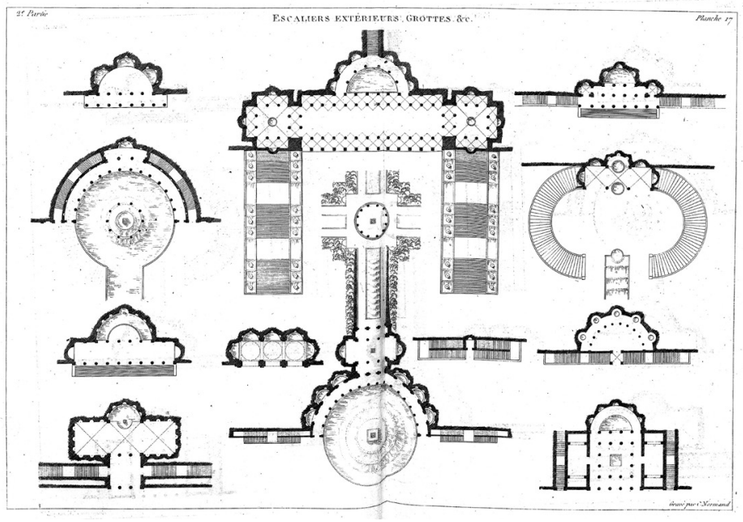
intellectual or aesthetic standards. The net result of a review of all of these theories is that they are all true, and in so far as they deal with unrelated facts, all exclusive of oneanother. They are specifications of comedy under special conditions and in various fields. They contain the essence of the comic; but they have not really isolated it. Our journey through the field of laughter has shown us that this essence may reside anywhere in the universe. It is not confined to human beings or to social norms, as certain authors believe; nor is it limited to the merely living. Its habitat is as wide as experience. It ranges from the tangent which so stirred the jocund Schopenhauer, to the universe which amused Democritus. As anything may be beautiful, so anything may be comic. It becomes comic, as all the comic objects which we have examined have shown us, and as the theories of the comic which we have considered obviously affirm, when somehow it is at a disadvantage, out of proportion, mal-adjusted. It becomes comic when it constitutes a disharmony. This disharmony is the basis of contrast, the cause of oscillation, of disappointed expectation, the essence of degradation. But by the mere fact of being a disharmony the object is not yet comic. The daily life and the arts offer the mind an infinity of disharmonies which are either tragic or indifferent. Intrinsically, things are no more comic than they are beautiful. The comic, like the beautiful, is not a property which things possess, but a relation which they bear to the mind. We do not laugh at a thing because it is funny; it is funny because we laugh at it.

An examination of the nature of laughter itself will show us that which more specifically constitutes comedy. We have found laughter to be a wide-ranging action, corresponding to the active character of its object. But this action does not have the purposeful, rapt nature of other human activities. It seems to bP. a detached and free thing, –a thing which is leisurely and secure. Even when it ensues upon absorbing fear, upon the madness of anger, the anguish of passion, it seems to have this liberty and security, this leisure, as opposed to the precedent breathlessness and extreme intentness. It seems indeed often to be a cry of freedom, of relief, a roulade of triumph. When we seek the earliest semblance of an apprehension of the comic, we find it in the replete child, repeating the pleasurable act of sucking. Its normal expression in the smile requires the baring of the rending and cutting teeth, the assumption of an appearance which, when well-considered, bears a startling resemblance to an animal about to rend and devour its prey. In the hungry beast of the jungle, that has fought for its life in a double sense, and has triumphed in its struggle, may lie the ultimate parentage of laughter. The explosions of breath, the gurgitations, the throwing back of the head as if to swallow, the sprawling, expansive movements of the limbs, –those are actions that beasts still perform when they have their prey completely at their mercy. And this prey, up to the moment of possession, was a peer. The struggle to live matches not kind with kind, but every kind with all other kinds; its may be a contest of strength against swiftness, ear against eye, eye against nose. And the struggle invariably carries its essential hazard which makes even the weakling his enemy's peer. There is therefore the inevitable absorption and tension and breathlessness. In no matter how unequal a combat, there is even for the victor one moment of dread and menace, and there is the final triumph and relief in laughter. The primeval laugher is the triumphant beast, with its paw upon its defeated enemy, and its jaws set for the act of devouring. The first laughter is life's earliest cry of victory over the elemental world-wide enemy that wages the titanic battle with it. Laughter is perhaps a mutation from feeding, and it serves the same result: it strengthens life by heightening its vitality. Its scope has expanded as the world has expanded. The laughter of man has all things for its object, –all things that may enthrall him or do him hurt, in whatever sense. It 'degrades' them, makes them man's proper food; it contrasts them with what they were; it destroys their power over him. He stands outside and beyond them; they cannot touch him. The object of laughter is ridiculous, not in so far as it isgood, but in so far as it is dangerous. It is the frustrated menace in things, personal, social or cosmic, –that moves men merrily, when their power for evil is turned to emptiness. The novel, the dark, the cancerous in the life of the spirit and in the life of the body becomes ridiculous when we recognize that it is ineffectual. And conversely, to tum a thing to ridicule is to make it ineffectual, to throw i t out of gear, to rob it of its place, to compel it to spend its energy in a vacuum. This is true degradation, and the laughter in it is not appreciation but malice. It is for this reason that even to so intelligent and sympathetic a student of the comedy as Bergson or Meredith, comedy seems to be a social corrective. But they fail to see

that the comic force lies not in the correction, but in the joy of the corrector. There is always the possibility of a certain cruelty in comedy, an utter brutish joy in victory which is ethically more outrageous than the thing it destroys, until one remembers that what laughter consumes, laughter first finds evil.

This observation yields the key to the right definition of comedy. Beauty, it has been noted, is the relation between the mind and the environment when the two are adapted to each other harmoniously, perfectly and immediately. And the environment which beauty presents to the mind is good in itself, an intrinsic and direct excellence. Now the environment which comedy presents to the mind is primarily an evil, full of discord and unrest. This evil comes to us, however, not as our peer, but as our slave, bankrupt and stripped of its power to harm. And to it, as to the thing of beauty, we are adapted directly and instantly. Comedy, then, like beauty, is a relation, but it is a relation in which we are harmoniously and completely adapted to what is in itself a disharmony, a mal-adjustment. It is a relation which converts evil into goodness. It adapts us adequately to disharmony and mal-adjustment, snatching as it were, life's victory from the jaws of death itself.

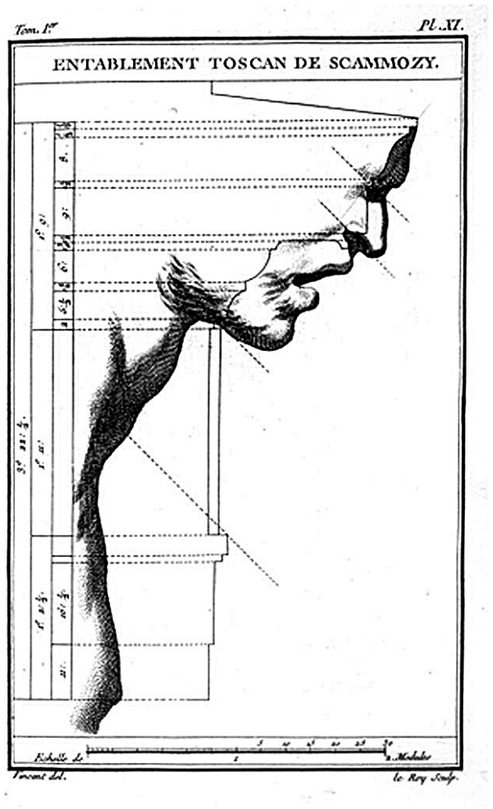
Horace M. Kallen, *The Aesthetic Principle in Comedy* (1911)



J.N.L. Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture – données à l'Ecole Polytechnique* (1802)

Motifs

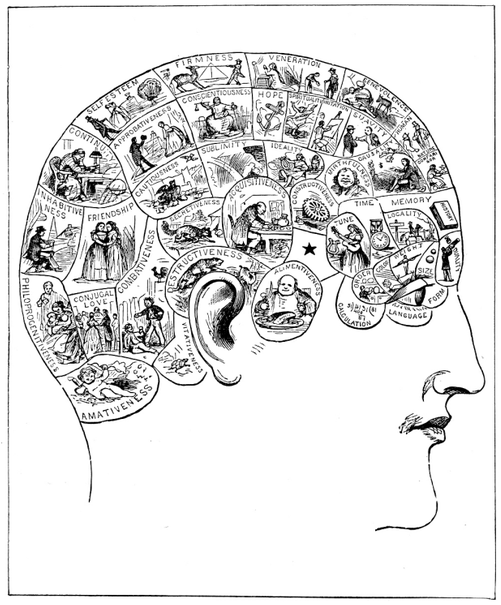
COMEDY



Jacques François Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture* (1683)
HUMANITY

The first point to which attention should be called is that the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human. A landscape may be beautiful, charming and sublime, or insignificant and ugly; it will never be laughable. You may laugh at an animal, but only because you have detected in it some human attitude or expression. You may laugh at a hat, but what you are making fun of, in this case, is not the piece of felt or straw, but the shape that men have given it,—the human caprice whose mould it has assumed.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
HUMANITY



Phrenological Chart of the Faculties.

Phrenology Chart (1883)
INTELLIGENCE

Here I would point out, as a symptom equally worthy of notice, the absence of feeling which usually accompanies laughter. It seems as though the comic could not produce its disturbing effect unless it fell, so to say, on the surface of a soul that is thoroughly calm and unruffled. Indifference is its natural environment, for laughter has no greater foe than emotion. [...] To produce the whole of its effect, then, the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
INTELLIGENCE

J.R. Eyerman, *Premiere Screening Bwana Devil* (1952)
SOCIAL

Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a social signification. [...] Laughter must be a sort of social gesture. By the fear which it inspires, it restrains eccentricity, keeps constantly awake and in mutual contact certain activities of a secondary order which might retire into their shell and go to sleep, and, in short, softens down whatever the surface of the social body may retain of mechanical inelasticity. Laughter, then, does not belong to the province of esthetics alone, since unconsciously (and even immorally in many particular instances) it pursues a utilitarian aim of general improvement. And yet there is something esthetic about it, since the comic comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art. In a word, if a circle be drawn round those actions and dispositions—implied in individual or social life—to which their natural consequences bring their own penalties, there remains outside this sphere of emotion and struggle—and within a neutral zone in which man simply exposes himself to man's curiosity—a certain rigidity of body, mind and character, that society would still like to get rid of in order to obtain from its members the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability. This rigidity is the comic and laughter is its corrective.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
SOCIAL

Nail House, Wenling, China (2012)
INELASTICITY

A man, running along the street, stumbles and falls; the passers-by burst out laughing. They would not laugh at him, I imagine, could they suppose that the whim had suddenly seized him to sit down on the ground. They laugh because his sitting down is involuntary. Consequently, it is not his sudden change of attitude that raises a laugh, but rather the involuntary element in this change,—his clumsiness, in fact. Perhaps there was a stone on the road. He should have altered his pace or avoided the obstacle. Instead of that, through lack of elasticity, through absentmindedness and a kind of physical obstinacy, as a result, in fact, of rigidity or of momentum, the muscles continued to perform the same movement when the circumstances of the case called for something else. [...] The laughable element consists of a certain mechanical inelasticity, just where one would expect to find the wide awake adaptability and the living pliableness of a human being. [...] The result has been brought about by an external circumstance. The comic is therefore accidental: it remains, so to speak, in superficial contact with the person.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
INELASTICITY

Isaac Newton, *Actio* = *Reactio* (1687)
GENERAL LAW

There is a general law [...] which we will formulate in the following terms: when a certain comic effect has its origin in a certain cause, the more natural we regard the cause to be, the more comic shall we find the effect.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
GENERAL LAW

Frank Gehry, *Binoculars Building* (1991)
CARICATURE

The art of the caricaturist consists in detecting this, at times, imperceptible tendency, and in rendering it visible to all eyes by magnifying it. He makes his models grimace, as they would do themselves if they went to the end of their tether. Beneath the skin-deep harmony of form, he divines the deep-seated recalcitrance of matter. He realises disproportions and deformations which must have existed in nature as mere inclinations, but which have not succeeded in coming to a head, being held in check by a higher force. His art, which has a touch of the diabolical, raises up the demon who had been overthrown by the angel. Certainly, it is an art that exaggerates, and yet the definition would be very far from complete were exaggeration alone alleged to be its aim and object, for there exist caricatures that are more lifelike than portraits, caricatures in which the exaggeration is scarcely noticeable, whilst, inversely, it is quite possible to exaggerate to excess without obtaining a real caricature. For exaggeration to be comic, it must not appear as an aim, but rather as a means that the artist is using in order to make manifest to our eyes the distortions which he sees in embryo. It is this process of distortion that is of moment and interest.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
CARICATURE

Peter Fischli, David Weiss, *Der Lauf der Dinge* (1987)
MACHINE

The attitudes, gestures and movemnets of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine. [...] The illusion of a machine working in the inside of the person is a thing that only crops up amid a host of amusing effects; but for the most part it is a fleeting glimpse, that is immediately lost in the laughter it provokes. To render it permanent, analysis and reflection must be called into play.

In a public speaker, for instance, we find that gesture vies with speech. Jealous of the latter, gesture closely dogs the speaker's thought, demanding also to act as interpreter. Well and good; but then it must pledge itself to follow thought through all the phases of its development. An idea is something that grows, buds, blossoms and ripens from the beginning to the end of a speech. It never halts, never repeats itself. It must be changing every moment, for to cease to change would be to cease to live. Then let gesture display a like animation! Let it accept the fundamental law of life, which is the complete negation of repetition! But I find that a certain movement of head or arm, a movement always the same, seems to return at regular intervals. If I notice it and it succeeds in diverting my attention, if I wait for it to occur and it occurs when I expect it, then involuntarily I laugh. Why? Because I now have before me a machine that works automatically. This is no longer life, it is automatism established in life and imitating it. It belongs to the comic. This is also the reason why gestures, at which we never dreamt of laughing, become laughable when imitated by another individual. [...] Our gestures can only be imitated in their mechanical uniformity, and therefore exactly in what is alien to our living personality. To imitate any one is to bring out the element of automatism he has allowed to creep into his person.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
MACHINE

William Rodgers Richardson, *Absent-Mindedness* (1893)

MORALITY

Something mechanical encrusted upon the living. Where did the comic come from in this case? It came from the fact that the living body became rigid, like a machine. [...] When we see only gracefulness and suppleness in the living body, it is because we disregard in it the elements of weight, of resistance, and, in a word, of matter; we forget its materiality and think only of its vitality, a vitality which we regard as derived from the very principle of intellectual and moral life, Let us suppose, however, that our attention is drawn to this material side of the body; that, so far from sharing in the lightness and subtlety of the principle with which it is animated, the body is no more in our eyes than a heavy and cumbersome vesture, a kind of irksome ballast which holds down to earth a soul eager to rise aloft. Then the body will become to the soul what, as we have just seen, the garment was to the body itself — inert matter dumped down upon living energy. The impression of the comic will be produced as soon as we have a clear apprehension of this putting the one on the other. And we shall experience it most strongly when we are shown the soul tantalised by the needs of the body: on the one hand, the moral personality with its intelligently varied energy, and, on the other, the stupidly monotonous body, perpetually obstructing everything with its machine-like obstinacy. The more paltry and uniformly repeated these claims of the body, the more striking will be the result. But that is only a matter of degree, and the general law of these phenomena may be formulated as follows: any incident is comic that calls our attention to the physical in a person when it is the moral side that is concerned. [...] Let us now give a wider scope to this image of the body taking precedence of the soul . We shall obtain something more general — the manner seeking to outdo the matter, the letter aiming at ousting the spirit.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)

MORALITY

Jacques Tati, *Playtime* (1967)
GENERAL LAW

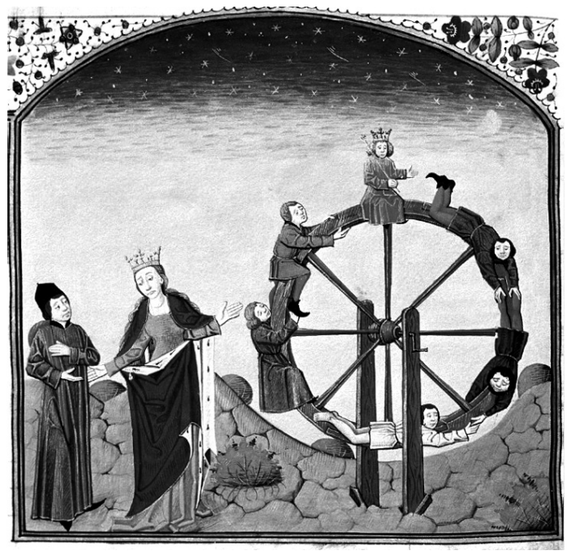
Any arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
GENERAL LAW

OMA, *The City of the Captive Globe* (1976)
REPETITION

Let us scrutinise more closely the image of the spring which is bent, released, and bent again (the jack-in-the-box). Let us disentangle its central element, and we shall hit upon one of the usual processes of classic comedy,—repetition. [...] It is a struggle between two stubborn elements, one of which, being simply mechanical, generally ends by giving in to the other, which treats it as a plaything. [...]In a comic repetition of words we generally find two terms : a repressed feeling which goes off like a spring, aand an idea that delights in repressing the feeling anew.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
REPETITION



Boethius with the Wheel of Fortune (15th century)
PUPPET

The Dancing-Jack [...] all that is serious in life comes from our freedom. The feelings we have matured, the passions we have brooded over, the actions we have weighed, decided upon, and carried through, in short, all that comes from us and is our very own, these are the things that give life its ofttimes dramatic and generally grave aspect. What, then, is requisite to transform all this into a comedy? Merely to fancy that our seeming, freedom conceals the strings of a dancing-Jack, and that we are, as the poet says, humble marionettes, the wires of which are pulled by Fate.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
PUPPET

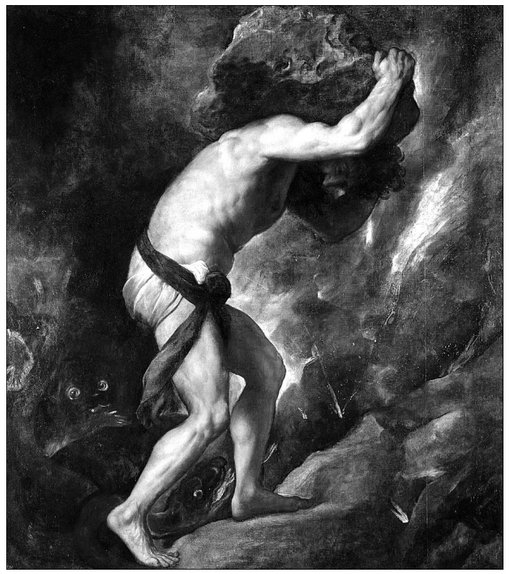
Thomas Struth, *Campo dei Fiori, Rome* (1984)

AGGREGATION

The Snow-ball [...] These instances [...] suggest the same abstract vision, that of an effect which grows by arithmetical progression, so that the cause, insignificant at the outset, culminates by a necessary evolution in a result as important as it is unexpected.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)

AGGREGATION

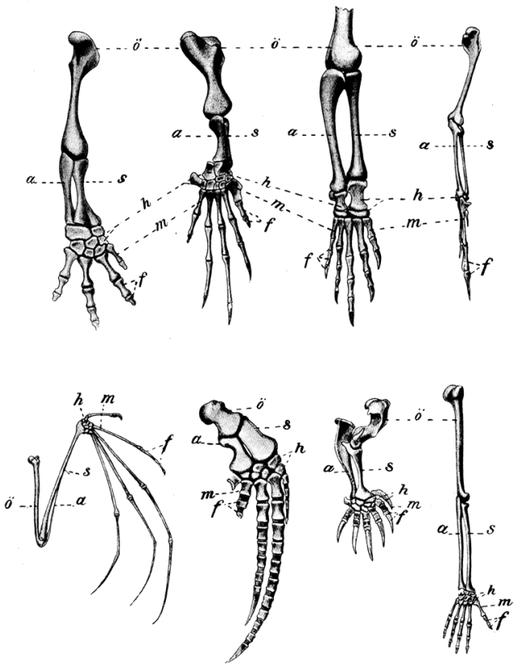


Titian, *Sisyphus* (1549)
VOID

It is the characteristic of a mechanical combination to be generally reversible. A child is delighted when he sees the ball in a game of ninepins knocking down everything in its way and spreading havoc in all directions; he laughs louder than ever when the ball returns to its starting-point after twists and turns and waverings of every kind. In other words, the mechanism just described is laughable even when rectilinear, it is much more so on becoming circular and when every effort the player makes, by a fatal interaction of cause and effect, merely results in bringing it back to the same spot.

[...] To cover a good deal of ground only to come back unwittingly to the starting-point, is to make a great effort for a result that is nil. So we might be tempted to define the comic in this latter fashion. And such, indeed, seems to be the idea of Herbert Spencer: according to him, laughter is the indication of an effort which suddenly encounters a void. Kant had already said something of the kind: "Laughter is the result of an expectation, which, of a sudden, ends in nothing."

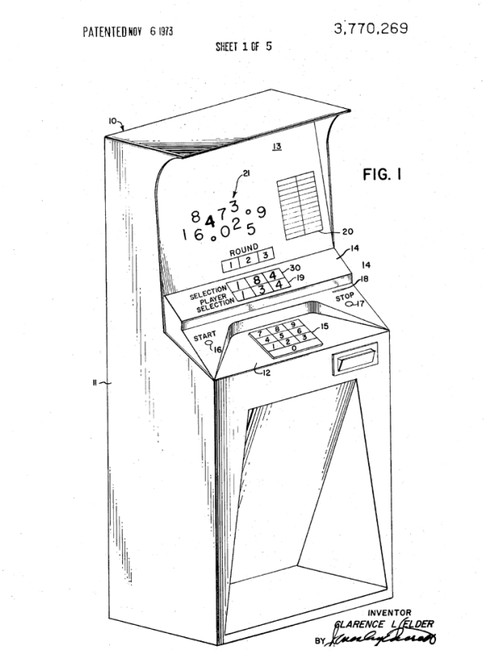
Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
VOID



Wilhelm Leche, *Comparative study of the skeleton of the arm* (1909)

Lack of proportion between cause and effect, whether appearing in one or in the other, is never the direct source of laughter. What we do laugh at is something that this lack of proportion may in certain cases disclose, namely, a particular mechanical arrangement which it reveals to us, as through a glass, at the back of the series of effects and causes. Disregard this arrangement, and you let go the only clue capable of guiding you through the labyrinth of the comic.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)



Random Unit Generator Amusement Device (1973)
COINCIDENCE

Our present problem no longer deals, like the preceding one, with a word or a sentence repeated by an individual, but rather with a situation, that is, a combination of circumstances, which recurs several times in its original form and thus contrasts with the changing stream of life. Everyday experience supplies us with this type of the comic, though only in a rudimentary state. Thus, you meet a friend in the street whom you have not seen for an age; there is nothing comic in the situation. If, however, you meet, him again the same day, and then a third and a fourth time, you may laugh at the "coincidence."

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
COINCIDENCE

Rachel Whiteread, *House* (1993)

Picture to yourself certain characters in a certain situation: if you reverse the situation and invert the roles, you obtain a comic scene.

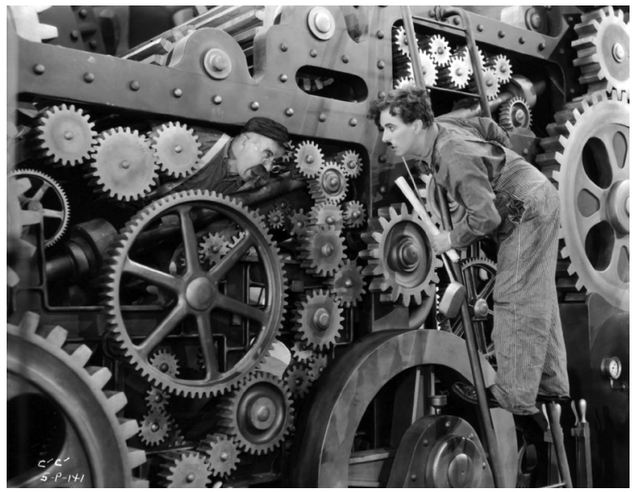
[...] When a comic scene has been reproduced a number of times, it reaches the stage of being a classical type or model. It becomes amusing in itself, quite apart from the causes which render it amusing. Henceforth, new scenes, which are not comic de jure, may become amusing de facto, on account of their partial resemblance to this model. They call up in our mind a more or less confused image which we know to be comical. They range themselves in a category representing an officially recognised type of the comic. The scene of the "robber robbed" belongs to this class.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917)
INTERFERENCE

A situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time.
You will at once think of an equivocal situation. And the equivocal situation is indeed one which permits of two different meanings at the same time, the one merely plausible, which is put forward by the actors, the other a real one, which is given by the public. [...] We proceed from this erroneous judgment to the correct one, we waver between the possible meaning and the real, and it is this mental seesaw between two contrary interpretations which is at first apparent in the enjoyment we derive from an equivocal situation ; [...] it is easy to see that the stage-made misunderstanding is nothing but a particular instance of a far more general phenomenon,—the reciprocal interference of independent series, and that, moreover, it is not laughable in itself, but only as a sign of such an interference.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
INTERFERENCE



Charly Chaplin, *Modern Times* (1936)
MECHANISATION

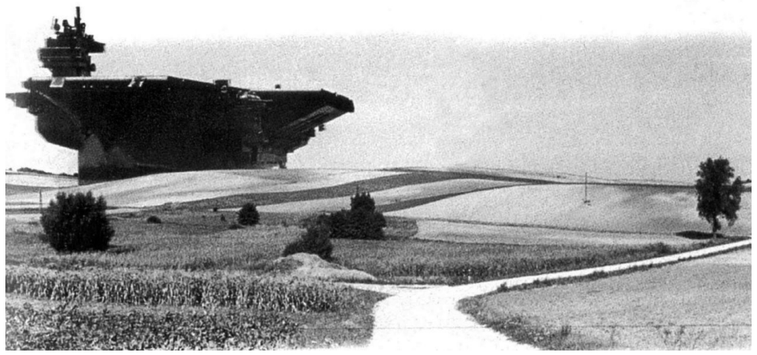
Whether we find reciprocal interference of series, inversion, or repetition, we see that the objective is always the same—to obtain what we have called a mechanisation of life. You take a set of actions and relations and repeat it as it is, or turn it upside down, or transfer it bodily to another set with which it partially coincides—all these being processes that consist in looking upon life as a repeating mechanism, with reversible action and interchangeable parts.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
MECHANISATION

Metaphorà
GENERAL LAW

A comic meaning is invariably obtained when an absurd idea is fitted into a well-established phrase-form.
[...] A comic effect is obtained whenever we pretend to take literally an expression which was used figuratively; or, once our attention is fixed on the material aspect of a metaphor, the idea expressed becomes comic.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
GENERAL LAW

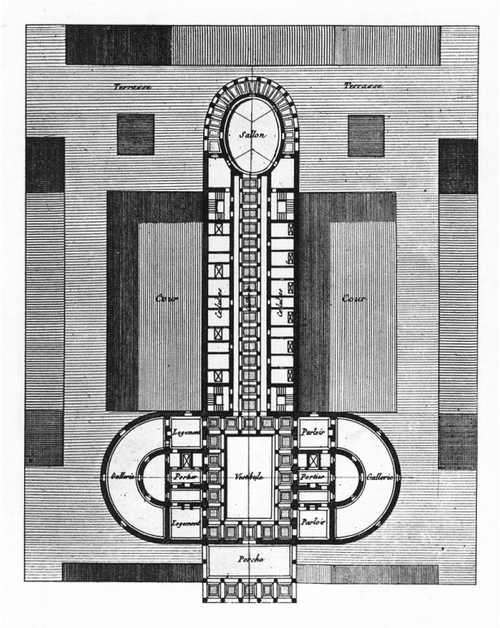


Hans Hollein, *Aircraft Carrier in Landscape* (1964)

Inversion and reciprocal interference are only a certain playfulness of the mind which ends at playing upon words. The comic in transposition is much more far-reaching. Indeed, transposition is to ordinary language what repetition is to comedy.

[...] A comic effect is always obtainable by transposing the nature expression of an idea into another key. [...] Imagine ideas expressed in suitable style and thus placed in the setting of their natural environment. If you think of some arrangement whereby they are transferred to fresh surroundings, while maintaining their mutual relations, or, in other words, if you can induce them to express themselves in an altogether different style and to transpose themselves into another key, you will have language itself playing a comedy—language itself made comic.

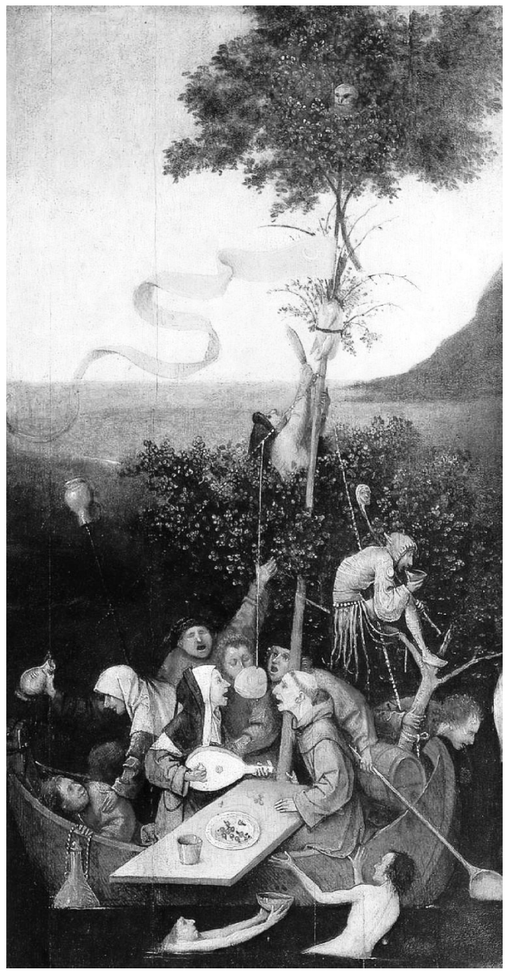
Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)



Claude Nicolas Ledoux, *House of Pleasure* (1773)
PARODY

Transpose the solemn into the familiar and the result is parody. The effect of parody, thus defined, extends to instances in which the idea expressed in familiar terms is one that, if only in deference to custom, ought to be pitched in another key.

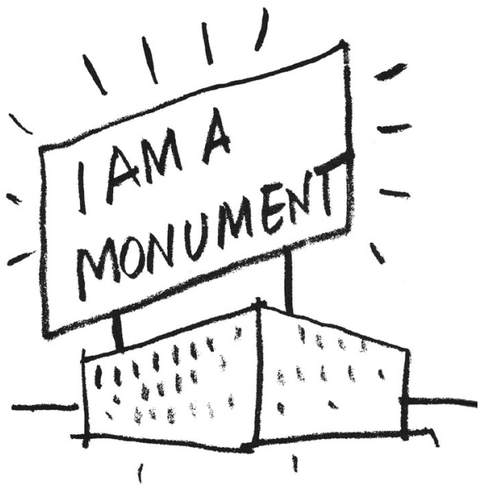
Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
PARODY



Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1500)

It is doubtless the comic in parody that has suggested to some philosophers, and in particular to Alexander Bain, the idea of defining the comic, in general, as a species of degradation. They describe the laughable as causing something to appear mean that was formerly dignified. But if our analysis is correct, degradation is only one form of transposition, and transposition itself only one of the means of obtaining laughter.

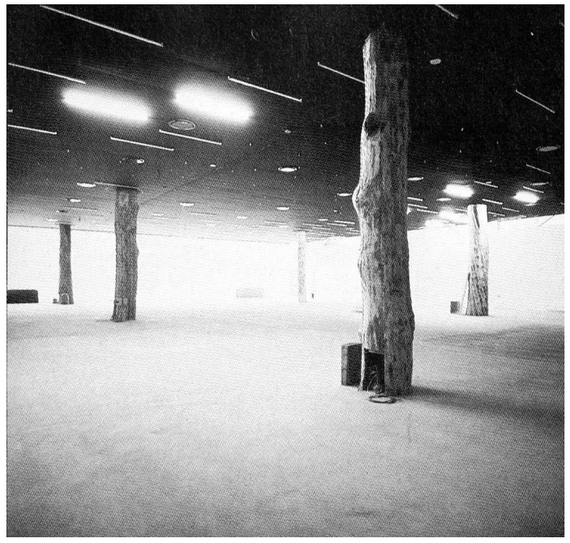
Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)



Robert Venturi, *I am a monument* (1977)
EXAGGERATION

[...] We may distinguish two main forms of it, according as it refers to the physical dimensions of an object or to its moral value.
To speak of small things as though they were large is, in a general way, to exaggerate. Exaggeration is always comic when prolonged, and especially when systematic; then, indeed, it appears as one method of transposition.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
EXAGGERATION



OMA, *Kunsthal Rotterdam* (1992)
IRONY

The most common of these contrasts is perhaps that between the real and the ideal, between what is and what ought to be. Here again transposition may take place in either direction. Sometimes we state what ought to be done, and pretend to believe that this is just what is actually being done; then we have irony. Sometimes, on the contrary, we describe with scrupulous minuteness what is being done, and pretend to believe that this is just what ought to be done; such is often the method of humour. Humour, thus denned, is the counterpart of irony. Both are forms of satire, but irony is oratorical in its nature, whilst humour partakes of the scientific.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
IRONY

Jeff Wall, *Morning Cleaning* (1999)
REALITY

[The comic] belongs neither altogether to art nor altogether to life. On the one hand, characters in real life would never make us laugh were we not capable of watching their vagaries in the same way as we look down at a play from our seat in a box; they are only comic in our eyes because they perform a kind of comedy before us. But, on the other hand, the pleasure caused by laughter, even on the stage, is not an unadulterated enjoyment; it is not a pleasure that is exclusively esthetic or altogether disinterested. It always implies a secret or unconscious intent, if not of each one of us, at all events of society as a whole. In laughter we always find an unavowed intention to humiliate, and consequently to correct our neighbour, if not in his will, at least in his deed. This is the reason a comedy is far more like real life than a drama is. The more sublime the drama, the more profound the analysis to which the poet has had to subject the raw materials of daily life in order to obtain the tragic element in its unadulterated form. On the contrary, it is only in its lower aspects, in light comedy and farce, that comedy is in striking contrast to reality: the higher it rises, the more it approximates to life.

[...] Life is action. Life implies the acceptance only of the utilitarian side of things in order to respond to them by appropriate reactions: all other impressions must be dimmed or else reach us vague and blurred. I look and I think I see, I listen and I think I hear, I examine myself and I think I am reading the very depths of my heart. But what I see and hear of the outer world is purely and simply a selection made by my senses to serve as a light to my conduct; what I know of myself is what comes to the surface, what participates in my actions. My senses and my consciousness, therefore, give me no more than a practical simplification of reality.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
REALITY

Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Water Towers* (1959 - 1990)
GENERALITY

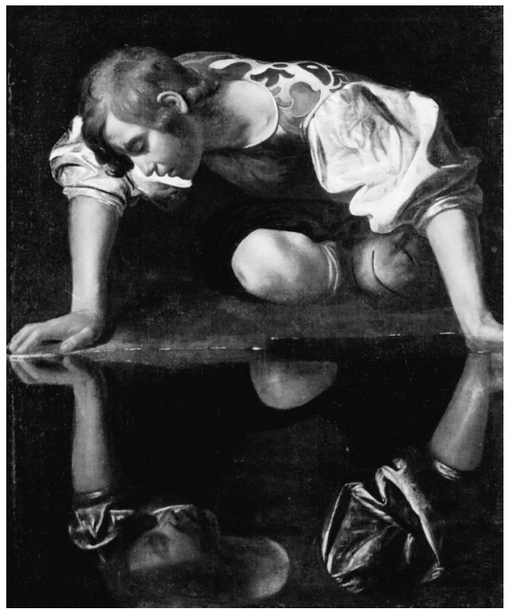
Art always aims at what is individual. What the artist fixes on his canvas is something he has seen at a certain spot, on a certain day, at a certain hour, with a colouring that will never be seen again. What the poet sings of is a certain mood which was his, and his alone, and which will never return. What the dramatist unfolds before us is the life-history of a soul, a living tissue of feelings and events—something, in short, which has once happened and can never be repeated. We may, indeed, give general names to these feelings, but they cannot be the same thing in another soul. They are individualised.

[...] Altogether different is the object of comedy. Here it is in the work itself that the generality lies. Comedy depicts characters we have already come across and shall meet with again. It takes note of similarities. It aims at placing types before our eyes. It even creates new types, if necessary.

[...] A tragic poet will never think of grouping around the chief character in his play secondary characters to serve as simplified copies, so to speak, of the former. The hero of a tragedy represents an individuality unique of its kind. It may be possible to imitate him, but then we shall be passing, whether consciously or not, from the tragic to the comic. No one is like him, because he is like no one. But a remarkable instinct, on the contrary, impels the comic poet, once he has elaborated his central character, to cause other characters, displaying the same general traits, to revolve as satellites round him.

[...] A person is never ridiculous except through some mental attribute resembling absent-mindedness, through something that lives upon him without forming part of his organism, after the fashion of a parasite; that is the reason this state of mind is observable from without and capable of being corrected. But, on the other hand, just because laughter aims at correcting, it is expedient that the correction should reach as great a number of persons as possible. This is the reason comic observation instinctively proceeds to what is general. It chooses such peculiarities as admit of being reproduced and consequently are not indissolubly bound up with the individuality of a single person,—a possibly common sort of uncommonness, so to say,—peculiarities that are held in common. By transferring them to the stage, it creates works which doubtless belong to art in that their only visible aim is to please, but which will be found to contrast with other works of art by reason of their generality and also of their scarcely confessed or scarcely conscious intention to correct and instruct. So we were probably right in saying that comedy lies midway between art and life. It is not disinterested as genuine art is. By organising laughter, comedy accepts social life as a natural environment, it even obeys an impulse of social life.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
GENERALITY



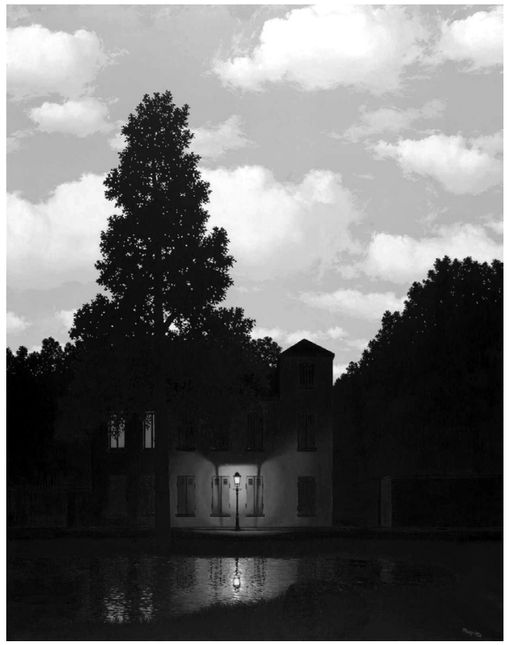
Caravaggio, *Narcissus* (1599)
VANITY

There are ready-made categories established by society itself, and necessary to it because it is based on the division of labour. We mean the various trades, public services and professions. Each particular profession impresses on its corporate members certain habits of mind and peculiarities of character in which they resemble each other and also distinguish themselves from the rest. Small societies are thus formed within the bosom of Society at large.

[...] It is the business of laughter to repress any separatist tendency. Its function is to convert rigidity into plasticity, to readapt the individual to the whole, in short, to round off the corners wherever they are met with. Accordingly, we here find a species of the comic whose varieties might be calculated beforehand. This we shall call the professional comic.

Instead of taking up these varieties in detail, we prefer to lay stress upon what they have in common. In the forefront we find professional vanity.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)
VANITY



René Magritte, *The Empire of Light* (1954)

We refer to the logic peculiar to the comic character and the comic group, a strange kind of logic, which, in some cases, may include a good deal of absurdity.

Theophile Gautier said that the comic in its extreme form was the logic of the absurd. [...] Every comic effect, it is said, implies contradiction in some of its aspects. What makes us laugh is alleged to be the absurd realised in concrete shape, a "palpable absurdity";—or, again, an apparent absurdity, which we swallow for the moment only to rectify it immediately afterwards;—or, better still, something absurd from one point of view though capable of a natural explanation from another, etc. [...] Absurdity, when met with in the comic, is not absurdity in general. It is an absurdity of a definite kind. It does not create the comic; rather, we might say that the comic infuses into it its own particular essence. It is not a cause, but an effect—an effect of a very special kind, which reflects the special nature of its cause.

[...] Laughter, as we have seen, is incompatible with emotion. If there exists a madness that is laughable, it can only be one compatible with the general health of the mind,—a sane type of madness, one might say. Now, there is a sane state of the mind that resembles madness in every respect, in which we find the same associations of ideas as we do in lunacy, the same peculiar logic as in a fixed idea. This state is that of dreams. So either our analysis is incorrect, or it must be capable of being stated in the following theorem: comic absurdity is of the same nature as that of dreams.

[...] If comic illusion is similar to dream illusion, if the logic of the comic is the logic of dreams, we may expect to discover in the logic of the laughable all the peculiarities of dream logic. Here, again, we shall find an illustration of the law with which we are well acquainted: given one form of the laughable, other forms that are lacking in the same comic essence become laughable from their outward resemblance to the first.

[...] We shall first call attention to a certain general relaxation of the rules of reasoning. The reasonings at which we laugh are those we know to be false, but which we might accept as true were we to hear them in a dream. They counterfeit true reasoning just sufficiently to deceive a mind dropping off to sleep. There is still an element of logic in them, if you will, but it is a logic lacking in tension and, for that very reason, affording us relief from intellectual effort.

Henri Bergson, *Laughter* (1900)

PostScript

Shinto Priest and an actor playing a game of GO

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

NOMADOLOGY: THE WAR MACHINE

Axiom I. The war machine is exterior to the State apparatus. Proposition I. This exteriority is first attested to in mythology, epic, drama, and games.

Georges Dumézil, in his definitive analyses of Indo-European mythology, has shown that political sovereignty, or domination, has two heads: the magician-king and the jurist-priest. Rex and flamen, raj and Brahman, Romulus and Numa, Varuna and Mitra, the despot and the legislator, the binder and the organizer. Undoubtedly, these two poles stand in opposition term by term, as the obscure and the clear, the violent and the calm, the quick and the weighty, the fearsome and the regulated, the "bond" and the "pact," etc. But their opposition is only relative; they function as a pair, in alternation, as though they expressed a division of the One or constituted in themselves a sovereign unity. "At once antithetical and complementary, necessary to one another and consequently without hostility, lacking a mythology of conflict: a specification on any one level automatically calls forth a homologous specification on another. The two together exhaust the field of the function." They are the principal elements of a State apparatus that proceeds by a One-Two, distributes binary distinctions, and forms a milieu of interiority. It is a double articulation that makes the State apparatus into a ***stratum***.

It will be noted that war is not contained within this apparatus. ***Either*** the State has at its disposal a violence that is not channeled through war— either it uses police officers and jailers in place of warriors, has no arms and no need of them, operates by immediate, magical capture, "seizes" and "binds," preventing all combat— or, the State acquires an army, but in a way that presupposes a juridical integration of war and the organization of a military function. As for the war machine in itself, it seems to be irreducible to the State apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere. ***Indra, the warrior god, is in opposition to Varuna no less than to Mitral*** He can no more be reduced to one or the other than he can constitute a third of their kind. Rather, he is like a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, the pack, an irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis. ***He unties the bond just as he betrays the pact.*** He brings ***a furor*** to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (***puissance***) against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus. He bears witness to another kind of justice, one of incomprehensible cruelty at times, but at others of unequaled pity as well (because he unties bonds...). He bears witness, above all, to other relations with women, with animals, because he sees all things in relations of ***becoming***, rather than implementing binary distributions between "states": a veritable becoming-animal of the warrior, a becoming-woman, which lies outside dualities of terms as well as correspondences between relations. In every respect, the war machine is of another species, another nature, another origin than the State apparatus.

Let us take a limited example and compare the war machine and the State apparatus in the context of the theory of games. Let us take chess and Go, from the standpoint of the game pieces, the relations between the pieces and the space involved. Chess is a game of State, or of the court: the emperor of China played it. Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop. Each is like a subject of the statement endowed with a relative power, and these relative powers combine in a subject of enunciation, that is, the chess player or the game's form of interiority. Go pieces, in contrast, are pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units, and have only an anonymous, collective, or third-person function. "It" makes a move. "It" could be a man, a woman, a louse, an elephant. Go pieces are elements of a nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, only situational ones. Thus the relations are very different in the two cases. Within their milieu of interiority, chess pieces entertain biunivocal relations with one another, and with the adversary's pieces: their functioning is structural. On the other hand, a Go piece has only a milieu of exteriority, or extrinsic relations with nebulas or constellations, according to which it fulfills functions of insertion or situation, such as bordering, encircling, shattering. All by itself, a Go piece can destroy an

entire constellation synchronically; a chess piece cannot (or can do so diachronically only). Chess is indeed a war, but an institutionalized, regulated, coded war, with a front, a rear, battles. But what is proper to Go is war without battle lines, with neither confrontation nor retreat, without battles even: pure strategy, whereas chess is a semiology. Finally, the space is not at all the same: in chess, it is a question of arranging a closed space for oneself, thus of going from one point to another, of occupying the maximum number of squares with the minimum number of pieces. In Go, it is a question of arraying oneself in an open space, of holding space, of maintaining the possibility of springing up at any point: the movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival. The "smooth" space of Go, as against the "striated" space of chess. The ***nomas*** of Go against the State of chess, ***nomas*** against ***polis***. The difference is that chess codes and decodes space, whereas Go proceeds altogether differently, territorializing or deterritorializing it (make the outside a territory in space; consolidate that territory by the construction of a second, adjacent territory; deterritorialize the enemy by shattering his territory from within; deterritorialize oneself by renouncing, by going elsewhere...). Another justice, another movement, another space-time.

"They come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext..." "In some way that is incomprehensible they have pushed right into the capital. At any rate, here they are; it seems that every morning there are more of them." Luc de Heusch analyzes a Bantu myth that leads us to the same schema: Nkongolo, an indigenous emperor and administrator of public works, a man of the public and a man of the police, gives his half-sisters to the hunter Mbidi, who assists him and then leaves. Mbidi's son, a man of secrecy, joins up with his father, only to return from the outside with that inconceivable thing, an army. He kills Nkongolo and proceeds to build a new State. "Between" the magical-despotic State and the juridical State containing a military institution, we see the flash of the war machine, arriving from without.

From the standpoint of the State, the originality of the man of war, his eccentricity, necessarily appears in a negative form: stupidity, deformity, madness, illegitimacy, usurpation, sin. Dumézil analyzes the three "sins" of the warrior in the Indo-European tradition: against the king, against the priest, against the laws originating in the State (for example, a sexual transgression that compromises the distribution of men and women, or even a betrayal of the laws of war as instituted by the State). The warrior is in the position of betraying everything, including the function of the military, ***or*** of understanding nothing. It happens that historians, both bourgeois and Soviet, will follow this negative tradition and explain how Genghis Khan understood nothing: he "didn't understand" the phenomenon of the city. An easy thing to say. The problem is that the exteriority of the war machine in relation to the State apparatus is everywhere apparent but remains difficult to conceptualize. It is not enough to affirm that the war machine is external to the apparatus. It is necessary to reach the point of conceiving the war machine as itself a pure form of exteriority, whereas the State apparatus constitutes the form of interiority we habitually take as a model, or according to which we are in the habit of thinking. What complicates everything is that this extrinsic power of the war machine tends, under certain circumstances, to become confused with one of the two heads of the State apparatus. Sometimes it is confused with the magic violence of the State, at other times with the State's military institution. For instance, the war machine invents speed and secrecy; but there is all the same a certain speed and a certain secrecy that pertain to the State, relatively, secondarily. So there is a great danger of identifying the structural relation between the two poles of political sovereignty, and the dynamic interrelation of these two poles, with the power of war. Dumézil cites the lineage of the Roman kings: there is a Romulus-Numa relation that recurs throughout a series, with variants and an alternation between these two types of equally legitimate rulers; but there is also a relation with an "evil king," Tullus Hostilius, Tarquinius Superbus, an upsurge of the warrior as a disquieting and illegitimate character. Shakespeare's kings could also be invoked: even violence, murders, and perversion do not prevent the State lineage from producing "good" kings; but a disturbing character like Richard III slips in, announcing from the outset his intention to reinvent a war machine and impose its line (deformed, treacherous and traitorous, he claims a "secret close intent" totally different from the conquest of State power, and another —an ***other***—relation with women). In short, whenever the irruption of war power is confused

with the line of State domination, everything gets muddled; the war machine can then be understood only through the categories of the negative, since nothing is left that remains outside the State. But, returned to its milieu of exteriority, the war machine is seen to be of another species, of another nature, of another origin. One would have to say that it is located between the two heads of the State, between the two articulations, and that it is necessary in order to pass from one to the other. But "between" the two, in that instant, even ephemeral, if only a flash, it proclaims its own irreducibility. ***The State has no war machine of its own;*** **it** can only appropriate one in the form of a military institution, one that will continually cause it problems. This explains the mistrust States have toward their military institutions, in that the military institution inherits an extrinsic war machine. Karl von Clausewitz has a general sense of this situation when he treats the flow of absolute war as an Idea that States partially appropriate according to their political needs, and in relation to which they are more or less good "conductors."

Trapped between the two poles of political sovereignty, the man of war seems outmoded, condemned, without a future, reduced to his own fury, which he turns against himself. The descendants of Hercules, Achilles, then Ajax, have enough strength left to proclaim their independence from Agamemnon, a man of the old State. But they are powerless when it comes to Ulysses, a man of the nascent modern State, the first man of the modern State. And it is Ulysses who inherits Achilles' arms, only to convert them to other uses, submitting them to the laws of the State— not Ajax, who is condemned by the goddess he defied and against whom he sinned. No one has portrayed the situation of the man of war, at once eccentric and condemned, better than Kleist. In ***Penthesilea***, Achilles is already separated from his power: the war machine has passed over to the Amazons, a Stateless woman-people whose justice, religion, and loves are organized uniquely in a war mode. Descendants of the Scythians, the Amazons spring forth like lightning, "between" the two States, the Greek and the Trojan. They sweep away everything in their path. Achilles is brought before his double, Penthesilea. And in his ambiguous struggle, Achilles is unable to prevent himself from marrying the war machine, or from loving Penthesilea, and thus from betraying Agamemnon and Ulysses at the same time. Nevertheless, he already belongs enough to the Greek State that Penthesilea, for her part, cannot enter the passional relation of war with him without herself betraying the collective law of her people, the law of the pack that prohibits "choosing" the enemy and entering into one-to-one relationships or binary distinctions.

Throughout his work, Kleist celebrates the war machine, setting it against the State apparatus in a struggle that is lost from the start. Doubtless Arminius heralds a Germanic war machine that breaks with the imperial order of alliances and armies, and stands forever opposed to the Roman State. But the Prince of Homburg lives only in a dream and stands condemned for having reached victory in disobedience of the law of the State. As for Kohlhaas, his war machine can no longer be anything more than banditry. Is it the destiny of the war machine, when the State triumphs to be caught in this alternative: either to be nothing more than the disciplined, military organ of the State apparatus, or to ***turn against itself*** to become a double suicide machine for a solitary man and a solitary woman? Goethe and Hegel, State thinkers both, see Kleist as a monster, and Kleist has lost from the start. Why is it, then, that the most uncanny modernity lies with him? It is because the elements of his work are secrecy, speed and affect." And in Kleist the secret is no longer a content held within a form of interiority; rather, it becomes a form, identified with the form of exteriority that is always external to itself. Similarly, feelings become uprooted from the interiority of a "subject," to be projected violently outward into a milieu of pure exteriority that lends them an incredible velocity, a catapulting force: love or hate, they are no longer feelings but affects and these affects are so many instances of the becoming-woman, the becoming-animal of the warrior (the bear, she-dogs). Affects transpierce the body like arrows, they are weapons of war. The deterritorialization velocity of affect. Even dreams (Homburg's, Pentheselea's) are externalized, by a system of relays and plug-ins, extrinsic linkages belonging to the war machine. Broken rings. This element of exteriority—which dominates everything, which Kleist invents in literature, which he is the first to invent—will give time a new rhythm: an endless succession of catatonic episodes or fainting spells, and flashes or rushes. Catatonia is- "This affect is too strong for me," and a flash is: "The power of this affect sweeps me away," so that the Self (***Moi***) is now

nothing more than a character whose actions and emotions are desubjectified, perhaps even to the point of death. Such is Kleist's personal formula: a succession of nights of madness and catatonic freezes in which no subjective interiority remains There is much of the East in Kleist: the Japanese fighter, interminably still who then makes a move too quick to see. The Go player. Many things in modern art come from Kleist. Goethe and Hegel are old men next to Kleist. Could it be that it is at the moment the war machine ceases to exist, conquered by the State, that it displays to the utmost its irreducibility, that it scatters into thinking, loving, dying, or creating machines that have at their disposal vital or revolutionary powers capable of challenging the conquering State? Is the war machine already overtaken, condemned, appropriated as part of the same process whereby it takes on new forms, undergoes a metamorphosis, affirms its irreducibility and exteriority, and deploys that milieu of pure exteriority that the occidental man of the State, or the occidental thinker, continually reduces to something other than itself?

Problem I. Is there a war of warding off the formation of a State apparatus (or its equivalents in a group)?
Proposition II. The exteriority of the war machine is also attested to by ethnology (a tribute to the memory of Pierre Clastres).

Primitive, segmentary societies have often been defined as societies without a State, in other words, societies in which distinct organs of power do not appear. But the conclusion has been that these societies did not reach the degree of economic development, or the level of political differentiation, that would make the formation of the State apparatus both possible and inevitable: the implication is that primitive people "don't understand" so complex an apparatus. The prime interest in Pierre Clastres's theories is that they break with this evolutionist postulate. Not only does he doubt that the State is the product of an ascribable economic development, but he asks if it is not a potential concern of primitive societies to ward off or avert that monster they supposedly do not understand. Warding off the formation of a State apparatus, making such a formation impossible, would be the objective of a certain number of primitive social mechanisms, even if they are not consciously understood as such. To be sure, primitive societies have ***chiefs***. But the State is not defined by the existence of chiefs; it is defined by the perpetuation or conservation of organs of power. The concern of the State is to conserve. Special institutions are thus necessary to enable a chief to become a man of State, but diffuse, collective mechanisms are just as necessary to prevent a chief from becoming one. Mechanisms for warding off, preventive mechanisms, are a part of chieftainship and keep an apparatus distinct from the social body from crystallizing. Clastres describes the situation of the chief, who has no instituted weapon other than his prestige, no other means of persuasion, no other rule than his sense of the group's desires. The chief is more like a leader or a star than a man of power and is always in danger of being disavowed, abandoned by his people. But Clastres goes further, identifying war in primitive societies as the surest mechanism directed against the formation of the State: war maintains the dispersal and segmentarity of groups, and the warrior himself is caught in a process of accumulating exploits leading him to solitude and a prestigious but powerless death. Clastres can thus invoke natural Law while reversing its principal proposition: just as Hobbes saw clearly that ***the State was against war, so war is against the State***, and makes it impossible. It should not be concluded that war is a state of nature, but rather that it is the mode of a social state that wards off and prevents the State. Primitive war does not produce the State any more than it derives from it. And it is no better explained by exchange than by the State: far from deriving from exchange, even as a sanction for its failure, war is what limits exchanges, maintains them in the framework of "alliances"; it is what prevents them from becoming a State factor, from fusing groups.

The importance of this thesis is first of all to draw attention to collective mechanisms of inhibition. These mechanisms may be subtle, and function as micromechanisms. This is easily seen in certain band or pack phenomena. For example, in the case of gangs of street children in Bogota, Jacques Meunier cites three ways in which the leader is prevented from acquiring stable power: the members of the band meet and undertake their theft activity in common, with collective sharing of the loot, but they disperse to eat or sleep separately; also, and especially, each member of the band is paired off with one, two, or three other members, so if he has a disagreement with

the leader, he will not leave alone but will take along his allies, whose combined departure will threaten to break up the entire gang; finally, there is a diffuse age limit, and at about age fifteen a member is inevitably induced to quit the gang.These mechanisms cannot be understood without renouncing the evolutionist vision that sees bands or packs as a rudimentary, less organized, social form. Even in bands of animals, leadership is a complex mechanism that does not act to promote the strongest but rather inhibits the installation of stable powers, in favor of a fabric of immanent relations. One could just as easily compare the form "high-society life" to the form "sociability" among the most highly evolved men and women: high-society groups are similar to gangs and operate by the diffusion of prestige rather than by reference to centers of power, as in social groupings (Proust clearly showed this noncorrespondence of high- society values and social values). Eugene Sue, a man of high society and a dandy, whom legitimists reproached for frequenting the Orleans family used to say: I'm not on the side of the family, I side with the pack." Packs, bands, are groups of the rhizome type, as opposed to the arborescent type that centers around organs of power. That is why bands in general, even those engaged in banditry or high-society life, are metamorphoses of a war machine formally distinct from all State apparatuses or their equivalents, which are instead what structure centralized societies. We certainly would not say that discipline is what defines a war machine: discipline is the characteristic required of armies after the State has appropriated them. The war machine answers to other rules. We are not saying that they are better, of course, only that they animate a fundamental indiscipline of the warrior! A questioning of hierarchy, perpetual blackmail by abandonment or betrayal, and a very volatile sense of honor, all of which, once again, it impedes the formation of the State.

But why does this argument fail to convince us entirely? We follow Clastres when he demonstrates that the State is explained neither by a development of productive forces nor by a differentiation of political forces. It is the State, on the contrary, that makes possible the undertaking of large-scale projects, the constitution of surpluses, and the organization of the corresponding public functions. The State is what makes the distinction between governors and governed possible. We do not see how the State can be explained by what it presupposes, even with recourse to dialectics. The State seems to rise up in a single stroke, in an imperial form, and does not depend on progressive factors. Its on-the-spot emergence is like a stroke of genius, the birth of Athena. We also follow Clastres when he shows that the war machine is directed against the State, either against potential States whose formation it wards off in advance, or against actual States whose destruction it purposes. No doubt the war machine is realized more completely in the "barbaric" assemblages of nomadic warriors than in the "savage" assemblages of primitive societies. In any case, it is out of the ' question that the State could be the result of a war in which the conquerors imposed, by the very fact of their victory, a new law on the vanquished, because the organization of the war machine is directed against the State- form, actual or virtual. The State is no better accounted for as a result of war than by a progression of economic or political forces. This is where Clastres locates the break: between "primitive" counter-State societies and "monstrous" State societies whose formation it is no longer possible to explain. Clastres is fascinated by the problem of "voluntary servitude," in the manner of La Boetie: In what way did people want or desire servitude, which most certainly did not come to them as the outcome of an involuntary and unfortunate war? They did, after all, have counter-State mechanisms at their disposal: So how and why the State? Why did the State triumph? The more deeply Clastres delved into the problem, the more he seemed to deprive himself of the means of resolving it. He tended to make primitive societies hypostases, self-sufficient entities (he insisted heavily on this point). He made their formal exteriority into a real independence. Thus he remained an evolutionist, and posited a state of nature. Only this state of nature was, according to him, a fully social reality instead of a pure concept, and the evolution was a sudden mutation instead of a development. For on the one hand, the State rises up in a single stroke, fully formed; on the other, the counter-State societies use very specific mechanisms to ward it off, to prevent it from arising. We believe that these two propositions are valid but that their interlinkage is flawed. There is an old scenario: "from clans to empires," or "from bands to kingdoms." But nothing says that this constitutes an evolution, since bands and clans are no less organized than empire-kingdoms. We

will never leave the evolution hypothesis behind by creating a break between the two terms, that is, by endowing bands with self-sufficiency and the State with an emergence all the more miraculous and monstrous.

We are compelled to say that there has always been a State, quite perfect quite complete. The more discoveries archaeologists make, the more empires they uncover. The hypothesis of the ***Urstaat*** seems to be verified- The State clearly dates back to the most remote ages of humanity." It is hard to imagine primitive societies that would not have been in contact with imperial States, at the periphery or in poorly controlled areas. But of greater importance is the inverse hypothesis: that the State itself has always been m a relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship. The law of the State is not the law of all or Nothing (State societies or counter-State societies) but that of interior and exterior. The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, of appropriating locally. Not only is there no universal State but the outside of States cannot be reduced to "foreign policy," that is to a set of relations among States. The outside appears simultaneously in two directions: huge worldwide machines branched out over the entire ***ecumenon*** at a given moment, which enjoy a large measure of autonomy in relation to the States (for example, commercial organization of the "multinational" type, or industrial complexes, or even religious formations like Christianity, Islam, certain prophetic or messianic movements, etc) but also the local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in opposition to the organs of State power. The modern world can provide us today with particularly well developed images of these two directions: worldwide ecumenical machines, but also a neoprimitivism, a new tribal society as described by Marshall McLuhan. These directions are equally present in all social fields, in all periods. It even happens that they partially merge. For example, a commercial organization is also a band of pillage, or piracy for part of its course and in many of its activities; or it is in bands that a religious formation begins to operate. What becomes clear is that bands, no less than worldwide organizations, imply a form irreducible to the State and that this form of exteriority necessarily presents itself as a diffuse and polymorphous war machine. It is a nomas very different from the "law" The State-form, as a form of inferiority, has a tendency to reproduce itself, remaining identical to itself across its variations and easily recognizable within the limits of its poles, always seeking public recognition (there is no masked State). But the war machine's form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses; it exists in an industrial innovation as well as in a technological invention, in a commercial circuit as well as in a religious creation, in all flows and currents that only secondarily allow themselves to be appropriated by the State. It is in terms not of independence, but of coexistence and competition ***in a perpetual Held of interaction***, that we must conceive of exteriority and inferiority, war machines of metamorphosis and State apparatuses of identity, bands and kingdoms, megamachines and empires. The same field circumscribes its interiority in States, but describes its exteriority in what escapes States or stands against States.

[...]

AXIOM II. The war machine is the invention of the nomads (insofar as it is exterior to the State apparatus and distinct from the military intuition). As such, the war machine has three aspects, a spatiogeographic aspect, an arithmetic or algebraic aspect. and an affective aspect. Proposition V. Nomad existence necessarily effectuates the conditions of the war machine in space.

The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.). But the question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence. To begin with, although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated^ the paths they determine, the reverse of what happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but then-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them.* The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes

principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen, or not well localized. But the nomad goes from point to point only as a consequence and as a factual necessity; in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory. Nomads and migrants can mix in many ways, or form a common aggregate; their causes and conditions are no less distinct for that (for example, those who joined Mohammed at Medina had a choice between a nomadic or Bedouin pledge, and a pledge of hegira or emigration).

Second, even though the nomadic trajectory may follow trails or customary routes, it does not fulfill the function of the sedentary road, which is to ***parcel out a closed space to people***, assigning each person a share and regulating the communication between shares. The nomadic trajectory does the opposite: it ***distributes people (or animals) in an open spac***e, one that is indefinite and noncommunicating. The ***nomas*** came to designate the law, but that was originally because it was distribution, a mode of distribution. It is a very special kind of distribution, one without division into shares, in a space without borders or enclosure. The ***nomas*** is the consistency of a fuzzy aggregate: it is in this sense that it stands in opposition to the law or the ***polis***, as the backcountry, a mountainside, or the vague expanse around a city ("either nomos or polis"). Therefore, and this is the third point, there is a significant difference between the spaces: sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory. Even the lamellae of the desert slide over each other, producing an inimitable sound. The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle. It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement. Toynbee is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary ***he who does not move***. Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe or the desert advances, and who invents nomadism as a response to this challenge. Of course, the nomad moves, but while seated, and he is only seated while moving (the Bedouin galloping, knees on the saddle, sitting on the soles of his upturned feet, "a feat of balance"). The nomad knows how to wait, he has infinite patience. Immobility and speed, catatonia and rush, a "stationary process," station as process—these traits of Kleist's are eminently those of the nomad. It is thus necessary to make a distinction between ***speed*** and ***movement***: a movement may be very fast, but that does not give it speed; a speed may be very slow, or even immobile, yet it is still speed. Movement is extensive; speed is intensive. Movement designates the relative character of a body considered as "one," and which goes from point to point; ***speed, on the contrary; constitutes the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex***, with the possibility of springing up at any point. (It is therefore not surprising that reference has been made to spiritual voyages effected without relative movement, but in intensity, in one place: these are part of nomadism.) In short, we will say by convention that only nomads have absolute movement, in other words, speed; vortical or swirling movement is an essential feature of their war machine.

It is in this sense that nomads have no points, paths, or land, even though they do by all appearances. If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization ***afterward*** as with the migrant, or upon ***something else as*** with the sedentary (the sedentary's relation with the earth is mediatized by something else, a property regime, a State apparatus). With the nomad, on the contrary, it is deterritorialization that constitutes the relation to the earth, to such a degree that the nomad reterritorializes on deterritorialization itself. It is the earth that deterritorializes itself, in a way that provides the nomad with a territory. The land ceases to be land, tending to become simply ground ***(sol)*** or support. The earth does not become deterritorialized in its global and relative movement, but at specific locations, at the spot where the forest recedes, or where the steppe and the desert advance. Hubac is right to say that nomad.sm is explainable less by universal changes in climate (which relate instead to migrations) as by the "divagation of local climates."" The nomads are there, on the land, wherever there forms a smooth space that gnaws, and tends to grow, in all directions. The nomads inhabit these places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them

grow, for it has been established that the nomads make the desert no less than they are made by it. They are vectors of deterritorialization. They add desert to desert, steppe to steppe, by a series of local operations whose orientation and direction endlessly vary." The sand desert has not only oases which are like fixed points, but also rhizomatic vegetation that is temporary and shifts location according to local rains, bringing changes in the direction of the crossings." The same terms are used to describe ice deserts as sand deserts: there is no line separating earth and sky; there is no intermediate distance, no perspective or contour; visibility is limited; and yet there is an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points or objects but rather on haecceities, on sets of relations (winds, undulations of snow or sand, the song of the sand or the creaking of ice, the tactile qualities of both). It is a tactile space, or rather "haptic," a sonorous much more than a visual space.56 The variability, the poly vocality of directions, is an essential feature of smooth spaces of the rhizome type, and it alters their cartography. The nomad, nomad space, is localized and not delimited. What is both limited and limiting is striated space, the relative global: it is limited in its parts, which are assigned constant directions, are oriented in relation to one another, divisible by boundaries, and can interlink; what is limiting (***limes*** or wall, and no longer boundary) is this aggregate in relation to the smooth spaces it "contains," whose growth it slows or prevents, and which it restricts or places outside. Even when the nomad sustains its effects he does not belong to this ***relative global***, where one passes from one point to another, from one region to another. Rather, he is in a ***local absolute*** an absolute that is manifested locally, and engendered in a series of local operations of varying orientations: desert, steppe, ice, sea.

Making the absolute appear in a particular place—is that not a very general characteristic of religion (recognizing that the nature of the appearance, and the legitimacy, or lack thereof, of the images that reproduce it are •pen to debate)? But the sacred place of religion is fundamentally a center hat repels the obscure ***nomas***. The absolute of religion is essentially a horizon that encompasses, and, if the absolute itself appears at a particular place, it does so in order to establish a solid and stable center for the global I he encompassing role of smooth spaces (desert, steppe, or ocean) in nonotheism has been frequently noted. In short, religion converts the absolute. Religion is in this sense a piece in the State apparatus (in both of its forms, the "bond" and the "pact or alliance"), even if it has within itself the power to elevate this model to the level of the universal or to constitute an absolute ***Imperium***. But for the nomad the terms of the question are totally different: locality is not delimited; the absolute, then, does not appear at a particular place but becomes a nonlimited locality; the coupling of the place and the absolute is achieved not in a centered, oriented globalization or universalization but in an infinite succession of local operations. Limiting ourselves to this opposition between points of view, it may be observed that nomads do not provide a favorable terrain for religion; the man of war is always committing an offense against the priest or the god. The nomads have a vague, literally vagabond "monotheism," and content themselves with that, and with their ambulant fires. The nomads have a sense of the absolute, but a singularly atheistic one. The universalist religions that have had dealings with nomads—Moses, Mohammed, even Christianity with the Nestorian heresy—have always encountered problems in this regard, and have run up against what they have termed obstinate impiety. These religions are not, in effect, separable from a firm and constant orientation, from an imperial de jure State, even, and especially, in the absence of a de facto State; they have promoted an ideal of sedentarization and addressed themselves more to the migrant components than the nomadic ones. Even early Islam favored the theme of the hegira, or migration, over nomadism; rather, it was through certain schisms (such as the Kahariji movement) that it won over the Arab or Berber nomads.

However, it does not exhaust the question to establish a simple opposition between two points of view, religion-nomadism. For monotheistic religion, at the deepest level of its tendency to project a universal or spiritual State over the entire ecumenon, is not without ambivalence or fringe areas; it goes beyond even the ideal limits of the State, even the imperial State, entering a more indistinct zone, an outside of States where it has the possibility of undergoing a singular mutation or adaptation. We are referring to religion as an element in a war machine and the idea of holy war as the motor of that machine. The ***prophet***, as opposed to the state personality of the king and the religious personality of the priest, directs the movement by which a religion becomes a war machine or passes over to the side of such a machine. It has often been said that Islam, and the prophet Mohammed, performed such a conversion of religion and constituted a veritable esprit de corps: in the formula of Georges Bataille, "early Islam, a society reduced to the military enterprise." This is what the West invokes in order to justify its antipathy toward Islam. Yet the Crusades were a properly Christian adventure of this type. The prophets may very well condemn nomad life; the war machine may very well favor the movement of migration and the ideal of establishment; religion in general may very well compensate for its specific deterritorialization with a spiritual and even physical reterritorialization, which in the case of the holy war assumes the well-directed character of a conquest of the holy lands as the center of the world. Despite all that, when religion sets itself up as a war machine, it mobilizes and liberates a formidable charge of nomadism or absolute deterritorialization; it doubles the migrant with an accompanying nomad, or with the potential nomad the migrant is in the process of becoming; and finally, it turns its dream of an absolute State back against the State-form.5* And this turning-against is no less a part of the "essence" of religion than that dream. The history of the Crusades is marked by the most astonishing series of directional changes: the firm orientation toward the Holy Land as a center to reach often seems nothing more than a pretext. But it would be wrong to say that the play of self-interest, or economic, commercial, or political factors, diverted the crusade from its pure path. The idea of the crusade ***in itself implies this variability of directions***, broken and changing, and intrinsically possesses all these factors or all these variables from the moment it turns religion into a war machine and simultaneously utilizes and gives rise to the corresponding nomadism. The necessity of maintaining the most rigorous of distinctions between sedentaries, migrants, and nomads does not preclude de facto mixes; on the contrary, it makes them all the more necessary in turn. And it is impossible to think of the general process of sedentarization that vanquished the nomads without also envisioning the gusts of local nomadization that carried off sedentaries and doubled migrants (notably, to the benefit of religion).

Smooth or nomad space lies between two striated spaces: that of the forest, with its gravitational verticals, and that of agriculture, with its grids and generalized parallels, its now independent arborescence, its art of extracting the tree and wood from the forest. But being "between" also means that smooth space is controlled by these two flanks, which limit it, oppose its development, and assign it as much as possible a communicational role; or, on the contrary, it means that it turns against them, gnawing away at the forest on one side, on the other side gaining ground on the cultivated lands, affirming a noncommunicating force or a force of ***divergence*** like a "wedge" digging in. The nomads turn first against the forest and the mountain dwellers, then descend upon the farmers. What we have here is something like the flipside or the outside of the State-form—but in what sense? This form, as a global and relative space, implies a certain number of components: forest-clearing of fields; agriculture-grid laying; animal raising subordinated to agricultural work and sedentary food production; commerce based on a constellation of town-country (***polis-nomos***) communications. When historians inquire into the reasons for the victory of the West over the Orient, they primarily mention the following characteristics, which put the Orient in general at a disadvantage: deforestation rather than clearing for planting, making it extremely difficult to extract or even to find wood; cultivation of the type "rice paddy and garden" rather than arborescence and field; animal raising for the most part outside the control of the sedentarics, with the result that they lacked animal power and meat foods; the low communication content of the town-country relation, making commerce far less flexible. The conclusion is not that the State-form is absent in the Orient. Quite to the contrary, a more rigid agency becomes necessary in order to retain and reunite the various components plied by escape vectors. States always have the same composition; if there is even one truth in the political philosophy of Hegel, it is that every State carries within itself the essential moments of its existence. States are made up not only of people but also of wood, fields, gardens, animals, and commodities. There is a unity of ***composition*** of all States, but States have neither the same ***development*** nor the same ***organization***. In the Orient, the components are much more disconnected, disjointed, necessitating a

great immutable Form to hold them together: "despotic formations," Asian or African, are rocked by incessant revolts, by secessions and dynastic changes, which nevertheless do not affect the immutability of the form. In the West, on the other hand, the interconnectedness of the components makes possible transformations of the State-form through revolution. It is true that the idea of revolution itself is ambiguous; it is Western insofar as it relates to a transformation of the State, but Eastern insofar as it envisions the destruction, the abolition of the State.61 The great empires of the Orient, Africa, and America run up against wide-open smooth spaces that penetrate them and maintain gaps between their components (the nomos does not become countryside, the countryside does not communicate with the town, large- scale animal raising is the affair of the nomads, etc.): the oriental State is in direct confrontation with a nomad war machine. This war machine may fall back to the road of integration and proceed solely by revolt and dynastic change; nevertheless, it is the war machine, as nomad, that invents the abolitionist dream and reality. Western States are much more sheltered in their striated space and consequently have much more latitude in holding their components together; they confront the nomads only indirectly, through the intermediary of the migrations the nomads trigger or adopt as their stance.

One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire "exterior," over all of the flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of Hows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc. There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects. That is why Paul Virilio's thesis is important, when he shows that "the political power of the State is ***polis***, police, that is, management of the public ways," and that "the gates of the city, its levies and duties, are barriers, filters against the fluidity of the masses, against the penetration power of migratory packs," people, animals, and goods. (gravity, ***gravitas***, such is the essence of the State. It is not at all that the State knows nothing of speed; but it requires that movement, even the fastest, cease to be the absolute state of a moving body occupying a smooth space, to become the relative characteristic of a "moved body" going from one point to another in a striated space. In this sense, the State never ceases to decompose, recompose, and transform movement, or to regulate speed. The State as town surveyor, converter, or highway interchange: the role of the engineer from this point of view. Speed and absolute movement are not without their laws, but they are the laws of the ***nomos***> of the smooth space that deploys it, of the war machine that populates it. If the nomads formed the war machine, it was by inventing absolute speed, by being "synonymous" with speed. And each time there is an operation against the State— insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act—it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has* appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space as though it were smooth (Virilio discusses the importance of the riot or revolutionary theme of "holding the street"). It is in this sense that the response of the State against all that threatens to move beyond it is to striate space. The State does not appropriate the war machine without giving even it the form of relative movement: this was the case with the model of the fortress as a regulator of movement, which was precisely the obstacle the nomads came up against, the stumbling block and parry by which absolute vortical movement was broken. Conversely, when a State does not succeed in striating its interior or neighboring space, the flows traversing that State necessarily adopt the stance of a war machine directed against it, deployed in a hostile or rebellious smooth space (even if other States are able to slip their striations in). This was the adventure of China: toward the end of the fourteenth century, and in spite of its very high level of technology in ships and navigation, it turned its back on its huge maritime space, saw its commercial flows turn against it and ally themselves with piracy, and was unable to react except by a politics of immobility, of the massive restriction of commerce, which only reinforced the connection between commerce and the war machine.

The situation is much more complicated than we have let on. The sea is perhaps principal among smooth spaces, the hydraulic model par excellence. But the sea is also, of all smooth spaces, the first one attempts were made to striate, to transform into a dependency of the land, with its fixed routes, constant directions, relative movements, a whole counterhydraulie of channels and conduits. One of the reasons for the hegemony of the West was the power of its State apparatuses to striate the sea by combining the technologies of the North and the Mediterranean and by annexing the Atlantic. But this undertaking had the most unexpected result: the multiplication of relative movements, the intensification of relative speeds in striated space, ended up reconstituting a smooth space or absolute movement. As Virilio emphasizes, the sea became the place ***of the fleet in being***, where one no longer goes from one point to another, but rather holds space beginning from any point: instead of striating space, one occupies it with a vector of deterritorialization in perpetual motion. This modern strategy was communicated from the sea to the air, as the new smooth space, but also to the entire Earth considered as desert or sea. As converter and capturer, the State does not just relativize movement, it reimparts absolute movement. It does not just go from the smooth to the striated, it reconstitutes smooth space; it reimparts smooth in the wake of the striated. It is true that this new nomadism accompanies a worldwide war machine whose organization exceeds the State apparatuses and passes into energy, military-industrial, and multinational complexes. We say this as a reminder that smooth space and the form of exteriority do not have an irresistible revolutionary calling but change meaning drastically depending on the interactions they are part of and the concrete conditions of their exercise or establishment (for example, the way in which total war and popular war, and even guerrilla warfare, borrow one another's methods).

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