

THE IMMEDIATE EROTIC STAGES¹ OR THE MUSICAL-EROTIC

INSIGNIFICANT INTRODUCTION [I 31]

From the moment my soul was first astounded by Mozart's music and humbly bowed in admiration, it has often been a favorite and refreshing occupation for me to deliberate on the way that happy Greek view of the world that calls the world a κόσμος [cosmos] because it manifests itself as a well-organized whole, as an elegant, transparent adornment for the spirit that acts upon and operates throughout it, the way that happy view lets itself be repeated in a higher order of things, in the world of ideals, the way there is here again a ruling wisdom especially wonderful at uniting what belongs together, Axel with Valborg,² Homer with the Trojan War, Raphael with Catholicism, Mozart with Don Juan. There is a paltry disbelief that seems to contain considerable healing power.³ It thinks that such a connection is accidental and sees nothing more in it than a very fortunate conjunction of the various forces in the game of life. It thinks that it is accidental that the lovers find each other, accidental that they love each other. There might have been a hundred other girls with whom he could have been just as happy, whom he could have loved just as much. It considers that many a poet has lived who would have been just as immortal as Homer if that glorious subject matter had not been taken over by him, many a composer who would have been just as immortal as Mozart if the opportunity had offered itself. This wisdom contains considerable consolation and balm for all mediocrities, who thereby see themselves in a position [I 32] to delude themselves and like-minded people into thinking that they did not become as exceptional as the exceptional ones because of a mistaken identification on the part of fate, a mistake on the part of the world. This produces a very convenient optimism. But it is abhorrent, of course, to every high-minded soul, every optimist,⁴ to whom it is not as important to rescue himself in such a paltry manner as it is to lose himself by contemplating greatness;

whereas it is a delight to his soul, a sacred joy, to see united that which belongs together. This is good fortune, not in the sense of the accidental, and thus presupposes two factors, whereas the accidental consists in the unarticulated interjections of fate. This is good fortune in history, the divine interplay of the historic forces, the festival period of the historic epoch. The accidental has only one factor: It is accidental that Homer, in the history of the Trojan War, acquired the most remarkable epic subject matter imaginable. Good fortune has two factors: It is fortunate that this most remarkable epic subject matter came into the hands of Homer. Here the emphasis is just as much on Homer as on the subject matter. Here is the deep harmony that pervades every production we call classic. So also with Mozart: It is fortunate that the perhaps sole musical theme (in the more profound sense) was given to—Mozart.

With his *Don Giovanni*,⁵ Mozart joins that little immortal band of men whose names, whose works, time will not forget because eternity recollects them. And although it makes no difference, once one is in, whether one ranks highest or lowest—because in a certain sense everyone ranks equally high—since all rank infinitely high, and although it is just as childish to argue about first and last places here as it is to argue about the place assigned in church on confirmation day, I am still too much of a child, or, more correctly, I am infatuated, like a young girl, with Mozart, and I must have him rank in first place, whatever it costs. And I will go to the deacon and the pastor and the dean and the bishop and the whole church council, and I will beseech and implore them to grant my request, and I will challenge the whole congregation on the same matter, and if my appeal is not heard, my childish wish not fulfilled, then I will secede from the association, then I will divorce myself from its way of thinking, then I will form a sect that not only places Mozart first but has no one but Mozart. [I 33] And I will beseech Mozart to forgive me that his music did not inspire me to great deeds but made me a fool who, because of him, lost the little sense I had and now in quiet sadness usually passes the time humming something I do not understand, and like a ghost prowls night and day around something I cannot enter. ⁶Immortal Mozart! You to whom I owe everything—to whom I owe that I lost my mind, that my soul was astounded, that I was terrified at the core of my being—you to whom I owe that I did not go through life without encountering something that could shake me, you whom I thank because I did not die without having loved,

even though my love was unhappy. No wonder, then, that I am much more zealous for his glorification than for the happiest moment of my own life, much more zealous for his immortality than for my own existence [*Tilvær*]. Indeed, if he were taken away, if his name were blotted out, that would demolish the one pillar that until now has prevented everything from collapsing for me into a boundless chaos, into a dreadful nothing.

Yet I certainly need not fear that any age will deny him a place in that kingdom of the gods, but I do need to be prepared for people to find it childish of me to insist that he have first place. And although I by no means propose to feel ashamed of my childishness, although it will always have more significance and value for me than any exhaustive consideration precisely because it is inexhaustible, I shall nevertheless try by way of deliberation to demonstrate his legitimate claim.

In a classic work, good fortune—that which makes it classic and immortal—is the absolute correlation of the two forces. This correlation is so absolute that a subsequent reflective age will scarcely be able, even in thought, to separate that which is so intrinsically conjoined without running the danger of causing or fostering a misunderstanding. For example, if it is said that it was Homer's good fortune that he acquired that most exceptional epic subject matter, this can lead one to forget that we always have this epic subject matter through Homer's conception, and the fact that it appears to be the most perfect epic subject matter is clear to us only in and through the transubstantiation due to Homer. If, however, Homer's poetic work in permeating the subject matter is emphasized, then one runs the risk of forgetting that the poem would never have become what it is if the idea with which Homer permeated it was not its own idea, if the form was not the subject matter's own form. The poet wishes for his subject matter, but, as they say, wishing is no art; this is quite correct and truthfully applies to [I 34] a host of powerless poetic wishes. To wish properly, however, is a great art, or, more correctly, it is a gift. It is the inexplicability and mysteriousness of genius, just as with a divining rod [*Ønskeqvist*], which never has the notion to wish [*ønske*] except in the presence of that for which it wishes. Hence, wishing has a far deeper significance than it ordinarily does; indeed, to abstract reason it appears ludicrous, since it rather thinks of wishing in connection with what is not present, not in connection with what is present.

There was a school of estheticians who, because of a one-sided emphasis on the significance of form, were not without guilt in occasioning the

diametrically opposite misunderstanding.⁷ It has often struck me that these estheticians were as a matter of course attached to Hegelian philosophy, inasmuch as both a general knowledge of Hegel and a special knowledge of his esthetics give assurance that he strongly emphasizes, especially with regard to the esthetic, the importance of the subject matter.⁸ Both parts, however, essentially belong together, and a single observation will be sufficient to show this, since otherwise a phenomenon of this sort would be inexplicable. Ordinarily, it is a single work or a single suite of works that marks the particular individual as a classic poet, artist, etc. The same individuality may have produced many different things, but they are not to be compared with it. For example, Homer also wrote a *Batrachomyomachia*⁹ but did not become a classic writer or immortal through it. To say that this is due to the unimportance of the theme is indeed foolish, since the classic consists in the balance. Now, if whatever makes a classic work classic lies simply and solely in the producing individual, then everything he produced would inevitably be classic, somewhat in the sense, although higher, in which bees always produce a certain kind of cell. To answer that it was due to his having been more fortunate with the one than with the other would really say nothing. For one thing, this is merely a splendid tautology that all too frequently in life enjoys the honor of being regarded as an answer; for another, as an answer it pertains to a relativity other than that of the question. It throws no light on the relation between subject matter and form and at best could come under consideration if the question pertained solely to the formative activity.

It is likewise the case with Mozart that only one of his works [I 35] makes him a classic composer and absolutely immortal. That work is *Don Giovanni*. Everything else he has composed can please and delight, arouse our admiration, enrich the soul, satisfy the ear, delight the heart; but no service is done to him and his immortality by throwing everything together and making it all equally great. *Don Giovanni* is his reception piece.¹⁰ With *Don Giovanni*, he enters that eternity which lies not outside time but in the midst of it, which is not hidden from the eyes of men by any curtain, into which the immortals are not admitted once and for all but are continually being admitted, inasmuch as the generation passes by and directs its gaze toward them, is happy in its contemplation of them, goes to its grave, and the next generation in turn goes by and is transfigured in contemplating them. With his *Don Giovanni*, Mozart enters the rank of those immortals, of

those visibly transfigured ones, whom no cloud takes away¹¹ from the eyes of men; with *Don Giovanni* he stands supreme among them. This last assertion, as I said above, I shall attempt to demonstrate.

All classic productions rank equally high, as previously noted, because each one ranks infinitely high. Consequently, if one nevertheless wants to introduce a certain order into this series, it stands to reason that it cannot be based on anything essential, for that would mean that there was an essential difference, and that in turn would mean that the word “classic” was wrongly predicated of all of them. If a classification were based on the dissimilar nature of the subject matter, one would immediately be involved in a misunderstanding, which in its wider extension would end with the annulment of the whole concept of the classic. The subject matter is an essential element, inasmuch as it is one factor, but it is not the absolute, since it is only one element. It could be pointed out that in a sense certain kinds of classic works have no subject matter, whereas in others, however, the subject matter plays a very important role. The former is the case with works we admire as classic in architecture, sculpture, music, painting—especially the first three, and even in painting, insofar as there is any question of subject matter it has importance almost solely as an occasion. The second is true of poetry, this word understood in its widest meaning to denote all artistic production that is based on language and the historical consciousness. This comment is in itself altogether correct, but it is a mistake to [I 36] base a classification on it by regarding the absence or presence of subject matter as an advantage or a detriment to the creative individual. If it is strictly understood, the result will be to argue the very opposite of what was really intended, as is always the case when one moves abstractly in dialectical qualifications, where it is the case that one not only says one thing and means something else but says something else; what one thinks one is saying one does not say but says the opposite. So it is when the subject matter is made the principle of division. In speaking of it, one speaks of something entirely different: namely, the formative activity.

But the same thing happens if one starts with the formative activity and emphasizes it alone. In maintaining the distinction here and emphasizing that in some respects the formative activity is creative to the degree that it creates the subject matter in the process, whereas in other respects it receives the subject matter, then here again, although one thinks one is

speaking of the formative activity, one is actually speaking of the subject matter and is basing the classification on the division of the subject matter.

The same holds for the formative activity as the point of departure in such a classification as for the subject matter. Consequently, a single aspect cannot be used as the basis for an order of rank, because it is still too essential to be sufficiently accidental, too accidental to be a basis for an essential ranking. But this thoroughgoing mutual permeation—which justifies saying, if one wishes to speak clearly, that the subject matter permeates the form and also that the form permeates the subject matter—this mutual permeation, this like-for-like in the immortal friendship of the classic, may serve to illuminate the classic from a new side and to limit it in such a way that it does not become too copious. In fact, the estheticians who one-sidedly stressed the poetic activity have broadened this concept so much that this pantheon became adorned, indeed, overdecorated, to such a degree with classic knickknacks and bagatelles that the unsophisticated notion of a cool hall with a few particular great figures utterly vanished, and instead that pantheon became a storage attic. According to this esthetic view, every artistically skillful little dainty is a classic work that is assured of absolute immortality; indeed, in this kind of hocus-pocus, such trifles are admitted first of all. Although paradoxes are otherwise detested, the paradox that the least was actually art was not dismaying. The untruth was in a one-sided emphasis on the formal activity. Therefore, such an esthetic view could [I 37] last only for a certain period, that is, so long as there was no awareness that time mocked it and its classic works. In the realm of esthetics, this view was a form of the radicalism that has similarly manifested itself in so many spheres; it was an expression of the unbridled producing individual in his equally unbridled lack of substance.

Like so many others, however, this effort found its subduer in Hegel. It is a sad truth about Hegelian philosophy that on the whole it has by no means achieved the importance, neither for the past nor for the present age, that it would have achieved if the past age had not been so busy scaring people into it but had rather possessed a little more calm presence of mind in appropriating it to itself, and if the present age had not been so indefatigably active in driving people beyond it.¹² Hegel reinstated the subject matter, the idea, in its rights and thereby ousted those transient classic works, those superficialities, those twilight moths from the arched vaults of classicism. It is by no means our intention to deny these works the

value that is their due, but the point is to watch out lest here, as in so many other places, the language become confused, the concepts enervated. A certain eternity may be readily attributed to them, and this is their merit, but still this eternity is actually only the eternal moment that any true artistic production has, but not the full eternity in the midst of the shifts and changes of the times. What these productions lacked was ideas, and the more formally perfect they were, the more quickly they burned themselves out. As technical skill was more and more developed to the highest level of virtuosity, the more transient this virtuosity became and the more it lacked the mettle and power or balance to withstand the gusts of time, while more and more exalted it continually made greater claims to being the most distilled spirit. Only where the idea is brought to rest and transparency in a definite form can there be any question of a classic work, but then it will also be capable of withstanding the times. This unity, this mutual intimacy in each other, every classic work has, and thus it is readily perceived that every attempt at a classification of the various classic works that has as its point of departure a separation of subject matter and form or of idea and form is *eo ipso* a failure.

Another way might be proposed. The medium through [I 38] which the idea becomes visible could be made the object of consideration. Having noted that one medium is richer and another less rich, one could base the division on this difference by finding a facilitation or an impediment in the varying richness or poverty of the medium. But the medium stands in an all too necessary relation to the whole production to keep a division based on it from becoming entangled in the above-mentioned difficulties after a few turns of thought.

I believe, however, that the following observations will open the prospect for a division that will have validity precisely because it is completely accidental. The more abstract and thus the more impoverished the idea is, the more abstract and thus the more impoverished the medium is; hence the greater is the probability that no repetition can be imagined, and the greater is the probability that when the idea has acquired its expression it has acquired it once and for all. On the other hand, the more concrete and thus the richer the idea and likewise the medium, the greater is the probability of a repetition. As I now place the various classic works side by side and, without wishing to rank them, am amazed that all stand equally high, it nevertheless will be readily apparent that one section has more works than

another or, if it does not, that there is the possibility that it can have, whereas any possibility for the other is not so readily apparent.

I would like to develop this point in somewhat more detail. The more abstract the idea is, the less the probability. But how does the idea become concrete? By being permeated by the historical. The more concrete the idea, the greater the probability. The more abstract the medium is, the less the probability; the more concrete, the more. But what does it mean that the medium is concrete except that it either is, or is seen in its approximation to, language, for language is the most concrete of all media. Hence, the idea that is disclosed in sculpture is totally abstract and has no relation to the historical; the medium through which it becomes manifest is likewise abstract. Consequently, it is very probable that the section of classic works that comprises sculpture will include only a few. The witness of time and the agreement of experience bear me out on this. But if I take a concrete idea and a concrete medium, the situation is different. Homer certainly is a classic epic poet, but precisely because the idea that becomes manifest in the epic is a concrete idea and because the medium is language, it is conceivable that the section of classic works that includes the epic has many works, which are all equally classic because history continually provides new epic subject matter. Here, too, the witness of history and the agreement of experience bear me out.

If I now base a division on the completely accidental, it [I 39] really cannot be denied that it is accidental. But if reproached for it, I then reply that the reproach is a mistake, for it is supposed to be just that. It is accidental that one section has or can have more works than another. But since this is accidental, it is easy to see that the class that has or can have the most works may very well be placed uppermost. At this point, I could persist in what I said before and calmly reply that this would be perfectly legitimate but that I ought to be all the more praised for my consistency because I altogether accidentally placed the opposite section uppermost. But I shall not do that. On the other hand, I shall appeal to a circumstance that speaks in my favor—namely, the circumstance that the sections that include the concrete ideas are not closed and cannot be closed in this way. Therefore, it is more natural to place the others first and with regard to the latter group always to keep the double doors open. But if someone says that this is an imperfection, a defect in that first class, then he is plowing outside the furrows of my consideration, and I cannot pay any attention to what he

says, however exhaustive it is, for it is indeed a fixed point that, viewed essentially, all are equally perfect.

But, then, which idea is the most abstract? Here, of course, the question concerns an idea that can become a theme for artistic treatment, not ideas that are suitable for scholarly-scientific presentation. Which medium is the most abstract? I will answer this question first. It is the medium that is furthest removed from language.

Before answering that question, however, may I recall that there is a circumstance related to the final solution of my task. That is, the most abstract medium does not always have the most abstract idea as its theme. Thus the medium that architecture uses is undoubtedly the most abstract, and yet the ideas that are manifest in architecture are not at all the most abstract. Architecture stands in a much closer relation to history than, for example, sculpture does. Here again appears the possibility of a new choice. For the first class in that order of precedence, I can choose either the works with the most abstract medium or those with the most abstract idea. In that respect, I prefer the idea, not the medium.

[I 40] Sculpture, painting, and music have abstract media as does architecture, but this is not the place to go further into that exploration. The most abstract idea conceivable is the sensuous¹³ in its elemental originality [*Genialitet*].¹⁴ But through which medium can it be presented? Only through music. It cannot be presented in sculpture because it has a qualification of a kind of inwardness; it cannot be painted, for it cannot be caught in definite contours. In its lyricism, it is a force, a wind, impatience, passion, etc., yet in such a way that it exists not in one instant but in a succession of instants, for if it existed in one instant, it could be depicted or painted. That it exists in a succession of instants expresses its epic character, but still it is not epic in the stricter sense, for it has not reached the point of words; it continually moves within immediacy. Consequently, it cannot be presented in poetry, either. The only medium that can present it is music. Music has an element of time in itself but nevertheless does not take place in time except metaphorically. It cannot express the historical within time.

In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, we have the perfect unity of this idea and its corresponding form. But precisely because the idea is so very abstract and because the medium also is abstract, there is no probability that Mozart will

ever have a competitor. Mozart's good fortune is that he has found a subject matter that is intrinsically altogether musical, and if any other composer were to compete with Mozart, there would be nothing for him to do except to compose *Don Giovanni* all over again. Homer found a perfect epic subject matter, but because history offers more epic subject matter, many more epic poems are conceivable. Such is not the case with *Don Giovanni*. What I really mean will perhaps be seen best if I indicate the difference by reference to a related idea. Goethe's *Faust* is really a classic work, but it is a historical idea, and therefore every extraordinary time in history will have its *Faust*. *Faust* has language as its medium, and since this is a much more concrete medium, for that reason, too, many works of the same kind are conceivable. But in the same sense as the classic works of Greek sculpture, *Don Giovanni* is and remains the only one of its kind. However, since the idea of *Don Giovanni* is even much more abstract than that which constitutes the basis of sculpture, it is readily seen that whereas in sculpture there are many works, in music there is only a single work. To be sure, many more classic works in music are conceivable, but there still is only one work of which it can be said that its idea is altogether musical [I 41] in such a way that the music does not help along as accompaniment but discloses its own innermost nature as it discloses the idea. Therefore Mozart with his *Don Giovanni* stands highest among those immortals.

But I shall give up this whole exploration. It is written only for those who have fallen in love. And just as it does not take much to make children happy, so it is, as is well known, that the love-enraptured often rejoice in very odd things. It is like a vehement lovers' quarrel over nothing, and yet it has its value—for the lovers.

Although the foregoing discussion has tried in every possible way imaginable or unimaginable to gain recognition for Mozart's *Don Giovanni* as supreme among all classic works, it nevertheless has made as good as no attempt to demonstrate that this work actually is classic, for the few scattered hints found here, by appearing merely as hints, simply show that the aim was not to demonstrate but occasionally to illuminate. This approach might seem more than odd. To demonstrate that *Don Giovanni* is a classic work in the strictest sense is a task for reflection, but the other endeavor is completely irrelevant to the proper domain of reflection. The movement of thought is calmed by having recognized that it is a classic

work and that every classic production is equally perfect; to thinking, anything more one wants to do is suspect.

To that extent, the entire foregoing part is entangled in a self-contradiction and easily disintegrates into nothing. But this is quite proper, and such a self-contradiction is deeply rooted in human nature. The admiration, sympathy, and veneration in me, the child in me, the woman in me, demanded more than what thought could provide. Thought was calm, rested happy in its knowledge; then I went to it and begged it to bestir itself once more, to venture the ultimate. It knew very well that this was futile, but since I am usually on good terms with it, it did not refuse me. It labored in vain; egged on by me, it was continually going beyond itself and continually collapsing back into itself. It was continually looking for a foothold and finding none, continually trying to find bottom, but could neither swim nor wade. It was both a laughing and a crying matter. Therefore I did both and was very grateful that it had not denied me this service. And although I now know perfectly well that it is useless, it could still very well occur to [I 42] me to ask thought to play once again the game that to me is inexhaustible material for enjoyment. Every reader who finds the game boring is, of course, not of my kind; it is meaningless to him, and here as everywhere children who are alike play together best. To him, the entire foregoing part is a superfluity; whereas to me it has such great importance that I say with Horace:

Exilis domus est, ubi non et multa supersunt
[Poor is the house where there's not much to spare].¹⁵

To him it is foolishness, to me wisdom; to him it is boring, to me a source of joy and merriment.

That kind of reader would therefore be incapable of appreciating my lyrical thought, which is so ecstatic that it goes beyond thought. But perhaps he would be kind enough to say, "We shall not quarrel about that; I skip that part. See now if you can come to the far more important matter of demonstrating that *Don Giovanni* is a classic work, for I admit that this would be a really appropriate introduction to the exploration proper." To what extent it would be an appropriate introduction, I shall leave in abeyance, but the trouble here for me is that I in turn cannot appreciate him, for no matter how easy it may be for me to demonstrate it, it would still never occur to me to demonstrate it. But although I always assume the

matter settled, the following will many times and in many ways¹⁶ illuminate *Don Giovanni* in this respect, just as the foregoing discussion has already contained a few hints.

The immediate task of this exploration is to show the significance of the musical-erotic and to that end in turn to indicate the various stages, which, since they are all characterized by the immediate erotic, also harmonize in this, that essentially they are all musical. What I have to say about this I owe solely to Mozart. Therefore, if anyone should be courteous enough to admit that I am right in what I aim to set forth but has some doubts whether it is in Mozart's music or whether, instead, I put it into the music, I can assure him that not only the little I am able to set forth is in Mozart's music, but infinitely [I 43] much more. Yes, I can assure him that this very thought gives me the boldness to venture to try to explain a few things in Mozart's music. What one has loved with youthful infatuation, what one has admired with youthful enthusiasm, that with which one has kept secret, enigmatic company in the inwardness of the soul, that which one has hidden in the heart—one always approaches this with a certain shyness, with mixed feelings, when one knows that the purpose is to understand it. What one has come to know piece by piece, just as a bird gleans each little straw for itself, happier over each little bit than over all the rest of the world; what the loving ear, solitary, has absorbed, solitary in the great crowd, unnoticed in its secret hiding place; what the avid ear has picked up, never satisfied, what the avaricious ear has preserved, never secure, of which the faintest echo has never disappointed the sleepless attention of the reconnoitering ear; what one has lived in during the day and relived at night, what has driven away sleep and made it restless, what one has dreamed about in sleep, what one has awakened to in order awake to dream about it again, for the sake of which one has leaped out of bed in the middle of the night out of fear of forgetting it; what has made its appearance to one in the most inspired moments, what one has always had at hand like a woman's needlework, what has accompanied one on bright moonlit nights, in lonely forests by the lake, on gloomy streets, in the middle of the night, at the break of day; what has sat with one on the same horse, what has been company in the carriage; what has permeated the home, what one's room has witnessed, what has resonated in the ear, what has reverberated in the soul, what the soul has spun into its finest fabric—this now shows itself to

thought. Just as in the old tales those enigmatic beings, draped in seaweed, rise up from the bottom of the sea, so this rises up from the sea of recollection, intertwined with mementos. The soul becomes sad and the heart mellow, for it is as if one were taking leave of it, as if one were parting never to meet again, neither in time nor in eternity. One feels that one is being unfaithful, that one has betrayed one's pact; one feels that one is no longer the same, not as young, not as childlike; one fears for oneself, that one will lose what made one happy, blissful, and rich; one fears for what one loves, that it will suffer in this change, will perhaps appear less perfect, that it will possibly fail to answer the many questions, alas, and then all is lost, the magic is gone, and it can never again be evoked. As for Mozart's [I 44] music, my soul knows no fear, my confidence no limits. For one thing, what I have understood hitherto is only very little, and enough will always remain, hiding in the shadows of presentiment; for another, I am convinced that if Mozart ever became entirely comprehensible to me, he would then become completely incomprehensible to me.

To make the claim that Christianity brought sensuality into the world seems boldly venturesome. But as they say: Boldly ventured is half won. So it also holds here; it will become evident upon reflection that in the positing of something, the other that is excluded is indirectly posited. Since sensuality generally is that which is to be negated, it really comes to light, is really posited, first by the act that excludes it through a positing of the opposite positive. Sensuality is posited as a principle, as a power, as an independent system first by Christianity, and to that extent Christianity brought sensuality into the world. But if the thesis that Christianity has brought sensuality into the world is to be understood properly, it must be comprehended as identical to its opposite, that it is Christianity that has driven sensuality out of the world, has excluded sensuality from the world. Sensuality was first posited as a principle, as a power, as an independent system by Christianity. I could add one more qualification that perhaps most emphatically shows what I mean: sensuality was placed under the qualification of spirit first by Christianity. This is quite natural, for Christianity is spirit, and spirit is the positive principle it has brought into the world. But when sensuality is viewed under the qualification of spirit, its significance is seen to be that it is to be excluded, but precisely because it is to be excluded it is defined as a principle, as a power, for that which spirit, which is itself a principle, is supposed to exclude must be something

that manifests itself as a principle, even though it does not manifest itself as a principle until the moment when it is excluded. Of course, to protest against my thesis that sensuality existed in the world prior to Christianity would be rather foolish, inasmuch as it goes without saying that whatever is to be excluded always exists prior to that which excludes it, even though, understood in another way, it comes into existence [*bliver til*] only when it is excluded. This in turn occurs because it comes into existence in another sense, and that is why I promptly said that boldly ventured is only half won.

Consequently, the sensual certainly did exist in the world before, but it was not qualified spiritually. How, then, did it [I 45] exist? It was qualified psychically. This was its nature in paganism, and if one wishes to look for its most perfect expression, it was in Greece. But the sensual psychically qualified is not contrast or exclusion, but harmony and consonance. But precisely because the sensual is posited as harmoniously qualified, it is posited not as a principle but as a consonant *encliticon*¹⁷

This view will be of importance in illuminating the various forms the erotic takes in various stages of the development of world consciousness and thereby guide us to the category of the immediate-erotic as identical with the musical-erotic. In Greek culture, the sensuous was controlled in the beautiful individuality,¹⁸ or, to put it more accurately, it was not controlled, for it was not an enemy to be subdued, not a dangerous insurgent to be held in check; it was liberated to life and joy in the beautiful individuality. Thus the sensuous was not posited as a principle. The psychical aspect constituting the beautiful individuality was inconceivable without the sensuous; for this reason the erotic based on the sensuous was not posited as a principle either. Erotic love [*Elskov*] was everywhere present as an element and present as an element in the beautiful individuality. The gods, no less than men, knew its power; the gods, no less than men, knew happy and unhappy love affairs. But in none of them was erotic love present as a principle; insofar as it was in them, in the single individual, it was there as an element of erotic love's universal power, which, however, was present nowhere and therefore not even in the Greek conception or in the Greek consciousness.

It could be objected that Eros was indeed the god of erotic love and that therefore erotic love must be considered present in him as a principle. But apart from the fact that here again erotic love does not rest upon the erotic in such a way that this is based solely upon the sensuous, but upon the

psychical, there is also another circumstance to be noted, one that I shall now stress in somewhat more detail. Eros was the god of erotic love but was not himself in love. Insofar as the other gods or men detected the power of erotic love in themselves, they attributed it to Eros, traced it back to him, but Eros himself did not fall in love, and if it did happen to him once,¹⁹ it was an exception; and although he was the god of erotic love, [I 46] he was far behind the other gods, far behind men, in the number of his affairs. That he fell in love is as good as to say that he, too, yielded to the universal power of erotic love, which thus in a way became a power outside himself, which in being spurned by him had no place at all now where it could be sought. His erotic love is not based on the sensuous, either, but upon the psychical. It is a genuinely Greek idea that the god of erotic love is not in love himself, whereas all the others are indebted to him for their own falling in love. If I were to imagine a god or a goddess of longing, it would be genuinely Greek that, whereas everyone who knew the sweet unrest or pain of longing would trace it to this being, this being would itself know nothing of longing.

I know of no more precise way to designate what is distinctive in this relation than to say that it is the opposite of a representative relation. In the representative relation, the total power is concentrated in a single individual, and the particular individuals participate therein to the extent that they participate in the particular movements of that one. I could also say that this relation is the opposite of the one underlying incarnation. In incarnation, the full plenitude of life is in the single individual, and this is for the others only through their beholding it in the incarnated individual.

Therefore, in the Greek relation it is the reverse. That which is the god's power is not in the god but in all the other individuals, who trace it back to him; he himself is almost powerless, impotent, because he communicates his power to all the rest of the world. The incarnated individual imbibes, as it were, power from all the others, and thus the fullness is in that one, and in the others only insofar as they behold it in this individual. This is important for what follows, just as in and by itself it is significant with regard to the categories the world consciousness uses at various times. Hence, we do not find the sensuous as a principle in Greek culture; neither do we find the erotic as a principle based upon the principle of the sensuous; and even if we had found it, we still perceive—something that is of the greatest importance in this exploration—that the Greek consciousness did not have

the strength to concentrate all of it in a single individual but from a point that does not have it radiates it to all the others in such a way that this constituting point is almost recognizable by being the only one that does not have that which it gives to all the others.

So it was Christianity that posited sensuality as a principle, just as it posited the sensuous-erotic as a principle. The idea of representation was introduced into the world by Christianity. [I 47] If I now imagine the sensuous-erotic as a principle, as a power, as a domain, defined in relation to spirit—that is, defined in such a way that spirit excludes it—if I imagine this principle concentrated in a single individual, then I have the concept of the sensuous-erotic in its elemental originality [*Genialitet*]. This is an idea that Greek culture did not have, that Christianity first introduced into the world, although only indirectly.

If the elemental originality of the sensuous-erotic in all its immediacy insists on expression, then the question arises as to which medium is the most suitable for this. The point that particularly must be kept in mind here is that it insists on being expressed and presented in its immediacy. In its immediacy and in being reflected in another medium, it falls within language and comes under ethical categories. In its immediacy, it can be expressed only in music. In this connection, I must ask the reader to recall something said about this in the insignificant introduction. The significance of music thereby appears in its full validity, and in a stricter sense it appears as a Christian art or, more correctly, as the art Christianity posits in excluding it from itself, as the medium for that which Christianity excludes from itself and thereby posits. In other words, music is the demonic. In elemental sensuous-erotic originality, music has its absolute theme. This, of course, does not mean that music cannot express anything else, but nevertheless this is its theme proper. Similarly, sculpture can depict something other than human beauty, and yet this is its absolute theme. Painting can depict something other than celestially transfigured beauty, and yet this is its absolute theme. In this regard, the point is to see the basic concept in each art and not to be confused by whatever else it can do. The basic concept of man is spirit, and one should not be confused by the fact that he is also able to walk on two feet. The basic concept of language is thought, and one should not be confused by the fact that a few emotional people are of the opinion that the greatest importance of language is in the production of inarticulate sounds.

At this point, may I be permitted a little insignificant interlude;²⁰ *praeterea censeo* [furthermore I am of the opinion]²¹ that Mozart is the greatest of all the classic authors, that his *Don Giovanni* deserves the highest place among all the classic works.

As to music regarded as a medium, this, of course, is always a very interesting question. Whether I am capable of saying [I 48] anything adequate about it is another question. I am well aware that I do not understand music; I readily admit that I am a layman. I do not hide the fact that I do not belong to the chosen tribe of music experts, that at most I stand in the doorway as a gentile convert drawn from afar to this place by a strange, irresistible impulse—but no further. Yet it is possible that the little I have to say, if received with kindness and indulgence, may have a single comment that will be found to contain something true, even if it is concealed under a peasant's coat. I stand outside music, and from this position I observe it. That this position is very imperfect, I readily admit; that compared with the lucky ones standing inside I do not manage to see very much, I do not deny. But I go on hoping that from my position I, too, can communicate an illuminating detail, although the initiated could do it much better—indeed, to a certain degree even understand better what I say than I do myself.

If I imagined two kingdoms bordering each other, one of which I knew rather well and the other not at all, and if however much I desired it I were not allowed to enter the unknown kingdom, I would still be able to form some idea of it. I would go to the border of the kingdom known to me and follow it all the way, and in doing so I would by my movements describe the outline of that unknown land and thus have a general idea of it, although I had never set foot in it. And if this were a labor that occupied me very much, if I were unflaggingly scrupulous, it presumably would sometimes happen that as I stood with sadness at the border of my kingdom and gazed longingly into that unknown country that was so near and yet so far, I would be granted an occasional little disclosure. And even though I feel that music is an art that requires considerable experience if one is really to have an opinion on it, I comfort myself again as so often before with the paradox that also in presentiment and ignorance one can have a kind of experience. It is a comfort to me that Diana, who had not given birth herself, came to the aid of women in labor—indeed, that she [I 49] had this ability from

infancy as an inborn gift, so that when she was born she herself helped Latona in her labor pains.²²

The kingdom that I know, to whose outermost boundary I shall go to discover music, is language. If the various media are ordered according to a specific process of development, language and music must be placed closest to each other, and that is also why it has been said that music is a language, which is more than a clever observation. If one is inclined to indulge in cleverness, one could say that sculpture and painting, too, are each a kind of language, inasmuch as every expression of an idea is always a language, since the essence of the idea is language. Clever folk therefore speak of the language of nature, and soft-headed clergy occasionally open the book of nature for us and read something that neither they nor their listeners understand. If the observation that music is a language did not amount to anything more than that, I would not bother with it but would let it go unchallenged and pass for what it is. But that is not the case. Not until spirit is posited is language installed in its rights, but when spirit is posited, everything that is not spirit is excluded. Yet this exclusion is a qualification of spirit, and consequently, insofar as that which is excluded is to affirm itself, it requires a medium that is qualified in relation to spirit, and this medium is music. But a medium that is qualified in relation to spirit is essentially language; now, since music is qualified in relation to spirit, it is legitimately called a language.

Language, regarded as medium, is the medium absolutely qualified by spirit, and it is therefore the authentic medium of the idea. To elaborate this more thoroughly is neither within my competence nor in the interest of this little inquiry. Just one specific comment, which again leads me into music, should find a place here. In language, the sensuous as medium is reduced to a mere instrument and is continually negated. That is not the case with the other media. Neither in sculpture nor in painting is the sensuous a mere instrument; it is rather a component. It is not to be negated continually, either, for it is continually to be seen conjointly. It would be a strangely backward consideration of a piece of sculpture or of a painting if I were to behold it in such a way that I took pains to see it independently of the sensuous, whereby I would completely cancel its beauty. In sculpture, architecture, and painting, the idea is integral to the medium, but the fact that the idea does not reduce the medium to a mere instrument, does not continually negate it, expresses, as it were, that this medium cannot [I 50]

speak. It is the same with nature. Therefore, it is properly said that nature is dumb, and architecture and sculpture and painting; it is properly said despite all the fine, sensitive ears that can hear them speak. Therefore, it is foolish to say that nature is a language, certainly as foolish as to say that the mute speaks, since it is not even a language in the way sign language is. But that is not the case with language. The sensuous is reduced to a mere instrument and is thus annulled. If a person spoke in such a way that we heard the flapping of his tongue, etc., he would be speaking poorly; if he heard in such a way that he heard the vibrations of the air instead of words, he would be hearing poorly; if he read a book in such a way that he continually saw each individual letter, he would be reading poorly. Language is the perfect medium precisely when everything sensuous in it is negated. That is also the case with music; that which is really supposed to be heard is continually disengaging itself from the sensuous. It has already been pointed out that music as a medium does not rank as high as language, and that is why I said that music, understood in a certain way, is a language.

Language addresses itself to the ear. No other medium does this. The ear, in turn, is the most spiritually qualified sense. Most people, I believe, will agree with me on this point. If anyone wishes more information about this, I refer him to the preface to Steffens's *Karikaturen des Heiligsten*.²³ Apart from language, music is the only medium that is addressed to the ear. Here again is an analogy and a testimony to the sense in which music is a language. There is much in nature that is addressed to the ear, but what affects the ear is the purely sensate; therefore nature is mute, and it is a ludicrous fancy that one hears something because one hears a cow bellow or, what is perhaps more pretentious, a nightingale warble; it is a fancy that one hears something, a fancy that the one is worth more than the other, since it is all six of one and a half dozen of the other.

Language has its element in time; all other media have space as their element. Only music also occurs in time. But its occurrence in time is in turn a negation of the feelings dependent upon the senses [*det Sandselige*]. That which the other arts produce suggests their sensuousness precisely by having its continuance in space. There is, of course, much in nature that occurs [I 51] in time. For example, when a brook ripples and keeps on rippling, there seems to be a qualification of time involved therein. But this is not so, and if anyone absolutely insists that the qualification of time must be present here, then one must say that it certainly is so but that it is

spatially qualified. Music does not exist except in the moment it is performed, for even if a person can read notes ever so well and has an ever so vivid imagination, he still cannot deny that only in a figurative sense does music exist when it is being read. It actually exists only when it is being performed. That might seem an imperfection in this art in comparison with the other arts whose works continually exist because they have their continuance in the sensuous. But this is not so. It is indeed a demonstration that it is a higher, a more spiritual art.

Now, if I start with language in order, by a movement through it, to sound out music, as it were, the matter looks something like this. If I assume that prose is the language form that is most remote from music, I already detect in the oration, in the sonorous construction of its periods, an echo of the musical, which emerges ever more strongly at various stages in the poetic declamation, in the metrical construction, in the rhyme, until finally the musical element has developed so strongly that language leaves off and everything becomes music. Indeed, this is a pet phrase poets use to indicate that they, as it were, abandon the idea; it disappears for them, and everything ends in music. This might seem to imply that music is even closer to perfection as a medium than language. But this is one of those sentimental misconceptions that sprout only in empty heads. That it is a misconception will be pointed out later. Here I wish only to draw attention to the remarkable circumstance that by a movement in the opposite direction I once again encounter music, namely, when I descend from prose permeated by the concept until I end up with interjections, which in turn are musical, just as a child's first babbling is musical. Here the point certainly cannot be that music is closer to perfection as a medium than language, or that music is a richer medium than language, unless it is assumed that saying "Uh" is more valuable than a complete thought. But what does this mean—that where language leaves off I find the musical? This indeed expresses perfectly that language is bounded by music on all sides.

From this we also see the connection with that misconception that music is supposed to be a richer medium than language. [I 52] In other words, when language leaves off, music begins; when, as is said, everything is musical, one is not progressing but retrogressing. This is why—and perhaps the experts will agree with me on this—I have never had any sympathy for the sublimated music that thinks it does not need words. Ordinarily, it thinks itself superior to words, although it is inferior. The objection

presumably could be made that if it is true that language is a richer medium than music, then it is incomprehensible that an esthetic analysis of the musical involves such great difficulty, incomprehensible that here language continually shows itself to be a poorer medium than music. But this is neither incomprehensible nor unexplainable. Music always expresses the immediate in its immediacy. This is also the reason that in relation to language music appears first and last, but this also shows that it is a mistake to say that music is closer to perfection as a medium. Reflection is implicit in language, and therefore language cannot express the immediate. Reflection is fatal to the immediate, and therefore it is impossible for language to express the musical, but this apparent poverty in language is precisely its wealth. In other words, the immediate is the indeterminate, and therefore language cannot grasp it; but its indeterminacy is not its perfection but rather a defect in it. We indirectly acknowledge this in many ways. For example, we say: I cannot really explain why I do this or that in such a way—I play it by ear. For something that has no connection with the musical, we often use a phrase taken from music but denote thereby the vague, the unexplained, the immediate.

Now, if it is the immediate, qualified by spirit, that receives its proper expression in the musical, the question may be raised again more pointedly: What kind of immediacy is it that is essentially the theme of music? The immediate, qualified by spirit, can be qualified in such a way that it either comes within the realm of spirit or is outside the realm of spirit. When the immediate, qualified by spirit, is qualified in such a way that it falls within the realm of spirit, it can certainly find its expression in the musical, but this immediacy still cannot be music's absolute theme, for when it is qualified in such a way that it will fall within the realm of spirit, this suggests that music is in alien territory; it forms a prelude that is continually being annulled. [I 53] But if the immediate, qualified by spirit, is qualified in such a way that it is outside the realm of spirit, then music has in this its absolute theme. For the former immediacy, it is unessential for it to be expressed in music, whereas it is essential for it to become spirit and consequently to be expressed in language. For the latter, however, it is essential that it be expressed in music; it can be expressed only therein and cannot be expressed in language, since it is qualified by spirit in such a way that it does not come within the realm of spirit and thus is outside the realm of language. But the immediacy that is thus excluded by spirit is sensuous

immediacy. This is linked to Christianity. Sensuous immediacy has its absolute medium in music, and this also explains why music in the ancient world did not become properly developed but is linked to the Christian world. So it is the medium for the immediacy that, qualified by spirit, is qualified in such a way that it is outside the realm of spirit. Of course, music can express many other things, but this is its absolute theme. It is also easy to discern that music is a more sensuous medium than language, inasmuch as considerably more emphasis is placed on the sensuous sound in music than in language.

Consequently, sensuousness in its elemental originality is the absolute theme of music. The sensuous in its essential nature is absolutely lyrical, and in music it erupts in all its lyrical impatience. That is, it is qualified by spirit and therefore is power, life, movement, continual unrest, continual succession. But this unrest, this succession, does not enrich it; it continually remains the same; it does not unfold but incessantly rushes forward as if in a single breath. If I were to describe this lyricism with a single predicate, I would have to say: It sounds—and with this I come back again to the elemental originality of the sensuous as that which in its immediacy manifests itself musically.

That on this point even I could say a good deal more, I know; that it will be easy for the experts to clear everything up in an entirely different way, I am sure. But since no one, as far as I know, has made an attempt to do so or made a move toward doing so, since they merely go on repeating that Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is the crown among operas without developing further what they mean by that, although they all say it in a way that clearly shows that they thereby mean to say something more than that *Don Giovanni* is the best opera, that there is a qualitative difference between it and all other operas, which certainly cannot be looked for in anything but the absolute relation between idea, form, subject matter, and medium—since, [I 54] I repeat, this is the situation, I have broken silence. Perhaps I have been too hasty; perhaps I would have succeeded in saying it better if I had waited even longer. Perhaps. I do not know. But this I do know, that I did not hurry in order to have the pleasure of talking, that I did not hurry because I feared that someone more expert would beat me to it—but I hurried because I feared that if I, too, remained silent the stones would begin to speak²⁴ in praise of Mozart, to the disgrace of every human being to whom the gift of speech has been granted.

What has already been said I assume will be more or less sufficient, as far as this little exploration is concerned, since essentially it is supposed to blaze the trail for a description of the immediate erotic stages as we come to know them in Mozart. Before turning to that, however, I wish to mention a fact that from another side can lead our thinking to the absolute relation between the sensuous in its elemental originality and the musical. It is well known that music has always been the object of suspicious attention on the part of religious fervor. Whether it is right in this or not does not concern us here, for that would indeed have only religious interest. It is not, however, without importance to consider what has led to this. If I trace religious fervor on this point, I can broadly define the movement as follows: the more rigorous the religiousness, the more music is given up and words are emphasized. The different stages in this regard are represented in world history. The last stage excludes music altogether and adheres to words alone. I could embellish these statements with a multiplicity of specific comments, but I shall refrain and merely quote a few words by a Presbyterian who appears in a story by Achim v. Arnim: “Wir Presbyterianer halten die Orgel für des Teufels Dudelsack, womit er den Ernst der Betrachtung in Schlummer wiegt, so wie der Tanz die guten Vorsätze betäubt [We Presbyterians regard the organ as the devil’s bagpipe, with which he lulls to sleep the earnestness of contemplation, just as dance deadens good intentions].”²⁵ This must be regarded as a remark *instar omnium* [worth them all]. What reason can there be to exclude music in order thereby to make words alone predominant? That words, when they are misused, can confuse the mind just as much as music, all revivalist sects will surely admit. There must, then, be a qualitative difference between them. But that which religious fervor wants to have expressed is spirit; therefore it requires language, which is the spirit’s proper medium, [I 55] and rejects music, which for it is a sensuous medium and thus always an imperfect medium with which to express spirit. Whether religious fervor is right in excluding music is, as stated, another question, but its view of the relation of music to language may be perfectly correct. Music need not be excluded, then, but it must be understood that in the realm of spirit it nevertheless is an imperfect medium and that consequently it cannot have its absolute theme in the immediately spiritual qualified as spirit. It by no means follows that one must regard it as the devil’s work, even though our age provides many horrible proofs of the demonic power with which music

can grip an individual and this individual in turn intrigues and ensnares the crowd, especially a crowd of women, in the seductive snares of anxiety by means of the full provocative force of voluptuousness. It by no means follows that one must regard it as the devil's work, even though one detects with a certain secret horror that this art, more than any other art, frequently torments its devotees in a terrible way, a phenomenon, strangely enough, that seems to have escaped the attention of the psychologists and the mass, except on a particular occasion when they are alarmed by a desperate individual's scream of anxiety. But it is quite noteworthy that in folk legends, and consequently in the folk consciousness that the legends express, the musical is again the demonic. I cite, as an example, *Irische Elfenmärchen* by Grimm, 1826, pp. 25, 28, 29, and 30.²⁶

As for the immediate-erotic stages, I am indebted for what I can say about them solely to Mozart, to whom on the whole I am indebted for everything. But since the classification I shall attempt here can only indirectly, through someone else's interpretation, be traced back to him, I have examined myself and the classification before beginning in earnest, lest I in any way might spoil for myself or a reader the joy of admiring Mozart's immortal works. Anyone who wishes to see Mozart in his true immortal greatness must consider his *Don Giovanni*, in comparison with which everything else is incidental, unimportant. But if one considers *Don Giovanni* in such a way that one includes specific things from Mozart's other operas in this point of view, then I am convinced that one will neither [I 56] disparage him nor harm oneself and one's neighbor. There will be occasion to rejoice that the intrinsic power of music is fully expended in Mozart's music.

Moreover, when I use the term "stage" as I did and continue to do, it must not be taken to mean that each stage exists independently, the one outside the other. I could perhaps more appropriately use the word "metamorphosis." The different stages collectively make up the immediate stage, and from this it will be seen that the specific stages are more a disclosure of a predicate in such a way that all the predicates plunge down in the richness of the last stage, since this is the stage proper. The other stages have no independent existence; by themselves they are only for representation, and from that we also see their fortuitousness in relation to the last stage. But since they have found a separate expression in Mozart's music, I shall discuss them separately. But, above all, they must not be

thought of as persons on different levels with respect to consciousness, since even the last stage has not yet attained consciousness; at all times I am dealing only with the immediate in its total immediacy.

The difficulties that always arise when music is made the object of esthetic consideration will of course not be absent here either. The chief difficulty in the foregoing was that, whereas I wanted to demonstrate by way of thought that the elemental originality of the sensuous is music's essential theme, this still can be demonstrated properly only by music, just as I myself also came to a knowledge of it through music. The difficulty with which the subsequent discussion must struggle is more particularly this: since that which music expresses, the theme under discussion here, is essentially the proper theme of music, music expresses it much better than language is capable of doing, which shows up very poorly alongside it. Indeed, if I were dealing with the different levels of consciousness, the advantage naturally would be on my side and on the side of language, but that is not the case here. Consequently, what will be developed here can have meaning only for the person who has heard and continually keeps on listening. For him it perhaps may contain a particular hint that can prompt him to listen again.

FIRST STAGE²⁷ [I 57]

The first stage is suggested by the Page in *Figaro*. The point here, of course, is not to see a single individual in the Page, something one is so easily tempted to do when in thought or in actuality the Page is represented by a person. It then becomes difficult to avoid the intrusion of something incidental, some irrelevant idea (which more or less does happen with the Page in the play), so that he becomes more than he is supposed to be, for in a certain sense he promptly becomes that as soon as he becomes an individual. But in becoming more, he becomes less; he ceases to be the idea. This is why he cannot be given lines, but the music remains the only adequate expression, and thus it is noteworthy that *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, in their original form from the hand of Mozart, belong to *opera seria* [serious opera].²⁸ If, then, the Page is regarded in this way as a mythical character, the characteristic features of the first stage will be found expressed in the music.

The sensuous awakens, yet not to motion but to a still quiescence, not to delight and joy but to deep melancholy. As yet desire is not awake; it is intimated in the melancholy. That which is desired is continually present in the desire; it arises from it and appears in a bewildering dawning. This occurs in the sphere of the sensuous, is put at a distance by clouds and mists, and is brought closer by reflection in them. Desire possesses what will become the object of its desire but possesses it without having desired it and thus does not possess it. This is the painful, but also in its sweetness the fascinating and enchanting contradiction, which with its sadness, its melancholy, resonates through this stage. Its pain consists not in there being too little but rather in there being too much. The desire is quiet desire, the longing quiet longing, the infatuation quiet infatuation, in which the object is stirring and is so close to the desire that it is within it. That which is desired floats above the desire, sinks down into it, not because of the desire's own drawing power or because of being desired. That which is desired does not vanish, does not squirm out of desire's embrace, for then desire would indeed awaken; but without being [I 58] desired, it is there for desire, which then becomes depressed precisely because it cannot begin to desire. As soon as desire awakens or, more correctly, in and with its awakening, desire and the object of desire are separated; now desire breathes freely and soundly, whereas before it could not draw its breath because of that which was desired. When desire has not awakened, that which is desired fascinates and captivates—indeed, almost causes anxiety. The desire must have air, must find escape; this occurs through their being separated. That which is desired shyly flees, bashful as a woman, and the separation occurs; that which is desired vanishes *et apparet sublimis* [and is seen aloft]²⁹ or in any case outside desire. Painters say that a ceiling painted with figures, one alongside the other, presses down; a single figure done lightly and elusively elevates the ceiling. Such is the relation between desire and the desired in a first and a later stage.

Desire, consequently, which in this stage is present only in a presentiment of itself, is devoid of motion, devoid of unrest, only gently rocked by an unaccountable inner emotion. Just as the life of the plant is confined to the earth, so it is lost in a quiet ever-present longing, absorbed in contemplation, and still cannot discharge its object, essentially because in a more profound sense there is no object; and yet this lack of an object is not its object, for then it would immediately be in motion, then it would be

defined, if in no other way, by grief and pain; but grief and pain do not have the implicit contradiction characteristic of melancholy [*Melancholi*] and depression [*Tungsindighed*], do not have the ambiguity that is the sweetness in melancholy. Although desire in this stage is not qualified as desire, although this intimated desire is altogether vague about its object, it nevertheless has one qualification—it is infinitely deep. Like Thor, it sucks through a horn, the tip of which rests in the ocean;³⁰ but the reason that it cannot suck its object to itself is not that the object is infinite, but that this infinity cannot become an object for it. Thus the sucking [*Sugen*] does not indicate a relation to the object but is identical with its sighing [*Suk*], and this is infinitely deep.

In accord with the description of the first stage given here, it is very significant that the music for the role of the Page is arranged for a woman's voice. The inconsistency in this stage [I 59] seems to be suggested by this contradiction; the desire is so vague, the object so little separated from it, that what is desired rests androgynously in the desire, just as in plant life the male and female are in one blossom. The desire and the desired are joined in this unity, that they both are *neutrius generis* [of neuter gender].

Although the speaking lines belong not to the mythical Page but to the Page in the play, the poetic character Cherubino, and although consequently they cannot be considered in this connection, since for one thing they do not belong to Mozart and for another they express something entirely different from what is under discussion here, I nevertheless want to emphasize in some detail one particular line because it gives me an opportunity to characterize this stage in its analogy to a later stage. Susanna mocks Cherubino because he, too, is in a way infatuated with Marcellina, and the Page has no other answer handy than to say: She is a woman.³¹ With regard to the Page in the play, it is essential that he be in love with the countess, unessential that he can fall in love with Marcellina, which is merely an indirect and paradoxical expression for the violence of the passion with which he is captivated by the countess. With regard to the mythical Page, it is equally essential that he be in love with the countess and with Marcellina, for femininity is indeed his object, and this they both have in common. Therefore, when we later hear about Don Giovanni:

Even coquettes as old as sixty
He gladly records in his tally,³²

we have the perfect analogy to this, except that the intensity and firmness of the desire are far more developed.

Now, if I were to venture an attempt at characterizing Mozart's music with a single predicate pertaining to the Page in *Figaro*, I would say: It is intoxicated with erotic love; but, like [I 60] all intoxication, an intoxication with erotic love can also have two effects, either a heightened transparent joy of life or a concentrated obscure depression. The latter is the case with the music here, and this is indeed proper. The music cannot explain why this is so, for it is beyond its power to do that. Words cannot express the mood, for it is too heavy and dense to be borne by words—only music can render it. The basis of its melancholy lies in the deep inner contradiction we tried to point out earlier.

We now leave the first stage, epitomized by the mythical Page; we let him, depressed, continue to dream about what he has, melancholy, to desire what he possesses. He never goes further; he never moves from the spot, for his movements are illusory, and hence there is no movement at all. The Page in the play is another matter; with true and honest friendliness we shall be interested in his future. We congratulate him on having become a captain; we permit him to kiss Susanna once more in farewell. We shall not betray him with regard to the mark on his forehead, which no one can see except the one who knows about it.³³ But no more than this, my good Cherubino, or we shall call the count, and then it will be “Be off! There is the door! To your regiment! After all, he is no child, and no one knows that better than I do.”

SECOND STAGE

This stage is epitomized by Papageno in *The Magic Flute*.³⁴ Here again, of course, the point is to separate the essential from the accidental, to evoke the mythical Papageno and forget the actual character in the play, and especially here, since [I 61] this character in the play has become involved in all sorts of dubious nonsense. In this connection, it would not be devoid of interest to go through the whole opera to show that its theme, regarded as a theme for an opera, is a failure at its deepest level. There would also be no lack of opportunity to illuminate the erotic from a new side by observing how the attempt to put a more profound ethical view into it, in such a way that it tries its hand at all sorts of rather important dialectical engagements,

is a daring venture that has ventured far beyond the boundaries of music, so that it was impossible even for a Mozart to invest it with any deeper interest. The distinguishing tendency in this opera is precisely the unmusical, and therefore, despite some perfect concert numbers and a few deeply moving, pathos-filled lines, it is by no means a classic opera. But all this cannot concern us in the present little exploration. Our only concern here is Papageno. This is a great advantage for us, if for no other reason than that we are thereby exempt from any attempt to explain the significance of Papageno's relation to Tamino, a relation that in design appears so profound and thoughtful that it practically becomes unthinkable because of its very thoughtfulness.

Such a treatment of *The Magic Flute* perhaps could seem arbitrary to one or another reader, because it sees both too much in Papageno and too little in the rest of the opera; he may not be able to sanction our conduct. This is because he does not agree with us on the point of departure for any consideration of Mozart's music. This, in our judgment, is *Don Giovanni*, and it is also our conviction—without denying the importance of making each opera the subject of a special study—that the greatest veneration of Mozart is shown if several other operas are looked at in relation to this one.

Desire awakens, and just as we always realize that we have dreamed only in the moment we awaken, so also here—the dream is over. This awakening in which desire awakens, this jolt, separates desire and its object, gives desire an object. A dialectical qualification that must be strictly maintained is this: only when there is an object is there desire; only when there is desire is there an object. The desire and the object are twins, neither of which comes into the world one split second before the other. But even though they came into the world absolutely coinstantaneously, and even though they do not have an [I 62] interval of time between them, as twins generally have, the significance of this coming into existence [*Tilblivelse*] is not that they are united but rather that they are separated. But this movement of the sensuous, this earthquake, splits the desire from its object infinitely for a moment; but just as the moving principle shows itself for a moment as disuniting, so it manifests itself in turn as wanting to unite the separated. The result of the separation is that desire is torn out of its substantial repose in itself, and as a consequence of this, the object no longer falls under the rubric of substantiality but splits up into a multiplicity.

Just as the plant's life is confined to the soil, so the first stage is captivated in substantial³⁵ longing. Desire awakens, the object flees, multiple in its manifestation; longing tears itself loose from the soil and takes to wandering. The flower acquires wings and flutters, fitful and tireless, here and there. Desire turns toward the object; it is also internally moved. The heart beats, sound and happy; the objects swiftly appear and vanish, but before each disappearance there is nevertheless an instant of enjoyment, a moment of contact, short but sweet, glowworm brilliant, fitful and fleeting as the alighting of a butterfly, and as harmless, and there are innumerable kisses, but so quickly enjoyed that seemingly only that is taken from one object which is bestowed on the next. Only momentarily is there a presentiment of a deeper desire, but this presentiment is forgotten.

In Papageno, desire aims at discoveries. This urge to discover is the pulsation in it, its liveliness. It does not find the proper object of this exploration, but it discovers the multiplicity in seeking therein the object that it wants to discover. In this way desire is awakened, but it is not qualified as desire. If it is kept in mind that desire is present in all three stages, then it can be said that in the first stage it is qualified as *dreaming*, in the second as *seeking*, in the third as *desiring*. That is, the seeking desire is not yet desiring desire; it is only seeking that which it can desire but does not desire it. Therefore, perhaps the most suggestive predicate for it is: it discovers. If we compare Papageno with Don Giovanni, then his journey through the world is something more than a journey of discovery; not only does he enjoy the adventure of a journey of discovery, but he is a knight who is out for victories (*veni—vidi—vice* [I came, I saw, I conquered]).³⁶ The discovery and the victory are identical here; indeed, in a certain sense one may say that in the [I 63] victory he forgets the discovery or that the discovery lies behind him, and he therefore leaves it to his servant and secretary Leporello, who keeps a list in quite another sense than I would imagine Papageno would keep an account. Papageno selects, Don Giovanni enjoys, Leporello reviews.

As with every stage, I can represent in thought what is characteristic of this stage, but always only in the moment it has ceased to be. But even if I could describe ever so completely what is characteristic of it and give the reason for it, there would always be something left over that I cannot express and that nevertheless wants to be heard. It is too immediate to be contained in words. So it is with Papageno—it is the same song, the same

melody; he begins all over again as soon as he finishes, and so on continually. The objection could be made to me that it is altogether impossible to express something immediate. In a way, this is entirely correct, but, in the first place, the immediacy of spirit has its immediate expression in language, and, in the second place, if a change occurs in it through the intervention of thought, it still remains essentially the same simply because it is a qualification of spirit. But here it is an immediacy of the sensuous, which as such has a completely different medium, where as a consequence the disparity between the media makes the impossibility absolute.

If I were to venture to characterize with a single predicate the Mozart music in the part of the play that concerns us, I would say: It is exuberant, merrily twittering, bubbling over with love. What I must emphasize particularly is the first aria and the chimes; the duet with Pamina and later with Papagena falls completely outside the qualification of the immediate-musical. But if one takes the first aria into consideration, then one presumably will approve the predicates I have used and, if one pays closer attention, will also have the opportunity to see what importance the musical has where it appears as the absolute expression for the idea and how this as a consequence is immediate-musical. As is known, Papageno accompanies his [I 64] cheerful liveliness on a reed flute. Surely every ear has felt strangely moved by this accompaniment. But the more one thinks about it, the more one sees in Papageno the mythical Papageno, the more expressive and the more characteristic it proves to be. One does not weary of hearing it over and over again, for it is the absolutely adequate expression of Papageno's whole life, whose whole life is such an uninterrupted twittering, without a care twittering away uninterruptedly in complete idleness, and who is happy and contented because this is the substance of his life, happy in his work and happy in his singing. As is known, the opera is very profoundly designed in such a way that Tamino's and Papageno's flutes harmonize with each other. And yet what a difference! Tamino's flute, which nevertheless is the one the play is named after, miscarries completely, and why? Because Tamino simply is not a musical character. This is due to the misbegotten structure of the whole opera. Tamino with his flute becomes very boring and sentimental, and if all the rest of his development, his state of consciousness, is considered, then every time he takes out his flute and blows a piece on it one thinks of the peasant in Horace (*rusticas*

expectat, dum defluat amnis [the bumpkin waiting for the river to run out]),³⁷ except that Horace did not give his peasant a flute for pointless pastime. As a dramatic character, Tamino is completely beyond the musical, just as in general the spiritual development the play wants to accomplish is a completely unmusical idea. Tamino has simply come so far that the musical ceases, and therefore his flute playing is only a waste of time to drive away thoughts. Music is indeed excellent for driving away thoughts, even evil thoughts, as in the case of David, whose playing is said to have driven away Saul's evil mood.³⁸ But there is a considerable illusion here, for it does so only insofar as it leads the consciousness back into immediacy and soothes it therein. Therefore, the individual may feel happy in the moment of intoxication but becomes only all the more unhappy. Here I may be permitted a comment quite *in parenthesi*. Music has been used to cure insanity and in a certain sense this goal has been attained, and yet this is an illusion. When insanity has a mental basis, it is always due to a hardening at some point in the consciousness. This hardening must be overcome, but for it to be truly overcome the road to be taken must be the very opposite of the one that leads to music. When music is used, one is on the [I 65] wrong road altogether and makes the patient even more insane, even if he seems not to be so anymore.

What I have said about Tamino's flute playing I presumably can let stand without fear of having it misunderstood. It is not at all my intention to deny what in fact has been acknowledged many times, that music may have its importance as an accompaniment when entering a foreign domain, namely, the domain of language. The defect, however, in *The Magic Flute* is that the whole piece tends toward consciousness, and as a consequence the actual tendency of the piece is to annul the music, and yet it is supposed to be an opera, and not even this idea is clear in the piece. Ethically qualified love or marital love is set as the goal of the action, and therein lies the play's basic defect, for whatever that is, ecclesiastically or secularly speaking, one thing it is not, it is not musical—indeed, it is absolutely unmusical.

The first aria, then, has its great importance musically as the immediate-musical expression of Papageno's whole life—and history, which is the absolutely adequate expression for this in the same degree that music is, is history only metaphorically. The chimes, however, are the musical expression for his activity, of which, in turn, a notion is gained only through

the music; it is enchanting, tempting, alluring, just like the playing of the man who made the fish stop and listen.³⁹

The spoken lines, which are either Schikaneder's or the Danish translator's,⁴⁰ are generally so lunatic and foolish that it is almost incomprehensible how Mozart has brought as much out of them as he has done. To have Papageno say of himself, "I am a child of nature,"⁴¹ and then in the very same moment make a liar of himself, can be regarded as an example *instar omnium* [worth them all]. An exception could be made of the words in the text of the first aria, that he puts the girls he catches into his cage.⁴² If one puts a little more into them than the author himself in all likelihood did, then they characterize precisely the innocence of Papageno's activity, just as we have suggested above.

[I 66] We now leave the mythical Papageno. The fate of the actual Papageno cannot concern us. We wish him happiness with his little Papagena, and we gladly let him seek his joy in populating a primeval forest or a whole continent with nothing but Papagenos.⁴³

THIRD STAGE

This stage is epitomized by *Don Giovanni*. Here I am not in the position, as heretofore, of having to isolate a specific portion of an opera; here the point is not to separate but to synthesize, since the whole opera is essentially the expression of the idea and, with the exception of a few particular numbers, centers essentially in this and with dramatic necessity gravitates to this as its pivot. Here again there will be occasion to see in what sense I can call the previous stages by that name when I call *Don Giovanni* the third stage. I indicated earlier that they do not have any separate existence, and since my starting point is this third stage, which actually is the whole stage, they cannot very well be regarded as one-sided abstractions or preliminary anticipations, but rather as intimations of *Don Giovanni*, except that there still is always something left over that somewhat justifies use of the word "stage"—namely, that they are one-sided intimations, that every one of them intimates only one side.

The contradiction in the first stage consisted in the inability of desire to find an object, but, without having desired, desire did possess its object and therefore could not begin desiring. In the second stage, the object appears in

its multiplicity, but since desire seeks its object in this multiplicity, in the more profound sense it still has no object; it is still not qualified as desire. In *Don Giovanni*, however, desire is absolutely qualified [I 67] as desire; intensively and extensively it is the immediate unity of the two previous stages. The first stage ideally desired the one; the second desired the particular in the category of multiplicity; the third stage is the unity of the two. In the particular, desire has its absolute object; it desires the particular absolutely. In this resides the seductiveness that we shall discuss later. In this stage, therefore, desire is absolutely genuine, victorious, triumphant, irresistible, and demonic. Therefore, of course, it must not be overlooked that the issue here is not desire in a particular individual but desire as a principle, qualified by spirit as that which spirit excludes. This is the idea of the elemental originality of the sensuous, as suggested above. The expression for this idea is Don Juan, and the expression for Don Juan, in turn, is simply and solely music. It is especially these two observations that will now be stressed continually from various sides, and thereby the classic significance of this opera will be indirectly demonstrated. Meanwhile, to make it easier for the reader to maintain an overview, I shall attempt to gather the scattered observations under specific themes.

To say something specific about this music is not my aim, and with the aid of all congenial spirits I shall take care not to scare up a mass of pointless but very noisy predicates or in linguistic excess to make manifest the impotence of language—and all the more so since I regard it not as an imperfection on the part of language but as a high potency, but for this reason I am more willing to acknowledge music within its boundary. What I want to do, however, is in part to illuminate the idea from as many sides as possible and its relation to language and thereby continually to encompass more and more the territory where music is at home, to provoke it, so to speak, to declare itself, without my being able to say, when it can be heard, any more than: Listen. I think that thereby I have wanted to do the best that esthetics is able to do; whether I shall be successful is another matter. In only a single place will a predicate, like an arrest warrant, provide a description of it, but I shall not therefore forget or allow my reader to forget that the person who has an arrest warrant in his hand has by no means thereby apprehended the person it names. Furthermore, the design of the whole opera, its inner structure, will be discussed separately in the appropriate place, but again in such a way that I do not permit myself to

shout loudly enough for two: *Oh, bravo, schwere Noth, Gotts Blitz, bravissimo* but just keep on tempting forth [I 68] the musical and think that thereby I have wanted to do the best one is capable of doing purely esthetically with the musical. Therefore, I shall not give a running commentary on the music, which essentially cannot contain anything but subjective incidentals and idiosyncrasies and can apply only to something corresponding in the reader. Even a commentator like Dr. Hotho,⁴⁴ so discriminating and fertile in reflection, so copious in expression, has been unable to avoid, on the one hand, having his interpretation deteriorate into verbiage (which is supposed to constitute recompense for Mozart's sonority or sound like a faint echo, a pale copy of Mozart's rich, full-toned luxuriance) and, on the other hand, having Don Giovanni at times become more than he is in the opera, become a reflective individual, and at times become less. The latter comes about, of course, because the deep and absolute point of *Don Giovanni* has escaped Hotho. For him *Don Giovanni* is still only the best opera; it is not qualitatively different from all other operas. But if one has not discerned this with the ubiquitous certainty of the speculative eye, then one cannot speak worthily or validly about *Don Giovanni*, even though, if one has discerned it, one would be able to speak far more magnificently and richly and, above all, more truthfully about it than the one who here dares to speak.

I shall, however, continually track down the musical in the idea, the situation, etc., explore it by listening, and when I have brought the reader to the point of being so musically receptive that he seems to hear the music although he hears nothing, then I shall have finished my task, then I shall fall silent, then I shall say to the reader, as I say to myself: Listen. You friendly jinn who protect all innocent love, I commit my whole mind to you; guard my laboring thoughts so that they may be found worthy of the subject; form my soul into a euphonious instrument; let the gentle breeze of eloquence hasten over it; send the refreshment and blessing of fruitful moods! You righteous spirits, you who guard the boundaries of the kingdom of beauty, guard me lest I, in confused enthusiasm and blind zeal to make *Don Giovanni* all in all, do it an injustice, disparage it, make it something other than what it really is, which is the highest! You powerful spirits who know how to grasp men's hearts, stand by me so that I may capture the reader, not in the net of passion or the wiles of eloquence, but in the eternal truth of conviction.