Søren Kierkegaard was born in 1813 in Copenhagen, where he spent almost the whole of his brief and stormy life, dying there at the age of forty-two in the midst of a violent quarrel with the Church of Denmark. A layman and a man of private fortune, he devoted his life to writing. In an incredibly short twelve-year period there poured from his pen twenty-one extraordinary books, in addition to which he left behind his Papers, which in print extend to eight thousand pages. Tardily the world is recognizing in this Dane a philosopher and theologian of the first rank, a shrewd analyst of social and political trends, and a master psychologist.

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INSIGNIFICANT INTRODUCTION

From the moment that Mozart’s music first filled my soul with wonder, and I bowed before it in humble admiration, I have found a dear and grateful occupation in reflecting on how that happy Greek view of the world which calls the world a cosmos, because it manifests itself as a harmonious whole, a transparent and tasteful ornament for the Spirit which works in and through it—how this happy view finds application in a higher realm, in the world of ideals, where there is again an overruling wisdom particularly admirable in joining together those things which belong together; Axel with Valborg, Homer with the Trojan War, Raphael with Catholicism, Mozart with Don Juan. There is a wretched unbelief abroad which seems to contain much healing power. It deems such a connection accidental, and sees in it only a lucky conjunction of the different forces in the game of life. It thinks it an accident that the lovers win one another, accidental that they love one another; there were a hundred other women with whom the hero might have been equally happy, and whom he could have loved as deeply. It thinks that there has been many a poet who might have become as immortal as Homer, if this splendid subject had not already been appropriated by him; many a composer who might have made himself as immortal as Mozart, had the opportunity offered. This wisdom contains much solace and comfort for all mediocre minds, since it lends itself to the delusion with which they deceive themselves and other like-minded souls, that it is a confusion of fate, an error on the part of the world, that they did not become as famous as the famous. It is a very easy optimism that is thus encouraged. But for every high-minded soul, for every optimist 4 who is not so anxious to save himself in this wretched manner as to lose himself in the contemplation of greatness, it is naturally repugnant; while it is a delight to his soul, a sacred joy, to behold the union of those things which belong
I do not understand, haunting like a specter day and night what I am not permitted to enter. Immortal Mozart! Thou, to whom I owe everything; to whom I owe the loss of my reason, the wonder that caused my soul to tremble, the fear that gripped my inmost being; thou, to whom I owe it that I did not pass through life without having been stirred by something. Thou, to whom I offer thanks that I did not die without having loved, even though my love became unhappy. Is it strange then that I should be more concerned for Mozart’s glorification than for the happiest moment of my life, more jealous for his immortality than for my own existence? Aye, if he were taken away, if his name were erased from the memory of men, then would the last pillar be overthrown, which for me has kept everything from being hurled together into boundless chaos, into fearful nothingness.

And yet I need not fear that any age will ever deny him his place in the kingdom of the gods, but I am prepared to find that men will consider it childish in me to insist that he must have the first place. And though I am by no means ashamed of my childishness, and though it will always have more significance and more value for me than any exhaustive reflection, just because it is inexhaustible, I shall nevertheless attempt to prove his lawful claim by reasoned consideration.

The happy characteristic that belongs to every classic, that which makes it classic and immortal, is the absolute harmony of the two forces, form and content. This concord is so absolute that a later reflective age will scarcely be able to separate, even for thought, the two constituent elements here so intimately united, without running the risk of entertaining or provoking a misunderstanding. Thus when we say that it was Homer’s good fortune that he had the most remarkable epic subject conceivable, we may forget that we always see this epic material through Homer’s eyes, and that it seems to us the most perfect subject, is clear to us only in and through the transubstantiation which we owe to Homer. But if, on the other hand, we stress Homer’s poetic energy in interpreting the material, we easily run the risk of forgetting that the poem would never have become
the thing it is, if the thought with which Homer has imbued it were not its own thought, if the form were not precisely the form that belongs to it. The poet wishes for his subject; but, as we say that wishing is no art, it is quite rightly and truthfully said about many impotent poetic wishes. To wish rightly, on the other hand, is a great art, or, rather, it is a gift. It is the inexplicable and mysterious quality of genius that, like a divining rod, it never gets the idea of wishing except when the thing wished for is present. Here wishing has a more profound significance than it ordinarily does, and to the abstract understanding, it may even seem ridiculous, since we ordinarily think of a wish only in relation to that which is not, not in relation to that which is.

By one-sidedly emphasizing the significance of form, a certain school of aestheticians has been responsible for promoting the corresponding opposite misunderstanding also. It has often seemed strange to me that these aestheticians attached themselves without question to the Hegelian philosophy, since a general knowledge of Hegel, as well as a special acquaintance with his aesthetics, makes it clear that he strongly emphasizes, with regard to the aesthetic, the significance of the content. Both parts belong essentially together, and a single consideration will be sufficient to confirm this, since otherwise such a phenomenon as the following would be unthinkable. It is ordinarily only a single work, or a single suite of works, which stamps the individual artist as a classic poet, artist, and so on. The same individual may have produced a great many different things, none of which stand in any relation to the classic. Homer has, for example, written a Batrachomyomachia, but this poem has not made him classic or immortal. To say that this is due to the insignificance of the subject is foolish, since the classic depends on the perfect balance. If everything that determines a production as classic were to be found solely in the creative artist, then everything produced by him would have to be classic, in a sense similar to, though higher than, that in which bees always produce a uniform kind of cells. To explain this by saying that he was more successful in the one case than the other, would be to explain exactly nothing. For, partly, it would be only a pretentious tautology, which only too often in life enjoys the honor of being regarded as an answer; partly, considered as an answer, it lies in another relativity than the one concerning which our question was asked. For it tells us nothing about the relation between form and content, and at best could be taken into account in connection with an inquiry into the formative activity alone.

In Mozart's case it also happens that there is one work, and only one, which makes him a classical composer, and absolutely immortal. That work is Don Juan. The other things which Mozart has produced may give us pleasure and delight, awaken the admiration, enrich the soul, satisfy the ear, delight the heart; but it does him and his immortal fame no service to lump them all together, and make them all equally great. Don Juan is his reception-piece. Through Don Juan he is introduced into that eternity which does not lie outside of time but in the midst of it, which is not veiled from the eyes of men, where the immortals are introduced, not once for all, but constantly, again and again, as the generations pass and turn their gaze upon them, and happiness in beholding them, and go to the grave, and the following generation passes them again in review, and is transfigured in beholding them. Through his Don Juan, Mozart becomes one in the order of these immortals, one of these visibly transfigured ones, whom no cloud ever takes away from the sight of men; with his Don Juan he stands foremost among them. This last assertion, as I remarked above, I shall attempt to prove.

As has already been noted above, all classic productions stand equally high, because each one stands infinitely high. If, despite this fact, one were to attempt to introduce an order of rank into the classic procession, one would evidently have to choose as a basis for such a distinction, something which was not essential; for if the basis were essential, the difference itself would become an essential difference; from that it would again fallow that the word "classic" was wrongly predicated of the group as a whole. A classification based upon the varying character of the subject matter would immediately involve us in a misunderstanding, which
in its wider consequences would tend to nullify entirely the very concept of the classical. The subject matter is essential in so far as it is one of the constitutive factors, but it is not the absolute, since it is only one of the factors. We might notice, for example, that certain species of the classic have, in a sense, no subject matter, while, on the other hand, in others the subject matter plays a very significant role. The first holds true of those works which we admire as classic in the realms of architecture, sculpture, music and painting, especially the first three, and even in the case of painting, to the extent that a subject matter is involved, it has hardly more significance than that of having provided an occasion. The second holds true of poetry, taken in its broadest sense, including all artistic productions based upon language and the historical consciousness. This remark is quite correct in itself; but if we made it the basis of a classification, treating the absence or the presence of a subject as a help or a hindrance to the artist's creative energy, we should fall into error. Strictly speaking, we should actually be urging the opposite of what we had really intended, as always happens when dealing abstractly with dialectical concepts; it is not only true that we say one thing and mean another, but that we say the other; we do not say what we think we say, but we say the opposite. Such is the result when we employ the subject matter as the principle of classification. In speaking about the subject matter, it turns out that we really speak about something quite different, namely, the formative process. On the other hand, if we were to start from the formative process and stress it exclusively, the same thing would happen. In the attempt to make a valid distinction here by stressing the fact that in some respects the formative process is creative, in that it creates the subject matter, while in others it receives it, the result would be that while one believed that one was speaking about the formative process, one would really be speaking of the subject matter, and would actually base the classification upon the division of the subject matter. To the formative process as a point of departure for such a classification applies exactly the same law as obtains in the case of the subject matter. Therefore, the one side can never be used alone for the purpose of establishing a distinction in rank; for it is always too essential to be accidental, too accidental to be an adequate basis for an essential distinction.

But this absolutely reciprocal interpenetration, which makes it clearly as proper to say that the subject matter penetrates the form, as that the form penetrates the subject matter—this mutual interpenetration, this like for like in the immortal friendship of the classic, may serve to throw a light upon the classic from a new angle, and to limit it so that it does not become too ample. The aestheticians particularly, who have one-sidedly emphasized poetic activity, have so enlarged this concept that this pantheon became so enriched, aye, so overloaded with classical gimcracks and bagatelles, that the natural conception of a cool hall containing individually distinguished and imposing figures completely disappeared, and this pantheon became rather a lumber-room. Every neat little bit of perfect artistry is, according to this aesthetic verdict, a classical work, assured of absolute immortality; indeed, in this hocus-pocus, such little trifles were admitted most of all. Although otherwise one hated paradoxes, still one did not fear the paradox that the smallest was really the greatest art. The falsity lay in one-sidedly emphasizing the formal. Such an aesthetic could therefore flourish only temporarily, only so long as no one noticed that time made it and its classic works absurd. This tendency in the aesthetic sphere was a form of that radicalism, which, in a corresponding manner, has expressed itself in so many different spheres; it was an expression of the undisciplined subject in its equally undisciplined emptiness.

This endeavor, however, found its master in Hegel. It is, on the whole, a sad fact regarding the Hegelian philosophy that it has by no means received the significance which it would have had, either for the preceding generation or for the present, if the preceding generation had not been so busy intimidating people into it, as to give them little quiet for its appropriation, and if the present generation were not so unuttering active in pushing people beyond it. Hegel reinstated the content, the idea, in its just rights,
and thereby banished all these transitory classics, these flimsy beings, the hawk-moths, from the high-arched vaults of the classic pantheon. It is by no means our intention to deny these works their just worth, but, here as elsewhere, it is necessary to take care that the language does not become confused, the concepts emasculated. A certain kind of immortality they may well have, and this is their desert; but this immortality is only the momentary eternity which every true work of art possesses, not that eternal fullness which can withstand all the vicissitudes of time. What these productions lack is ideas, and the greater their formal perfection, the more quickly will they consume themselves; the more their technical performance approximates the highest degree of virtuosity, the more fugitive they become, having neither the courage nor the energy nor the poise to withstand the attacks of time, though all the while they more and more pretentiously claim to be the most rectified of spirits. Only when the idea reposes with transparent clearness in a definite form, can it be called a classic work; but then it will also be able to withstand the attacks of time. This unity, this mutual intensity within itself, is a property of every classical work, and hence it is readily evident that every attempt at a classification of the different classic works, which has for its basis a separation of form and content, or idea and form, is eo ipso doomed to failure.

In still another way we might attempt a classification. We might consider the medium through which the idea is made manifest, as an object for contemplation, and, as we have noticed that one medium is richer or poorer than another, make this the basis for a classification wherein the wealth or poverty of the medium would be regarded as a help or a hindrance. But the medium stands in too necessary a relation to the production as a whole, not to make it probable that a classification based upon the medium would sooner or later find itself involved in the difficulties already emphasized.

I believe, on the other hand, that the following considerations may open the way for a classification which will have validity, precisely because it is altogether accidental. The more abstract and hence the more void of content the idea is, and the more abstract and hence the more poverty-striken the medium is, the greater the probability that a repetition will be impossible, and the greater the probability that when the idea has once obtained its expression, then it has found it once for all. The more concrete and consequently the richer the idea, and similarly the medium, the greater the probability for a repetition. When I now arrange the classics side by side and, without wishing to rank them relatively, find myself wondering at their lofty equality, it nevertheless easily becomes apparent that there are more works in one section than another, or, if this is not the case, that some unequal representation is easily conceivable.

This point I wish to develop a little more in detail. The more abstract the idea is, the smaller the probability of a numerous representation. But how does the idea become concrete? By being permeated with the historical consciousness. The more concrete the idea, the greater the probability. The more abstract the medium, the smaller the probability; the more concrete, the greater. But what does it mean to say that the medium is concrete, other than to say it is language, or is seen in approximation to language; for language is the most concrete of all media. The idea, for example, which comes to expression in sculpture is wholly abstract, and bears no relation to the historical; the medium through which it is expressed is likewise abstract; consequently there is a great probability that the section of the classic works which includes sculpture will contain only a few. In this I have the testimony of time and experience on my side. If, on the other hand, I take a concrete idea and a concrete medium, then it seems otherwise. Homer is indeed a classic epic poet, but just because the epic idea is a concrete idea, and because the medium is language, it so happens that in the section of the classics which contains the epic, there are many epics conceivable, which are all equally classic, because history constantly furnishes us with new epic material. In this, too, I have the testimony of history and the assent of experience.

Now when I propose to base my subdivision wholly on the accidental, one can hardly deny its accidental character. But if, on the other hand, someone should reproach
me, my answer would be that the objection is a mistake, since the principle of classification ought to be accidental. It is accidental that one section numbers, or can number, many more works than another. But since this is accidental, it is evident that one might as well place the class highest which has, or can have, the greatest number. Here I might fall back upon the preceding discussion, and calmly answer that this is quite correct, but that I ought for this very reason to be all the more lauded for my consistency in accidentally setting the opposite class highest. However, I shall not do this, but, on the other hand, I shall appeal to a circumstance that speaks in my favor, the circumstance, namely, that those sections which embrace the more concrete ideas are not yet completed, and do not permit of being completed. Therefore it is quite natural to place the others first, and to keep the double doors wide open for the latter. Should someone say that this is an imperfection, a defect, in the former class, then he plows a furrow outside of my field of thought, and I cannot pay attention to his argument, however thorough it may be; for it is my fixed point of departure, that seen essentially everything is equally perfect.

But which idea is the most abstract? Here the question is naturally concerned only with such ideas as lend themselves to artistic representation, not with ideas appropriate only for scientific treatment. And what medium is the most abstract? The latter question I shall answer first. The most abstract medium is the one farthest removed from language.

But before I pass on to reply to this question, I desire to remind the reader of a circumstance which affects the final solution of my problem. The most abstract medium is not always employed to express the most abstract idea. Thus the medium employed by architecture is doubtless the most abstract medium, but the ideas which receive expression in architecture are by no means the most abstract. Architecture stands in a much closer relation to history than sculpture, for example. Here we are again confronted with a new alternative. I may place in the first class in this arrangement either those works of art which have the most abstract medium, or those whose idea is most abstract. In this respect I shall choose the idea, not the medium.

Now the media employed in architecture and sculpture and painting and music are abstract. Here is not the place to investigate this matter further. The most abstract idea conceivable is sensuous genius. But in what medium is this idea expressible? Solely in music. It cannot be expressed in sculpture, for it is a sort of inner qualification of inwardness; nor in painting, for it cannot be apprehended in precise outlines; it is an energy, a storm, impatience, passion, and so on, in all their lyrical quality, yet so that it does not exist in one moment but in a succession of moments, for if it existed in a single moment, it could be modeled or painted. The fact that it exists in a succession of moments expresses its epic character, but still it is not epic in the stricter sense, for it has not yet advanced to words, but moves always in an immediacy. Hence it cannot be represented in poetry. The only medium which can express it is music. Music has, namely, an element of time in itself, but it does not take place in time except in an unessential sense. The historical process in time it cannot express.

The perfect unity of this idea and the corresponding form we have in Mozart’s Don Juan. But precisely because the idea is so tremendously abstract, the medium is also abstract, so it is not probable that Mozart will ever have a rival. It was Mozart’s good fortune to have found a subject that is absolutely musical, and if some future composer should try to emulate Mozart, there would be nothing else for him to do than to compose Don Juan over again. Homer found a perfect epic subject, but many epic poems are conceivable, because history commands more epic material. This is not the case with Don Juan. What I really mean will perhaps be best understood if I show the difference in connection with a related idea. Goethe’s Faust is a genuinely classical production, but the idea is a historical idea, and hence every notable historical era will have its own Faust. Faust has language as its medium, and since this is a far more concrete medium, it follows on this ground also, that several works of the same kind are conceivable. Don Juan, on the other hand, will always stand alone by
that it was in vain; but since I am accustomed to living on good terms with my thought, it did not refuse me. However, its efforts accomplished nothing; incited by me it constantly transcended itself, and constantly fell back into itself. It constantly sought a foothold, but could not find it; constantly sought bottom, but could neither swim nor wade. It was something both to laugh at and to weep over. Hence I did both, and I was very thankful that it had not refused me this service. And although I know perfectly well that it will accomplish nothing, I am still as likely to ask it once more to play the same game, which is to me an inexhaustible source of delight. Any reader who finds the game tiresome is, of course, naturally not of my kind; for him the game has no significance, and it is true here as elsewhere, that like-minded children make the best playfellows. For him the whole preceding argument is a superfluous, while for me it has such great significance, that I say thereof with Horace: *exilis donus est, ubi non et multa supersunt,* to him it is foolishness, to me wisdom; to him boring, to me a joy and delight.

Consequently such a reader will not be able to sympathize with the lyricism of my thought, which is so elevated that it transcends thought; perhaps he will, however, be good-natured enough to say: “We will not quarrel about that; I skip that part, but now let us see how you approach the far more important problem of proving that Don Juan is a classical work; for that, I admit, would be a very suitable introduction to the main inquiry.” How far it would be a suitable introduction, I shall leave undecided, but here again I find myself in the unfortunate position of not being able to sympathize with him; for however easy it might be for me to prove it, it would never enter my mind to do so. But while I always presuppose that matter as decided, the following exposition will serve many times and in many ways to shed light upon Don Juan in this respect, just as the preceding exposition has already contributed an occasional suggestion.

The task to which this inquiry is committed is to show the significance of the musical-erotic, and again as a means...
THE "EITHER"

To this end, to point out the different stages which, as they have this in common, that they are all immediately erotic, also agree in being essentially musical. What I have to say on this subject I owe to Mozart alone. Hence, if one or another reader should be polite enough to agree with my exposition, but still be a little doubtful as to whether it was in Mozart's music, or whether I had not myself read it into the music, I can assure him that not only the little which I here present is found there but infinitely more; aye, I can assure him that it is precisely this thought which gives me courage to attempt an explanation of certain features of Mozart's music.

That which you have loved with youthful enthusiasm and admired with youthful ardor, that which you have secretly and mysteriously preserved in the innermost recesses of your soul, that which you have hidden in the heart; that you always approach with a certain shyness, with mingled emotions, when you know that the purpose is to try to understand it. That which you have learned to know bit by bit, like a bird gathering straws for its nest, happier over each separate little piece than over all the rest of the world; that which the loving ear has absorbed, solitary in the great multitude, unnoticed in the secret hiding-place; that which the greedy ear has snatched up, never sated, the miserly ear has hidden, never secure, whose softest echo has never disappointed the sleepless vigil of the spying ear; that which you have lived with by day, that which you have relived by night, that which has banished sleep and made it restless, that which you have dreamed about while sleeping, and have waked up to dream it again while awake, that for which you have leaped out of bed in the middle of the night for fear lest you forget it; that which has been present to your soul in the highest moments of rapture, that which like a woman's work you have kept always at hand; that which has followed you on bright moonlight nights, in lonely forests, by the ocean's shore, in the gloomy streets, in the dead of night, at the break of day; that which has been your companion on horseback, your fellow traveler in the carriage; that which has permeated the home, that to which your chamber has been witness, that with which your ear has re-echoed, that which has resounded through your soul, that which the soul has spun on its finest loom—that now reveals itself to thought. As those mysterious beings in ancient tales rise from the ocean's bed invested with seaweed, so it now rises from the sea of remembrance, interwoven with memories. The soul becomes sad, and the heart softens; for it is as if you were bidding it farewell, as if you were separating yourself from it, never to meet it again either in time or eternity. It seems as if you were false to it, faithless to your trust, you feel that you are no longer the same, neither so young nor so childlike; you fear for yourself, lest you lose what has made you happy and rich and glad; you fear for the object of your love, lest it suffer in this transformation, lest it show itself perhaps less perfect, lest it may not be able to answer the many questions, and then, alas! everything is lost, the magic vanished, never to be evoked again. As far as Mozart's music is concerned, my soul knows no fear; my confidence is boundless. For one thing, I know that what I have hitherto understood is very little, so there will always be enough left behind, hiding in the shadows of the soul's vaguer intimations; and for another, I am convinced that if ever Mozart became wholly comprehensible to me, he would then become fully incomprehensible to me.

To assert that Christianity has brought sensuousness into the world may seem boldly daring. But as we say that a bold venture is half the battle, so also here; and my proposition may be better understood if we consider that in positing one thing, we also indirectly posit the other which we exclude. Since the sensuous generally is that which should be negativized, it is clearly evident that it is posited first through the act which excludes it, in that it posits the opposite positive principle. As principle, as power, as a self-contained system, sensuousness is first posited in Christianity; and in that sense it is true that Christianity brought sensuousness into the world. Rightly to understand this proposition, that Christianity has brought sensuousness into the world, one must apprehend it as identical with the contrary proposition, that it is Christianity which has driven sensuousness out, has exchanged it from the world. As prin-
ciple, as power, as a self-contained system, sensuousness was first posited by Christianity; to add still another qualification, which will, perhaps, show more emphatically what I mean: as a determinant of spirit, sensuousness was first posited by Christianity. This is quite natural, for Christianity is spirit, and spirit is the positive principle which Christianity has brought into the world. But when sensuousness is understood in its relationship to spirit [i.e., as its contrary], it is clearly known as a thing that must be excluded; but precisely because it should be excluded, it is determined as a principle, as a power; for that which spirit—its principle—would exclude must be something which is also a principle, although it first reveals itself as a principle in the moment of its exclusion. To say that sensuousness was in the world before Christianity would, of course, be a very stupid objection against me, for it goes without saying that what is to be excluded must have been before that which excludes it, although in another sense it first emerges in being excluded. This means that it begins to exist in another sense, and that is why I said at once that a bold venture is only half the battle.

Sensuousness, then, already existed in the world but without being spiritually determined. How then has it existed? Psychically. It was in this manner that it existed in paganism, and, in its most perfect expression, in Greece. But sensuousness psychically determined is not opposition, exclusion, but harmony and accord. But precisely because sensuousness was harmoniously determined, it appeared, not as a principle, but as an enclitic assimilated by assonance.

This consideration will serve to throw light upon the different forms assumed by the erotic in the different stages of the evolution of the world-consciousness, and thereby lead us to determine the immediate-erotic as identical with the musical-erotic. In the Greek consciousness, the sensuous was under control in the beautiful personality, or, more rightly stated, it was not controlled; for it was not an enemy to be subjugated, not a dangerous rebel who should be held in check; it was liberated unto life and joy in the beautiful personality. The sensuous was thus not posited as a princi-

ple; the principle of soul which constituted the beautiful personality was unthinkable without the sensuous; the erotic based upon the sensuous was for this reason not posited as a principle. Love was present everywhere as moment, and as such it was momentarily present in the beautiful personality. The gods recognized its power no less than men; the gods, no less than men, knew happy and unhappy love adventures. In none of them, however, was love present as principle; in so far as it was in them, in the individual, it was there as a moment of the universal power of love, which was, however, not present anywhere, and therefore did not even exist for Greek thought nor for the Greek consciousness. The objection might be offered that Eros was the god of love, and that love as principle must be conceived as present in him. But disregarding now the consideration that here again love does not rest upon the erotic, as based upon the sensuous alone, but is a qualification of the soul, there is another circumstance which it is necessary to note, which I shall emphasize more particularly.

Eros was the god of love, but was not himself in love. In so far as the other gods or men felt the power of love in themselves, they ascribed it to Eros, referred it to him, but Eros was not himself in love; and in so far as this happened to him once, this was an exception, and though he was the god of love, he stood far behind the other gods in the number of his love adventures, far behind men. The fact that he did once fall in love, best expresses also the fact that he, too, bowed before the universal power of love, which thus in a certain sense became a force outside of himself, and which, rejected by him, now had no place at all where it might be found. Nor is his love based upon the sensuous, but upon the psychical. It is a genuine Greek thought that the god of love is not himself in love, while all others owe their love to him. If I imagined a god or goddess of longing, it would be a genuinely Greek conception, that while all who knew the sweet unrest of pain or of longing, referred it to this being, this being itself could know nothing of longing. I cannot characterize this remarkable relation better than to say it is the converse of a representative relation. In the representative relation the entire
energy is concentrated in a single individual, and the particular individuals participate therein, in so far as they participate in its particular movements. I might almost say that this relation is the opposite of that which lies at the basis of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, the special individual has the entire fullness of life within himself, and this fullness exists for other individuals only in so far as they behold it in the incarnated individual. The Greek consciousness gives us the converse relation. That which constitutes the power of the god is not in the god, but in all the other individuals, who refer it to him; he is himself, as it were, powerless and impotent, because he communicates his power to the whole world. The incarnated individual, as it were, absorbs the power from all the rest, and the fullness is therefore in him, and only so far in the others as they behold it in him. This consideration will be seen as important in its relation to what follows, as well as significant in itself, with respect to the categories which the universal consciousness makes use of in different periods of the world’s history.

As a principle, then, we do not find the sensuous in the Greek consciousness, nor do we find the erotic as principle based upon the principle of the sensuous; and even if we had found this, we still see, what is for this inquiry of the greatest importance, that the Greek consciousness did not have the energy to concentrate the whole in a single individual, but thought of it as emanating from a point which does not possess it, to all the other points, so that this constitutive point is almost identifiable by the fact that it is the only point which does not have that which it gives to all the others.

Hence the sensuous as principle is posited by Christianity, as is also the sensuous-erotic, as principle; the representative idea was introduced into the world by Christianity. If I now imagine the sensuous-erotic as a principle, as a power, as a kingdom qualified spiritually, that is to say, so qualified that the spirit excludes it; if I imagine this principle concentrated in a single individual, then I have the concept of sensuous-erotic genius. This is an idea which the Greeks did not have, which Christianity first brought into the world, even if only in an indirect sense.

If this sensuous-erotic genius demands expression in all its immediacy, the question arises as to which medium is appropriate for the purpose. Not to be lost sight of here is the fact that it demands expression and representation in its immediacy. In its immediacy and as reflected in something other than itself, it comes under language, and becomes subject to ethical categories; in its immediacy, however, it can only be expressed in music. In this connection I must ask the reader to remember something which was said in the insignificant introduction. Here the significance of music is revealed in its full validity, and it also reveals itself in a stricter sense as a Christian art, or rather as the art which Christianity posits in excluding it from itself, as being a medium for that which Christianity excludes from itself, and thereby posits. In other words, music is the daemonic. In the erotic-sensuous genius, music has its absolute object. It is not of course intended to say by this that music cannot also express other things, but this is its proper object. In the same way the art of sculpture is also capable of producing much else than human beauty, and yet this is its absolute object; painting can express much else than the beauty which is celestially glorified, and yet this is its absolute object. In this respect it is important to be able to see the essential idea in each art, and not to permit oneself to be disturbed by what it is incidentally capable of representing. Man’s essential idea is spirit, and we must not permit ourselves to be confused by the fact that he is also able to walk on two legs. The idea in language is thought, and we must not permit ourselves to be disturbed by the opinion of certain sentimental people, that its highest significance is to produce inarticulate sounds.

Here I beg to be allowed a little unmeaning interlude; praetera caesae, that Mozart is the greatest among classic composers, and that his Don Juan deserves the highest place among all the classic works of art.

Now regarding the nature of music as a medium, this will naturally always be a very interesting problem. Whether I am capable of saying anything satisfactory about it is an-
other question. I know very well that I do not understand
music. I freely admit that I am a layman. I do not conceal
the fact that I do not belong to the chosen people who are
connoisseurs of music, that I am at most a proselyte at the
gate, whom a strangely irresistible impulse carried from far
regions to this point, but no farther. And yet it is perhaps
possible that the little I have to say might contain some
particular remark, which, if it met with a kind and indul-
gent reception, might be found to contain something true,
even if it concealed itself under a shabby coat. I stand out-
side the realm of music and contemplate it from this stand-
point. That this standpoint is very imperfect, I freely admit;
that I am in a position to see very little in comparison with
the fortunate ones who stand inside, I do not deny; but I
still continue to hope that from my standpoint I may be
able to throw some light upon the subject, although the
initiated could do it much better, ay, to a certain extent,
even understand better what I say, than I myself can. If
I imagined two kingdoms adjoining one another, with one
of which I was fairly well acquainted, and altogether un-
familiar with the other, and I was not allowed to enter the
unknown realm, however much I desired to do so, I should
still be able to form some conception of its nature. I could
go to the limits of the kingdom with which I was acquainted
and follow its boundaries, and as I did so, I should in this
way describe the boundaries of this unknown country, and
thus without ever having set foot in it, obtain a general
conception of it. And if this was a task that engaged my
energies, and if I was indefatigable in my desire to be ac-
curate, it would doubtless sometimes happen that, as I stood
sadly at my country’s boundary and looked longingly into
the unknown country, which was so near me and yet so
far away, some little revelation might be vouchsafed to me.
And though I feel that music is an art which to the highest
degree requires experience to justify one in having an opin-
ion about it, still I comfort myself again, as I have so often
done before, with the paradox that, even in ignorance and
mere intimations, there is also a kind of experience. I com-
fort myself by remembering that Diana, who had not her-
self given birth, nevertheless came to the assistance of the

child-bearing; moreover, that she had this as a native gift
from childhood, so that she came to the assistance of Latona
in her labor, when she herself was born.

The kingdom known to me, to whose utmost boundaries
I intend to go in order to discover music, is language. If
one wished to arrange the different media according to their
appointed developmental process, one would have to place
music and language next to one another, for which reason
it has often been said that music is a language, which is
something more than a genial remark. If one enjoyed in-
dulging in clever speeches, one might almost say that sculpt-
ure and painting are each a kind of language, in so far as
every expression of the idea is necessarily a language, since
language is the essence of the idea. Very clever people,
therefore, talk about the language of nature, and maudlin
clergymen open the book of nature for us now and then
to read something which neither they nor their hearers un-
derstand. If the remark that music is a language had no
better standing than this, I should not trouble about it, but
let it go and be valid for what it is. But such, however,
is not the case. Not until the spiritual is posited is language
invested with its rights; but when the spiritual is posited,
all that which is not spirit is thereby excluded. But this
exclusion is a determination of spirit, and in so far as the
excluded is to assert itself, it requires a medium which is
spiritually determined, and this is music. But a medium
which is spiritually determined is essentially language; since
then music is spiritually determined, it has justly been called
a language.

As a medium, language is the one absolutely spiritually
qualified medium; therefore it is the proper vehicle for the
idea. A more adequate development of this point is not
within my competence, nor is it within the scope of this
little inquiry. Perhaps I may, however, find room for one
remark, which again brings me back to music. In language
the sensuous is as medium depressed to the level of a mere
instrumentality and constantly negated. Such is not the case
with the other media. Neither in sculpture nor in painting
is the sensuous a mere instrumentality, but it is an integral
part; nor is it constantly negated, for it is constantly taken
into account. It would be a peculiarly preposterous way of regarding a statue or a painting if I were to contemplate it in such wise that I took the trouble of abstracting the sensuous, thereby completely annulling its beauty. In sculpture, architecture, painting, the idea is bound up with the medium; but this fact that the idea does not depress the medium to the level of a mere instrumentality, nor constantly negate it, is, as it were, an expression of the fact that this medium cannot speak. So also with nature. Hence, we rightly say that nature is dumb, and architecture and sculpture and painting; we say it correctly, in spite of all the sensitive and sentimental ears that can hear them speak. It is in truth as silly to say that nature is a language as it is inept to say that which is mute is speaking, since it is not even a language in the sense in which the manual alphabet is a language. But it is different in the case of language. The sensuous is reduced to a mere instrument and is thus annulled. If a man spoke in such a way that one heard the movement of his tongue, he would speak badly; if he heard so that he heard the air vibrations instead of the words, he would hear badly; if in reading a book he constantly saw the individual letters, he would read badly. Language becomes the perfect medium just at the moment when everything sensuous in it is negativized. So it is also with music: that which really should be heard, constantly emancipates itself from the sensuous. That music as a medium stands lower than language has already been pointed out, and it was, therefore, on this account that I said that only in a certain sense is music a language.

Language addresses itself to the ear. No other medium does this. The ear is the most spiritually determined of the senses. That I believe most men will admit. If anyone wishes further information on this point, I refer the reader to the preface of *Kritiken des Heiligen* by Steffens. Aside from language, music is the only medium that addresses itself to the ear. Herein is again an analogy and a testimony concerning the sense in which music is a language. There is much in nature which addresses itself to the ear, but that which affects the ear is the purely sensuous, and for that reason nature is dumb; and it is a ridiculous delusion that one hears something because one hears a cow moo or, that which perhaps makes greater pretensions, a nightingale sing; it is a delusion to think that one hears something, a delusion to think that one is worth more than the other, since it is all a case of tweedledum and tweedledee.

Language has time as its element; all other media have space as their element. Music is the only one that takes place in time. But the fact that it does take place in time is again a negation of the sensuous. What the other arts produce indicates their sensuousness precisely by reason of the fact that it has its continuance in space. Now there is, of course, much in nature that takes place in time. Thus when a brook ripples and continues to ripple, there seems to be in it a qualling of time. However, this is not so, and in so far as one may wish to insist that we have here a qualling of time, one would have to say that time is indeed present, but present as if spatially qualified. Music exists only in the moment of its performance, for if one were ever so skillful in reading notes and had ever so lively an imagination, it cannot be denied that it is only in an unreal sense that music exists when it is read. It really exists only in being performed. This might seem to be an imperfection in this art as compared with the others whose productions remain, because they have their existence in the sensuous. Yet this is not so. It is rather a proof of the fact that music is a higher, a more spiritual art.

Now if I take language for my point of departure, in order by moving through it, as it were, to spy out the land of music, the result appears about as follows. If I assume that prose is the language-form that is farthest removed from music, then I notice even in the oratorical discourse, in the sonorous structure of its periods, a hint of the musical which manifests itself as and more strongly at different levels in the poetic form, in the structure of the verse, in the rhyme, until at last the musical has been developed so strongly that language ceases and everything becomes music. This is a favorite expression which the poets have used to signify that they have, so to speak, renounced the idea, which vanishes from them, and everything ends in music. This might seem to indicate that music is an even
more perfect medium than language. However, this is one of those sentimental misunderstandings which originate only in empty heads. That it is a misunderstanding will be shown later; here I desire only to call attention to the remarkable circumstance that, by moving through the language in the opposite direction, I again come up against music, in that I proceed from a prose interpenetrated by the concept, downward until I land in interjections which are again musical, just as the child’s first babbling syllables are musical. Here it will hardly be said that music is a more perfect medium than language or that music is a richer medium than language, unless one is willing to assume that saying “uh” is worth more than a complete thought. But what follows from maintaining that wherever language ceases, I encounter the musical? This is probably the most perfect expression of the idea that music everywhere limits language. From this it is easy to see how the misunderstanding arose that music is a richer medium than language. By saying that when language ceases, music begins, and by saying, as people do, that everything becomes musical, we do not advance but go backwards.

This is the reason why I never had any sympathy—and in this perhaps even the experts will agree with me—with that sublime music which believes it can dispense with words. As a rule it thinks itself higher than words, although it is inferior. Now I might perhaps be confronted with the following objection: “If it is true that language is a richer medium than music, then it is hard to understand why it should be so hard to give an aesthetic account of the musical; inconceivable that language in this connection should always appear as a poorer medium than music.” This is, however, neither inconceivable nor inexplicable. Music always expresses the immediate in its immediacy; it is for this reason, too, that music shows itself first and last in relation to language, but for this reason, also, it is clear that it is a misunderstanding to say that music is a more perfect medium. Language involves reflection, and cannot, therefore, express the immediate. Reflection destroys the immediate, and hence it is impossible to express the musical in language; but this apparent poverty of lan-

guage is precisely its wealth. The immediate is really the indeterminate, and therefore language cannot apprehend it; but the fact that it is indeterminate is not its perfection but an imperfection. This is indirectly acknowledged in many ways. Thus, to cite but one example, we say, “I cannot really explain why I do this or that so and so, I do it by ear.” Here we often use about things which have no relation to music a word derived from music, but we indicate by this the obscure, the unexplained, the immediate.

Now if it is the immediate, qualified spiritually, which receives its precise expression in music, we may again inquire more closely what species of the immediate it is which is essentially the subject of music. The immediate, qualified spiritually, may either be determined so as to fall within the sphere of the spiritual or as falling outside it. When the immediate, spiritually qualified, is determined as falling within the sphere of the spiritual, it may then well find its expression in the musical, but this immediacy cannot be the absolute subject of music, for since it is determined in such a way as to be included under the spiritual, it is thereby indicated that music is in a foreign sphere, it constitutes a prelude which is constantly being annulled. But if the immediate, spiritually qualified, is such that it falls outside the realm of spirit, then music here has its absolute subject. For the first species of the immediate, it is essential that it be expressed in music, whereas it is essential for it to become spirit and, consequently, to be expressed in language; for the second, on the contrary, it is essential that it be expressed in music, it cannot be expressed otherwise than in music, it cannot be expressed in language, since it is spiritually determined so that it falls outside of the spiritual and, consequently, outside of language. But the immediacy which is thus excluded by the spirit is sensuous immediacy. This belongs to Christianity. In music it has its absolute medium, and from this circumstance it is also possible to explain the fact that music did not really become developed in the ancient world but belongs to the Christian era. Music is, then, the medium for that species of the immediate which, spiritually determined, is determined as lying outside of the spirit. Music can, naturally,
express many other things, but this is its absolute subject. It is easy to perceive that music is a more sensuous medium than language, since it stresses the sensuous sound much more strongly than language does.

The genius of sensuousness is hence the absolute subject of music. In its very essence sensuousness is absolutely lyrical, and in music it breaks forth in all its lyrical impatience. It is, namely, spiritually determined, and is, therefore, force, life, movement, constant unrest, perpetual succession; but this unrest, this succession, does not enrich it, it remains always the same, it does not unfold itself, but it storms uninterruptedly forward as if in a single breath. If I desired to characterize this lyrical quality by a single predicate, I should say: it *sounds*; and this brings me back again to sensuous genius as that which in its immediacy manifests itself in music.

That even I might be able to say considerably more in connection with this point, I know; that it would be an easy matter for the experts to clear the matter up quite differently, of that I am convinced. But since no one, as far as I know, has attempted or even pretended to do so, since they all continue to reiterate that Mozart’s *Don Juan* is the crown of all operas, but without explaining what they mean by that, although they all say it in a manner which clearly demonstrates that by this statement they intend to say something more than that *Don Juan* is the best opera, that there is a qualitative difference between it and all other operas, which cannot well be sought in anything other than in the absolute relationship between idea, form, subject and medium; since, I say, this is so, it is for this reason that I have broken silence. Perhaps I have been a little too hasty, perhaps I should have been able to say it better had I waited a little longer, perhaps—I do not know; but this I know, I have not hurried in order to enjoy the pleasure of speaking, I have not hurried because I feared someone more capable than myself might anticipate me, but because I feared that if I kept silent, even the stones would cry out in Mozart’s honor, and cry shame to every human being to whom it has been given to speak.

What has been said in the preceding will, I assume, be enough with respect to this little inquiry, since it will essentially serve to clear the way for a discussion of the immediate-erotic stages as we learn to know them through Mozart. Before passing on to that, however, I wish to cite a fact, which, from another side, can direct the thought to the absolute relationship between sensuous genius and the musical. It is well known that music has always been the object of suspicion from the standpoint of religious enthusiasm. Whether this is justifiable or not does not concern us here, since it has only a religious interest; on the other hand, it is not unimportant to consider what brought it about. If I trace back the history of religious fervor in regard to this, then I can generally mark the course of the movement in this way: the stronger the religiosity, the more one renounces music and stresses the importance of words. The different stages in this respect are represented in the periods of world history. The last stage entirely excludes music and insists solely upon speech. I could deck out this statement with a variety of particular observations; however I shall not do that, but cite only a word or two from a Presbyterian who figures in a story by Achim v. Arnim: “We Presbyterians regard the organ as the devil’s bagpipe, by which serious reflection is not only lulled to sleep, but its devil’s dance bewilders the good intention.”14 This must be regarded as a speech *in statu omnium.*15 What reason can one have for excluding music and making the spoken word the only prevalent means of expression? That the spoken word when wrongly used can confuse the emotions equally with music, all intelligent sects will certainly admit. Hence there must be a qualitative difference between them. But that which religious enthusiasm wishes to have expressed is spirit, therefore it requires language, which is the proper medium of the spirit, and rejects music which for it is a sensuous medium and, as such, always an imperfect medium for expressing the spiritual. Whether, then, religious zeal is really right in rejecting music is, as was said, another question; on the other hand, its conception of the relation of music to language may be perfectly right. Music need not, therefore, be excluded, but we must recognize that in
the realm of the spirit it is an imperfect medium, and, hence, that it cannot have its absolute subject in the immediately spiritual, determined as spirit. From this it by no means follows that one needs to regard music as the work of the devil, even if our age does offer many horrible proofs of the demonic power with which music may lay hold upon an individual, and this individual in turn, grip and capture a multitude, especially women, in the seductive snare of fear, by means of the all-disturbing power of voluptuousness. It by no means follows that one needs to regard music as the work of the devil, even though one notices with a certain secret horror that this art, more than any other, frequently harrows its votaries in a terrible manner, a phenomenon which strangely enough seems to have escaped the attention of psychologists and the multitude, except at the single moment when they are startled by the wild shriek of some despairing individual. However, it is noticeable enough that in legends, hence in the popular consciousness which finds its expression in legends, the musical is again the demonic. As an example I may mention the Irish March of the Elves. 13

Now with respect to the immediate-erotic stages, I owe everything I can say about it exclusively to Mozart, to whom I owe altogether everything. Since, however, the classification and comparison I here attempt can only be referred to him indirectly (the classification having been suggested by somebody else), I have, before setting about it seriously, tested myself and the classification lest I might in any way disturb my own pleasure or that of some other reader in admiring the immortal works of Mozart. He who would see Mozart in his true immortal greatness must witness his Don Juan; in comparison with that every other work is accidental, unessential. But if we now look at Don Juan so that we see individual things from Mozart's other operas from this same point of view, then I am convinced that we shall neither disparage him nor injure ourselves or our neighbor. Then we shall have the opportunity to rejoice over the fact that all the essential potency of music is poured out in the music of Mozart.

As for the rest, when in the preceding I used, and in what follows I continue to use, the expression "stage," it must not be insisted upon as implying that each stage existed independently, the one wholly separate from the other. I might, perhaps, more pertinently have used the word "metamorphosis." The different stages taken together constitute the immediate stage, and from this we may perceive that the individual stages are rather a revelation of a predica, so that all the predicates rush down into the wealth of the last stage, since this is the real stage. The other stages have no independent existence; in and of themselves they exist only as parts of a conceptual scheme, and from this one may see their accidental character as over against the last stage. Since, however, they have found separate expression in Mozart's music, I shall discuss them separately. Above all, however, one must avoid considering them as different degrees of consciousness, since even the last stage has not yet arrived at consciousness; I have always to do only with the immediate in its sheer immediacy.

The difficulties which are always met with when one would make music the subject for aesthetic consideration, naturally do not fail to appear here. The difficulty in the preceding lay chiefly in the fact that while I would prove by means of thought that sensuous genius is essentially the subject of music, this can actually only be proved by means of music, just as I, too, can only come to an appreciation of music through the music itself. The difficulty the following must contend with is: rather, that since that which the music under discussion expresses is essentially music's proper subject, it expresses it far more perfectly than does language, which makes a mighty poor showing in comparison therewith. To be sure, if I had to do with different degrees of consciousness, then the advantage would naturally be on my side and on the side of language, but here that is not the case. Hence that which remains to be explained here can only have significance for him who has heard the music and who constantly continues to hear it. For him it may perhaps contain a single suggestion which may influence him to hear it again.
The first stage is suggested by the Page in Figaro. It is naturally not fair here to see in the Page a single individual, which we are so easily tempted to do, when in imagination or reality we see it presented on the stage by a person. Then it becomes difficult to avoid, as is also partly the case with the Page in the play, having something accidental, something irrelevant to the idea enter, so that he becomes more than he should be; for in a certain sense he becomes this the moment he becomes an individual. But in becoming more, he becomes less, he ceases to be the idea. Therefore, we cannot grant him speech, but music becomes his only adequate means of expression, and for that reason it is noticeable that Figaro as well as Don Juan, as they issue from the hand of Mozart, belong to opera seria. Now if we regard the Page only as a mythical figure, we shall find the characteristic of this first stage expressed in music.

The sensuous awakens, not yet to movement, but to a hushed tranquillity; not to joy and gladness, but to a deep melancholy. Desire is not yet awake, it is only a gloomy foreboding. In desire there is always present the object of desire, which arises out of it and manifests itself in a bewildering half-light of dawn. This relation obtains for the sensuous: by clouds and mists it is kept at a distance; by being reflected in these it is brought nearer. Desire possesses what will become its object, but possesses it without having desired it, and so does not possess it. This is the painful but also, in its sweetness, the delightful and fascinating contradiction which, in its sadness and its melancholy, resounds throughout this stage. Its pain lies not in there being too little, but rather in there being too much. The desire is quiet desire, the longing quiet longing, the ecstasy quiet ecstasy, wherein the object of desire is dawning, and is so near that it is within the desire. The object of desire hovers over the desire, sinks down in it, still without this movement happening through desire's own power to attract or because desire is operative. The object of desire does not fade away, nor does it elude desire's embrace, for then immedi-

IMMEDIATE STAGES OF THE EROTIC

The immediate desire would awaken; but it is, without being desired, present to desire, which just because of this becomes melancholy because it cannot come to the point of desiring. As soon as desire awakens, or rather in and with its awakening, desire and its object are separated; now desire breathes freely and soundly, whereas earlier it could not live and breathe for the desired. When desire is not awake, its object charms and inveigles it, awe, almost frightens it. Desire must have air, it must burst forth; thereby it happens that they part company. The object of desire flees shyly, modest as a woman, and they are separated; the object of desire vanishes et appareit sublimis in any case outside of desire. If one paints the ceiling of a room all over with figures from one side to the other, such a ceiling depresses one, as the painters say; if one paints only one light and graceful figure, then the room seems higher. Such is the relation between desire and its object at a first and later stage.

Hence the desire, which in this stage is present only as a presentiment about itself, is without movement, without disquiet, only gently rocked by an unclarified inner emotion. As the life of the plant is bound to the earth, so is desire lost in a present quiet longing, buried in contemplation, and yet cannot evacuate its object, because essentially in a deeper sense, there is no object. And yet this lack of an object is not its object, for then it would immediately be in motion, would be determined, if not in another way, then in sorrow and pain, but sorrow and pain have not the contradiction in them which is characteristic of melancholy and heaviness, nor the ambiguity which is the sweetness in the melancholy. Although desire in this stage is not qualified as desire, although this nascent desire, so far as its object is concerned, is entirely undefined, still it has the characteristic of being infinitely deep. It sucks, like Thor, through a horn whose point is buried in the sea; yet the reason why it cannot draw its object to it is not that it is infinite, but that this infinity cannot become its object. Its sucking, therefore, does not indicate a relation to the object but is identical with its sigh, and this is infinitely deep.

In harmony with the description of the first stage given here, we shall find it very significant that the Page's part is
so arranged musically that it always lies within the range of a female voice. The contradictory in this stage is, as it were, suggested by this contradiction, the desire is so indefinite, its object so little separated from it, that the object of desire rests androgynously within the desire, just as in plant life the male and female parts are both present in one blossom. Desire and its object are joined in this unity, that they both are of neuter gender.

Although speech does not belong to the mythical Page but to the Page in the play, the poetic figure Cherubino, and although because of this we cannot in this connection pay attention to it, partly because it does not belong to Mozart, partly because it expresses something quite different from that of which we are speaking here, I would, however, point to a particular speech, because it gives me occasion to describe this stage in its analogy to a later one. Susanne mocks Cherubino because he is in a way in love with Marcellina, and the Page has no answer ready other than this: she is a woman. With respect to the Page in the play, it is essential that he should be in love with the Countess, unessential that he should fall in love with Marcellina, which is only an indirect and paradoxical expression for the intensity of the passion which binds him to the Countess. With respect to the mythical Page, it is equally essential that he should be in love with the Countess and with Marcellina; the eternal feminine is his object, and both the Countess and Marcellina have this in common. Hence, when we later hear about Don Juan:

Coquettes whom sixty years have kissed,
With joy he adds them to his list,

we have the perfect analogy to this, except that the intensity and determination of the desire is far more strongly expressed.

Were I now to venture the attempt of indicating by a single predicate the characteristic of Mozart's music as it concerns the Page in Figaro, I would say: it is drunk with love. But like all intoxication, the intoxication of love can also act in two ways, either increasing the transparent joy of life, or compressing it in unclarified gloom. This latter is the case with the music here, and rightly so. Music cannot give the reason for it, that is beyond its power; the spoken word cannot express the mood, it is too heavy, too ponderous, for speech to carry; only music can express it. The reason for its melancholy lies in the profound inner contradiction that we attempted to call attention to in the preceding.

We now leave the first stage, which is represented by the mythical Page; we leave him to continue his melancholy dreaming about what he has, his melancholy desiring of what he possesses. He never comes any farther, he never gets going, for his movements are illusory, and hence nothing. It is otherwise with the Page in the play. We feel a true and sincere friendly interest in his future, we congratulate him upon becoming a captain, we permit him to kiss Susanne once more in farewell, we shall not betray him about the mark on his forehead which none can see except the initiated; but nothing more than this, my good Cherubino, or we shall call the Count, and he will shout: "Be off with you, get out of the house, to your regiment! He is certainly no child, as no one knows better than myself."

SECOND STAGE

This stage is represented by Papageno in The Magic Flute. Here again, naturally, it is important to separate the essential from the accidental, to conjure up the mythical Papageno and forget the actual person in the play; particularly so here, since the character in the play appears in connection with all sorts of doubtful galimatias. For this reason it might not be without interest to run through the whole opera in order to show that its subject matter, considered as operatic material, profoundly fails of its purpose. Nor would we lack occasion to illuminate the erotic from a new side, as we noticed how the endeavor to invest it with a deeper ethical view, in such wise that this view tries its hand at all sorts of more significant dialitical exercises, is an adventure which has ventured quite beyond the range of music, so that it was impossible for even a Mozart to lend it any deeper interest. This opera definitively tends toward the unmusical, and therefore, it is, in spite of individually
perfect concert numbers and individually deeply moving, pathetic utterances, by no means a classic opera. Still all this cannot occupy us in the present little inquiry. We have only to do with Papageno. This is a great advantage to us, if for no other reason than that we are thereby excused from every attempt to explain the significance of Papageno's relation to Tamino, a relationship which, with regard to the plan, looks so profound and thoughtful that it almost becomes unthinkable for sheer thoughtfulness.

Such a treatment of The Magic Flute might perhaps seem arbitrary to one or another reader, both because it sees too much in Papageno and too little in the rest of the opera; he will, perhaps, not approve of our procedure. The reason for this is that he does not agree with us as to the point of departure for every consideration of Mozart's music. In our opinion, this is, of course, Don Juan, and it is also our conviction that it is in seeing various features of the other operas in relation to this one that one shows the highest devotion to Mozart, although I would not thereby deny the importance of making each individual opera the object of separate consideration.

Desire awakens, and as it always happens that one first realizes he has dreamed in the moment of awakening, so likewise here, the dream is over. This impulse with which desire awakens, this trembling, separates the desire and its object, affords desire an object. This is a dialectical qualification which must be kept sharply in mind—only when the object exists does the desire exist, only when the desire exists does the object exist; desire and its object are twins, neither of which is born a fraction of an instant before the other. But though they are thus born at exactly the same instant, and with no time interval between, as is the case with other twins, the import of their thus coming into existence is not that they are united but, on the contrary, that they are separated. But this movement of the sensuous, this earthquake, splits the desire and its object infinitely asunder for the moment; but as the moving principle appears a moment separating, so it again reveals itself as wishing to unite the separated. The result of this separation is that desire is pulled out of its substantial repose within it-
The characteristic of this, as of every stage, I can indeed represent to thought, but always only in the moment that it has ceased to be. For even if I could perfectly describe its characteristic and explain the reason for this, there would still always be something left behind, which I cannot express, and which yet would be heard. It is too immediate to be fixed in words. So here with Papageno, it is the same song, the same melody; as soon as he finishes, he begins anew from the beginning, and so continuously. Someone may now offer the objection that it is wholly impossible to express anything which is immediate. In a certain sense this is quite true, but the immediacy of the spirit has, in the first place, its immediate expression in language, and next, in so far as there occurs, through the intervention of language, a change therewith, it yet remains essentially the same, just because it is a qualification of the spirit. Here, however, it is the immediacy of the sensuous which, as such, has quite another medium, where consequently the disproportion between the media makes the impossibility absolute.

If I should now attempt by means of a single predicate to indicate the characteristics of the Mozart music in the part of this play in which we are interested, I should say: it is cheerfully chirping, vigorous, bubbling with love. What I would especially emphasize are the first aria and the chime of bells; the duet with Pamina and later with Papageno falls entirely outside the category of the immediate-musical. If, on the other hand, one considers the first aria, then one will approve of the predicate I have chosen; and if one pays closer attention, there will be an opportunity to see what significance the musical has, how it appears as the absolute expression of the idea, and how this, as a consequence, is the immediate-musical. As you know, Papageno accompanies his light-hearted cheerfulness on the flute. Every ear has certainly felt itself moved in a strange manner by this accompaniment. But the more one considers it, the more one sees in Papageno the mythical Papageno, all the more expressive and characteristic one will find it; one does not tire of hearing it again and again, because it is an absolutely adequate expression of Papageno's life, whose whole life is such an incessant twittering; who, always carefree, chirps on in all idleness, and who is happy and satisfied because this is his life-content, happy in his work and happy in his song. As you know, it is so very profoundly arranged in the opera, that the flutes of Tamino and Papageno harmonize with one another. And yet, what a difference! Tamino's flute, from which the opera takes its name, fails altogether in its effect. And why? Because Tamino is simply not a musical figure. This is due to the mistaken plan of the opera as a whole. Tamino becomes exceedingly tiresome and sentimental on his flute; and when one considers all the rest of his development, his state of consciousness, one cannot help but think, every time he takes up his flute and begins to play on it, of the farmer in Horace (rusticus espectat, dum defuit amnis), except that Horace did not give his farmer a flute for an unprofitable pastime. Tamino as a dramatic figure is entirely outside of the musical, just as the intellectual development the play would realize is, on the whole, a totally unmusical idea. Tamino has really come so far that the musical ceases; therefore his flute-playing is only a time-killer, brought in to drive away thought. Music can effectively banish thoughts, even evil thoughts, just as we say about David that his playing exercised Saul's evil spirit. On the other hand, there is a great delusion in this idea, for it is true only in so far as it carries consciousness back into immediacy, and lulls it therein. The individual may therefore feel happy in the moment of intoxication, but he only becomes the more unhappy. Quite in parenthesis I shall now permit myself an observation. We have used music to heal mental aberrations; we have also in a certain sense achieved our purpose, and yet it is an illusion. That is, when madness has a mental cause, it is always the result of the induration of one or another part of the brain. This induration must be overcome, but in order to overcome it, one must go quite the opposite way from that which leads to music. If one employs music, one uses entirely the wrong method, and makes the patient even more unbalanced, even if he seems to be better.

What I have said here about Tamino's flute-playing, I can readily let stand without fear of seeing it misunder-
stood. It is by no means my intention to deny what several times has been conceded, that music as an accomplishment can have its significance upon entering an alien sphere—that of language. The fault in *The Magic Flute* is, however, that the whole opera tends toward consciousness, and consequently its whole trend is to do away with music, while still remaining an opera; and not even this thought is brought out clearly in the play. Ethically determined love, or married love, is posited as the goal of the development, and therein lies the radical fault of the play: for let marriage be, ecclesiastically or secularly, what it will be; one thing it is not, it is not musical; indeed, it is absolutely unmusical.

The first aria considered musically has, consequently, great significance as the immediate-musical expression for Papageno's whole life, and to the degree that history can find its absolutely adequate expression in music, it is only history in a figurative sense. The chime of bells, on the other hand, is the musical expression for his activity, of which one can only get an understanding through music; it is charming, tempting, entrancing, alluring, like the playing of the man who caused the fish to pause and listen.22

The speeches, for which either Schikaneder or the Danish translator is responsible, are in general so crazy and stupid that it is almost inconceivable how Mozart has brought as much out of them as he has. To let Papageno say of himself, “I am a child of Nature,” and so that very moment make himself a liar, may be regarded as an example *instar omnium*. One might make an exception of the words of the text in the first aria, that he puts the maidens he catches in his cage. That is, if one will put a little more into this than the author himself has presumably done, then it will serve nicely to indicate the inoffensive character of Papageno's activity, as we have indicated it above.

We leave now the mythical Papageno. The fate of the actual Papageno need not concern us. We wish him happiness with his little Papagenas, and we willingly permit him to seek his happiness in populating a primitive forest or an entire continent with nothing but Papagenos.

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**IMMEDIATE STAGES OF THE EROTIC**

**THIRD STAGE**

This stage is represented by *Don Juan*. Here I am not under the necessity, as in the preceding, of having to pick out a single portion of an opera. Here it is not necessary to separate but to sum up, since the entire opera is essentially an expression of the idea, and with the exception of one or two numbers, is based essentially upon this idea, with dramatic necessity gravitating toward this as its center. Hence one will again have opportunity to see in what sense I may call the preceding stages by that name, when I call the third stage *Don Juan*. I earlier reminded you that they do not have any separate existence, and when one understands this third stage, which is really the whole stage, then one cannot so easily regard them as one-sided abstractions or provisional anticipations, but rather as presentiments of *Don Juan*, except that something always constantly remains behind, which more or less justifies me in using the term *stage*, in that they are one-sided presentiments, each of them suggesting only one phase.

The contradiction in the first stage lay in the fact that desire could acquire no object, but without having desired was in possession of its object, and therefore could not reach the point of desiring. In the second stage, the object appears in its manifold, but as desire seeks its object in this manifold, it still has, in a deeper sense, no object, it is not yet posited as desire. In *Don Juan*, on the other hand, desire is absolutely determined as desire; it is, in an intensive and extensive sense, the immediate synthesis of the two preceding stages. The first stage desired the one ideally, the second stage desired the particular under the qualification of the manifold: the third stage is a synthesis of these two. Desire has its absolute object in the particular, it desires the particular absolutely. Herein lies the seductiveness of which we shall later speak. Hence, desire in this stage is absolutely sound, victorious, triumphant, irresistible and daemonic. We must, therefore, naturally not overlook the fact that we are not here talking about desire in a particular individual, but about desire as principle, spiritually determined as that.
which the spirit excludes. This is the idea of sensuous genius, as we also indicated above. Don Juan is the expression for this idea, and the expression for Don Juan is again exclusively musical. It is particularly these two considerations which will be continually emphasized from different points of view in what follows, from which also the proof of this opera’s classic significance will be indirectly demonstrated. Meanwhile, to make it easier for the reader to maintain a general viewpoint, I shall attempt to collect the scattered considerations under particular headings.

It is not my intention to say something simple about this music, and I shall, with the assistance of all good spirits, especially guard against soaring together a multitude of insignificant but very noisy predicates. I likewise eschew the linguistic orgy, which would betray the impotence of language, and that so much the more, since I do not regard it as an imperfection in language but as a high power. But therefore I am the more willing to recognize music within its own limits. By contrast, what I wish to do is, in part, to illuminate the idea from as many sides as possible and its relation to language, thereby always circumscribing more and more closely the region where music has its home; I would, as it were, worry it into breaking forth, yet without my being able to say more of something that exists to be heard than: listen! I mean by this that I have tried to do the best of which aesthetics is capable; whether I shall succeed in doing so is another matter. Only in a single place will a predicate, like a warrant for arrest, furnish the description, without my forgetting, or allowing the reader to forget, that he who holds the warrant in his hand has by no means on that account apprehended the one it names. Further, the whole plan of the opera, its inner structure, will in its place become the subject for separate discussion, but once again in such wise that I do not undertake to shout loud enough for two: “O! bravo schwere Noth Cott’s Blitz bravissimo,” but only so that I persistently tempt the musical forth, and mean thereby to have wished to do the utmost that one in a purely aesthetic sense is capable of doing with the musical.

What I shall give, consequently, is not a running com-

mentary on the music, which essentially cannot contain other than subjective accidentals and idiosyncrasies, and can only appeal to something corresponding in the reader. Even so able a commentator as Dr. Hotho, so rich in reflection, so manifold in expression, has still not been able to avoid, on the one hand, his exposition’s degenerating into mere verbosity, which must form a counterbalance for Mozart’s harmony, or sound like a weak echo, a pale impression of Mozart’s full-toned, exuberant vigor; and, on the other hand, Don Juan’s becoming at times something more than he is in the opera, a reflective individual, and at times becoming less. This last is naturally due to the fact that the profound, absolute point of Don Juan has escaped Hotho; to him Don Juan is still only the best of operas but not qualitatively different from all other operas. But if one has not perceived this with the omnipresent certainty of the speculative eye, then one cannot worthily and correctly discuss Don Juan, even though, if one had perceived it, one might be able to speak more gloriously, more richly, and above all, more truthfully, than he who here ventures to be the spokesman.

On the other hand, I shall constantly ferret out the musical in the idea, the situation, and so on, distilling its very essence, and then when I have made the reader so musically receptive that he seems to hear the music, although he hears nothing, then I shall have completed my task, then I become mute, then I say to the reader as to myself: listen. You friendly genii, who protect all innocent love, to you I commit all endowments of my mind and soul; guard the questing thoughts that they may be found worthy of the subject; fashion my soul into a harmonious instrument, let the soft breezes of eloquence blow over it, send the refreshment and blessings of fruitful moods! You righteous spirits, who guard the boundaries in the realms of the beautiful, watch over me, that I do not in a moment of unclarified enthusiasm and a blind zeal to exalt Don Juan above all, do it wrong, disparage it, make it something other than what it is, which is the highest! You powerful spirits, you who know and understand the hearts of men, stand by me that I may catch the reader, not in the net of passion, nor
by the artfulness of eloquence, but by the eternal truth of conviction.

1. Sensuous Genius Qualified as Seduction

When the idea in Don Juan originated is not known; only so much is known, that it belongs to the Christian era, and through Christianity it also belongs to the Middle Ages. Even if one could not with some degree of certainty trace the idea back in the human consciousness to that period of the world's history, still a consideration of the inner nature of the idea would immediately remove every doubt. The Middle Ages are altogether impregnated with the idea of representation, partly conscious, partly unconscious; the total is represented in a single individual, yet in such a way that it is only a single aspect which is determined as totality, and which now appears in a single individual, who is because of this, both more and less than an individual. By the side of this individual there stands another individual who, likewise, totally represents another aspect of life's content, such as the knight and the scholastic, the ecclesiastic and the layman. The grand dialectic of life is here invariably illustrated by representative individuals; who, more often than not, stand in pairs over against each other; life constantly presents itself only sub una specie, and the great dialectic unity which in unity possesses life sub utraque specie is not suspected. The contrasts usually stand, therefore, indifferent, apart from one another. This the Middle Ages knew nothing about. Thus they themselves instinctively realize the representative idea, while only a later reflection sees the idea contained in it. If the Middle Ages posit for their own consciousness an individual as representative of the idea, then they usually posit at his side another individual in relation to him. This relationship is generally a comic one, where the one individual, as it were, compensates for the disproportionate greatness of the other in actual life. Thus the king has his fool by his side, Faust has his Wagner, Don Quixote Sancho Panza, Don Juan Leporello. This arrangement, too, belongs essentially to the Middle Ages. The idea belongs, accordingly, to the Middle Ages; in the Middle Ages, however, it is not the exclusive property of a single poet; it is one of those conceptions of primal power which spring forth spontaneously out of the popular world-consciousness. The conflict between flesh and spirit which Christianity brought into the world, the Middle Ages had to regard as a subject for its consideration, and to that end, they made the contending forces individually the subject of reflection. Don Juan is, then, if I dare say so, flesh incarnate, or the inspiration of the flesh by the spirit of the flesh. This has already been sufficiently stressed in the preceding: what I would here call attention to, however, is whether one ought to refer Don Juan to the earlier or later period of the Middle Ages. That he stands in an essential relation to this era is evident to everyone. Either he is, then, the rebellious, misunderstood anticipation of the erotic, which appeared in the days of knighthood, or chivalry is yet only in a relative opposition to the spiritual, and only when this contradiction became still sharper did Don Juan appear as the sensuous which opposes the spiritual to the death. The erotic in the age of chivalry had a certain resemblance to that of the Greeks. The latter, like the former, is psychically determined. But the difference is this, that this psychical determination lay within a general spiritual qualification or in a qualification as totality. The idea of the feminine is constantly in movement in many ways, which was not the case among the Greeks, where everyone was only the beautiful individuality, but the feminine was not anticipated. The erotic element of knighthood was present therefore in the consciousness of the Middle Ages in an attitude somewhat conciliatory toward the spiritual, even if the spiritual in its zealous austerity held it suspect.

If we now assume that the spiritual principle is posited in the world, we may either imagine that the most glaring contrasts come first, the most atrocious disjunctions, and that afterward they gradually become milder. Under such an assumption, Don Juan belongs to the earlier Middle Ages. If, on the contrary, we assume that the relationship gradually developed into this absolute contradiction, as is also more natural, the spiritual more and more withdrawing