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RICHARD WAGNER'S PROSE WORKS

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RICHARD WAGNER'S
PROSE WORKS

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM ASHTON ELLIS

EDITOR OF "THE MEISTER," ETC.

VOL. I.

THE ART-WORK OF THE FUTURE, &c.

SECOND EDITION

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“For the last fortnight, i.e. since I have settled down quietly in my new home, I have been seized with an ungovernable desire to undertake a fresh literary labour, ‘The Art-work of the Future’ . . .” (R. Wagner’s Letters to Uhlig; Zurich, October 26, 1849.) *“I thought you would like to look through my new work before it came with due ceremony before the world. . . . This will be my last literary work. If I have been understood, and if I have convinced others—even if few in number—others must and will fulfil that portion of the task which is the work of many, not of one.”* (Ibidem, Nov. 1849.) *“Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft”* was originally published by Wigand of Leipzig at the end of the year 1849.

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE.

I.

MAN AND ART, IN GENERAL.

I.

Nature, Man, and Art.



AS Man stands to Nature, so stands Art to Man.

When Nature had developed in herself those attributes which included the conditions for the existence of Man, then Man spontaneously evolved. In like manner, as soon as human

life had engendered from itself the conditions for the manifestation of Art-work, this too stepped self-begotten into life.

Nature engenders her myriad forms without caprice or arbitrary aim (*"absichtlich und unwillkürlich"*), according to her need (*"Bedürfniss"*), and therefore of Necessity (*"Nothwendigkeit"*). This same Necessity is the generative and formative force of human life. Only that which is un-capricious and un-arbitrary can spring from a real need; but on Need alone is based the very principle of Life.*

* The above sentences, whose peculiar epigrammatic force it is well-nigh impossible to convey in a translation, are of the highest significance as bearing upon the much debated question whether Wagner's philosophy was self-originated or derived from that of Schopenhauer. In our opinion, they and the following sections of this chapter give most positive answer in the former sense. Except that Wagner does not employ the term "Will," but rather "Necessity," the whole scheme is Schopenhauerian from beginning to end, and the gradual evolution of the "Will's" manifestation, from elementary force to Intellect and Spirit, might have been written by that greatest philosopher of the century. It is unnecessary to draw special attention to individual sentences; but an attentive perusal of this pregnant chapter cannot fail to bring home to those conversant with Schopenhauer's *"Wille und Vorstellung"* the remarkable fact that two cognate minds have developed an almost identical

Man only recognises Nature's *Necessity* by observing the harmonious connection of all her phenomena ; so long as he does not grasp the latter, she seems to him Caprice.

From the moment when Man perceived the difference between himself and Nature, and thus commenced his own development as *man*, by breaking loose from the unconsciousness of natural animal life and passing over into conscious life,—when he thus looked Nature in the face and from the first feelings of his dependence on her, thereby aroused, evolved the faculty of Thought,—from that moment did Error begin, as the earliest utterance of consciousness. But Error is the mother of Knowledge ; and the history of the birth of Knowledge out of Error is the history of the human race, from the myths of primal ages down to the present day.

Man erred, from the time when he set the cause of Nature's workings outside the bounds of Nature's self, and for the physical phenomena subsumed a super-physical, anthropomorphic, and arbitrary cause ; when he took the endless harmony of her unconscious, instinctive energy for the arbitrary demeanour of disconnected finite forces. Knowledge consists in the laying of this error, in fathoming the *Necessity* of phenomena whose underlying basis had appeared to us Caprice.

Through this knowledge does Nature grow conscious of herself ; and verily by Man himself, who only through discriminating between himself and Nature has attained that point where he can apprehend her, by making her his 'object.' But this distinction is merged once more, when Man recognises the essence of Nature as his very own, and perceives the same *Necessity* in all the elements and lives around him, and therefore in his own existence no less

system of philosophy. For it must not be forgotten that R. Wagner was at the period of writing this essay, and long after, completely ignorant—as indeed was almost the whole world—of even the existence of the sage of Frankfort (*vide* Wagner's letters to Liszt). Another curious reflection aroused by this chapter is, that it should have been written when the Darwinian theory of the influence of environment upon evolution was as yet unpublished, if even formed.—Tr.

than in Nature's being ; thus not only recognising the mutual bond of union between all natural phenomena, but also his own community with Nature.

If Nature then, by her solidarity with Man, attains *in* Man her consciousness, and if Man's life is the very activation of this consciousness—as it were, the portraiture in brief of Nature,—so does man's Life itself gain understanding by means of Science, which makes this human life in turn an object of experience. But the activation of the consciousness attained by Science, the portrayal of the Life that it has learnt to know, the impress of this life's Necessity and Truth, is—*Art*.*

Man will never be that which he can and should be, until his Life is a true mirror of Nature, a conscious following of the only real Necessity, the *inner natural necessity*, and is no longer held in subjugation to an *outer* artificial counterfeit,—which is thus no necessary, but an *arbitrary* power. Then first will Man become a living man ; whereas till now he carries on a mere existence, dictated by the maxims of this or that Religion, Nationality, or State. (In like manner will Art not be the thing she can and should be, until she is or can be the true, conscious image and exponent of the real Man, and of man's genuine, nature-bidden life ; until she therefore need no longer borrow the conditions of her being from the errors, perversities, and unnatural distortions of our modern life.)

The real Man will therefore never be forthcoming, until true Human Nature, and not the arbitrary statutes of the State, shall model and ordain his Life ; while real Art will never live, until its embodiments need be subject only to the laws of Nature, and not to the despotic whims of Mode. (For as Man only then becomes free, when he gains the glad consciousness of his oneness with Nature ; so does Art only then gain freedom, when she has no more to blush for her affinity with actual Life.) But only in the joyous conscious-

* I.e. Art in general, or the Art of the Future in particular.—R. WAGNER.—The word 'Science' (*Wissenschaft*), also, must be understood in the broad sense in which it is employed in the next section (2).—TR.

ness of his oneness with Nature does Man subdue his dependence on her; while Art can only overcome her dependence upon Life through her oneness with the life of free and genuine Men.

2.

Life, Science, and Art.

Whilst Man involuntarily moulds his Life according to the notions he has gathered from his arbitrary views of Nature, and embalms their intuitive expression in Religion: these notions become for him in Science the subject of conscious, intentional review and scrutiny.

The path of Science lies from error to knowledge, from fancy ("Vorstellung") to reality, from Religion to Nature. In the beginning of Science, therefore, Man stands toward Life in the same relation as he stood towards the phenomena of Nature when he first commenced to part his life from hers. Science takes over the arbitrary concepts of the human brain, in their totality; while, by her side, Life follows in its totality the instinctive evolution of Necessity. Science thus bears the burden of the sins of Life, and expiates them by her own self-abrogation; she ends in her direct antithesis, in the knowledge of Nature, in the recognition of the unconscious, instinctive, and therefore real, inevitable, and physical. The character of Science is therefore finite: that of Life, unending; just as Error is of time, but Truth eternal. But that alone is true and living which is sentient, and hearkens to the terms of physicality (*Sinnlichkeit*). Error's crowning folly is the arrogance of Science in renouncing and contemning the world of sense (*Sinnlichkeit*); whereas the highest victory of Science is her self-accomplished crushing of this arrogance, in the acknowledgment of the teaching of the senses.

The end of Science is the justifying of the Unconscious, the giving of self-consciousness to Life, the re-instatement of the Senses in their perceptive rights, the sinking of

Caprice in the world-Will ("Wollen") of Necessity. Science is therefore the vehicle of Knowledge, her procedure mediate, her goal an intermediation; but Life is the great Ultimate, a law unto itself. As Science melts away into the recognition of the ultimate and self-determinate reality, of actual Life itself: so does this avowal win its frankest, most direct expression in Art, or rather in the *Work of Art*.

True that the artist does not at first proceed directly; he certainly sets about his work in an arbitrary, selective, and mediating mood. But while he plays the go-between and picks and chooses, the product of his energy is not as yet the Work of Art; nay, his procedure is the rather that of Science, who seeks and probes, and therefore errs in her caprice. Only when his choice is made, when this choice was born from pure Necessity,—when thus the artist has found himself again in the subject of his choice, as perfected Man finds his true self in Nature,—then steps the Art-work into life, then first is it a real thing, a self-conditioned and immediate entity.

∨The actual Art-work, i.e. *its immediate physical portrayal, in the moment of its liveliest embodiment*, is therefore the only true redemption of the artist; the uprootal of the final trace of busy, purposed choice; the confident determination of what was hitherto a mere imagining; the enfranchisement of thought in sense; the assuagement of the life-need in Life itself.

The Art-work, thus conceived as an immediate vital act, is therewith the perfect reconciliation of Science with Life, the laurel-wreath which the vanquished, redeemed by her defeat, reaches in joyous homage to her acknowledged victor.

3.

The Folk and Art.

The redemption of Thought and Science and their transmutation into Art-work would be impossible, could Life

itself be made dependent upon scientific speculation. Could conscious autocratic Thought completely govern Life, could it usurp the vital impulse and divert it to some other purpose than the great Necessity of absolute life-needs : then were Life itself dethroned, and swallowed up in Science. And truly Science, in her overweening arrogance, has dreamed of such a triumph ; as witness our tight-reined State and modern Art, the sexless, barren children of this dream.

The great instinctive errors of the People—which found their earliest utterance in Religion, and then became the starting-points of arbitrary speculation and system-making, in Theology and Philosophy—have reared themselves, in these Sciences and their coadjutrix and adopted sister, Statecraft, to powers which make no less a claim than to govern and ordain the world and life by virtue of their innate and divine infallibility. Irrevocably, then, would Error reign in destructive triumph throughout eternity : did not the same life-force which blindly bore it, once more effectually annihilate it, by virtue of its innate, natural Necessity ; and that so decisively and palpably, that Intellect, with all its arrogant divorce from Life, can see at last no other refuge from actual insanity, than in the unconditional acknowledgment of this only definite and visible force. And this vital force is—The Folk (*das Volk*).—

Who is then the Folk ?—It is absolutely necessary that, before proceeding further, we should agree upon the answer to this weightiest of questions.

“The Folk,” was from of old the inclusive term for *all the units* which made up the total of a *commonality*. In the beginning, it was the family and the tribe ; next, the tribes united by like speech into a nation. Practically, by the Roman world-dominion which engulfed the nations, and theoretically, by the Christian religion which admitted of naught but men, *i.e.* no racial, but only *Christian* men—the idea of “the People” has so far broadened out, or even evaporated, that we may either include in it mankind in general, or, upon the arbitrary political hypothesis, a

certain, and generally the propertyless portion of the Commonwealth. But beyond a frivolous, this term has also acquired an ineradicable *moral* meaning; and on account of this it is, that in times of stir and trouble all men are eager to number themselves among the People; each one gives out that he is careful for the People's weal, and no one will permit himself to be excluded from it. Therefore in these latter days also has the question frequently been broached, in the most diverse of senses: Who then is the People? In the sum total of the body politic, can a separate party, a particular fraction of the said body claim this name for itself alone? Rather, are we not all alike "the People," from the beggar to the prince?

This question must therefore be answered according to the conclusive and world-historical sense that now lies at its root, as follows:—

The "Folk" is the epitome of all those men *who feel a common and collective Want* ("*gemeinschaftliche Noth*"). To it belong, then, all of those who recognise their individual want as a collective want, or find it based thereon; ergo, all those who can hope for the stilling of their want in nothing but the stilling of a common want, and therefore spend their whole life's strength upon the stilling of their thus acknowledged common want. For only that want which urges to the uttermost, is genuine Want; but this Want alone is the force of true Need ("*Bedürfniss*"); but a common and collective need is the only true Need; but only he who feels within him a true Need, has a right to its assuagement; but only the assuagement of a genuine Need is Necessity; and it is *the Folk alone that acts according to Necessity's behests*, and therefore irresistibly, victoriously, and right as none besides.

Who now are they who belong *not* to this People, and who are its sworn foes?

All those *who feel no Want*; whose life-spring therefore consists in a need which rises not to the potence of a Want, and thus is artificial, untrue, and egoistic; and not only is not embraced within a common Need, but as the empty need

of preserving superfluity—as which alone can one conceive of need without the force of want—is diametrically opposed to the collective Need.

Where there is no Want, there is no true Need; where no true Need, no necessary action. But where there is no *necessary* action, there reigns Caprice; and where Caprice is king, there blossoms every vice, and every criminal assault on Nature. For only by forcing back, by barring and refusing the assuagement of true Need, can the false and artificial need endeavour to assuage itself.

But the satisfaction of an artificial need is *Luxury*; which can only be bred and supported in opposition to, and at the cost of, the necessities of others.

Luxury is as heartless, inhuman, insatiable, and egoistic as the 'need' which called it forth, but which, with all its heaping-up and over-reaching, it never more can still. For this need itself is no natural and therefore satisfiable one; by very reason that, being false, it has no true, essential antithesis in which it may be spent, consumed, and satisfied. Actual physical hunger has its natural antithesis, satiety, in which—by feeding—it is spent: but unwanting need, the need that craves for luxury, is in itself already luxury and superfluity. The error of it, therefore, can never go over into truth; it racks, devours, torments and burns, without an instant's stilling; it leaves brain, heart and sense for ever vainly yearning, and swallows up all gladness, mirth, and joy of life. For sake of one sole, and yet unreachable moment of refreshment, it squanders the toil and life-sweat of a thousand needy wanters; it lives upon the unstilled hunger of a thousand thousand poor, though impotent to satiate its own for but the twinkling of an eye; it holds a whole world within the iron chains of despotism, without the power to momentarily break the golden chains of that arch-tyrant which it is unto itself.

And this fiend, this crack-brained need-without-a-need, this need of Need,—this *need of Luxury*, which is *Luxury itself* withal,—is sovereign of the world. It is the soul of that Industry which deadens men, to turn them to

machines ; the soul of our State which swears away men's honour, the better then to take them back as lieges of its grace ; the soul of our deistic Science, which hurls men down before an immaterial God, the product of the sum of intellectual luxury, for his consumption. It is—alas!—the soul, the stipulation, of our—*Art!*

Who then will bring to pass the rescue from this baleful state?—

Want,—which shall teach the world to recognise its own true need ; that need which by its very nature admits of satisfaction.

Want will cut short the hell of Luxury ; it will teach the tortured, Need-lacking spirits whom this hell embraces in its bounds the simple, homely need of sheer human, physical hunger and thirst ; but in fellowship will it point us to the health-giving bread, the clear sweet springs of Nature ; in fellowship shall we taste their genuine joys, and grow up in communion to veritable men. In common, too, shall we close the last link in the bond of holy Necessity ; and the brother-kiss that seals this bond, will be the *mutual Art-work of the Future*. But in this, also, our great redeemer and well-doer, Necessity's vicegerent in the flesh,—*the Folk*, will no longer be a severed and peculiar class ; for in this Art-work we shall all be *one*,—heralds and supporters of Necessity, knowers of the unconscious, willers of the unwillful, betokeners of Nature,—*blissful men*.

4.

The Folk as the Force conditioning the Art-work.

All that subsists, depends on the conditions by which it subsists ; nothing, either in Nature or Life, stands shut-off and alone. Everything is rooted in one unending and harmonious whole ; and therewith likewise the capricious, unnecessary, and harmful. The harmful practises its might in hindering the necessary ; nay, it owes its being and its

force to this hindrance and naught else ; and thus, in truth, it is nothing but the powerlessness of the necessary. Were this powerlessness to last forever, then must the natural ordering of the world be other than it really is ; Caprice would be Necessity, and the necessary would lack its need. But this weakness is but transient, and therefore only seeming ; for the force of Necessity shows its living rule even as the sole and ground condition of the continuance of the arbitrary. Thus the luxury of the rich is built upon the penury of the poor ; and it is the very want of the poorer classes that hurls unceasingly fresh fodder to the luxury of the rich ; while the poor man, from very need of food for his life-forces, thus offers up his own life-strength unto the rich.

Thus did the life-force, the life-need, of telluric Nature nurture once those baleful forces—or rather the potentiality of those alliances and offspring of the elements — which blocked her way in giving true and fitting utterance to the fulness of her vital energy. The reason hereof lay in the great abundance, the swelling overflow of generative force and life-stuff, the inexhaustible supply of matter.—The need of Nature was therefore utmost multiple variety, and she reached the satisfaction of this need herewith : that—so to say—she drew off all her life-force from Exclusiveness, from the monumental singleness that she herself had hitherto fed so full, and resolved it into Multiplicity.—The exclusive, sole, and egoistic, can only take and never give : it can only let itself be born, but cannot bear ; for bearing there is need of I and Thou, the passing over of Egoism into Communism. The richest procreative force lies therefore in the utmost multiplicity ; and when Earth-nature had emanated to the most manifold variety, she attained therewith the state of saturation, of self-contentment, of self-delight, which she manifests amid her present harmony. She works no longer by titanic, total transformations, for her period of revolutions is foreby ; she now is all that she can be, and thus that she ever could have been, and ever must become. She no longer has to lavish life-force on

barren impotence ; throughout her endless-stretching realm she has summoned multiformity, the Manly and the Womanly, the ever self-renewing and engendering, the ever self-completing and assuaging, into life,—and in this eternal harmony of parts, she has become forevermore her stable self.

It is in the reproduction of this great evolutionary process of Nature *in Man himself*, that the human race, from the time of its self-severance from Nature, is thus involved. The same necessity is the mainspring of the great revolution of mankind ; the same assuagement will bring this revolution to its close.

But that impelling force, the plain and innate force of Life which vindicates itself in life-needs, is unconscious and instinctive by its very nature ; and where it is this—in the Folk—it also is the only true, conclusive might. Great, then, is the error of our folk-instructors when they fancy that the Folk must *know* first what it wills—*i.e.* in *their eyes should will*—ere it be justified, or even able, to will at all. From this chief error all the wretched makeshifts, all the impotent devices, and all the shameful weakness of the latest world-commotions take their rise.

The truly known is nothing other than the actual physical phenomenon, become by thought the vivid presentation of an object. Thought is arbitrary so long as it cannot picture to itself the physical present and that which has passed away from sense, with the completest unconditional perception of their necessary coherence (“*Zusammenhang*”); for the consciousness of this conception (“*Vorstellung*”) is the essence of all reasonable Knowledge (“*vernünftiges Wissen*”). Therefore the more truthful is Knowledge, the more frankly must it recognise that its whole existence hangs upon its own coherence with that which has come to actual, finished, and fulfilled manifestation to the senses, and thus admit its own possibility of existence as *a priori* conditioned by actuality. But so soon as Thought abstracts from actuality, and would fain construct the concrete future, it can no longer bring forth *Knowledge* ; but utters

itself as *Fancy* (" *Wähnen* "), which forcibly dissevers itself from *the Unconscious*. Only when it can fathom physicality, and unflinchingly plunge its sympathetic gaze into the depths of an actual physical need, can it take its share in the energy of the Unconscious ; and only that which is brought to light of day by an instinctive, necessary *Need*, to wit the actual physical Deed, can again become the satisfying object of thought and knowledge. For the march of human evolution is the rational and natural progress from the unconscious to the conscious, from un-knowledge to knowledge, from need to satisfying ; and not from satisfaction back to need,—at least not to that selfsame need whose end lay in that satisfying.

Not ye wise men, therefore, are the true inventors, but the Folk ; for Want it was, that drove it to invention. All great inventions are the People's deed ; whereas the devisings of the intellect are but the exploitations, the derivatives, nay, the splinterings and disfigurements of the great inventions of the Folk. Not ye, invented *Speech*, but the Folk ; ye could but spoil its physical beauty, break its force, mislay its inner understanding, and painfully explore the loss. Not ye, were the inventors of *Religion*, but the Folk ; ye could but mutilate its inner meaning, turn the heaven that lay within it to a hell, and its out-breathing truth to lies. Not ye are the inventors of the *State* ; ye have but made from out the natural alliance of like-needing men a natureless and forced allegiance of unlike-needing ; from the beneficent defensive league of all a maleficent bulwark for the privileged few ; from the soft and yielding raiment upon man's blithely moving body a stiff, encumbering iron harness, the gaud of some historic armoury. It is not ye that give the Folk the wherewithal to live, but it gives you ; not ye who give the Folk to think, but it gives you. Therefore it is not ye that should presume to teach the Folk, but ye should take your lessons from it ; and thus it is to you that I address myself, *not to the Folk*,—for to *it* there are but scant words to say, and e'en the exhortation : "Do as thou must!" to it is quite super-

fluous, for of itself it does that which it must. But to you I turn,—in the same sense as the Folk, albeit of necessity in your own mode of utterance,—to you, ye prudent men and intellectual, to offer you, with all the People's open-heartedness, the redemption from your egoistic incantations in the limpid spring of Nature, in the loving arm-caresses of the Folk—there where I found it; where it became for me my art-instructor; where, after many a battle between the hope within and the blank despair without, I won a dauntless faith in the assurance of the Future.

The *Folk* will thus fulfil its mission of redemption, the while it satisfies itself and at like time rescues its own foes. Its procedure will be governed by the instinctive laws of Nature; with the Necessity of elemental forces, will it destroy the *bad coherence* that alone makes out the conditions of Un-nature's rule. So long as these conditions last, so long as they suck out their life-sap from the squandered powers of the People, so long as they—themselves unable to create—bootlessly consume the productive faculties of the Folk for their own egoistic maintenance,—so long too will all showing, doing, changing, bettering, and reforming,* be naught but wilful, aimless, and unfruitful. But the Folk has only to deny by deeds *that* thing which in very deed is *no-thing*—to wit, is needless, superfluous, and null; it requires thus to merely know what thing it wills *not*,—and this its own instinctive life-bent teaches it; it needs but to turn this *Willed-not* to a *Non-existing*, and by the force of its own Want to annihilate what is fit for nothing but annihilation; and then the *Some-thing* of the fathomed Future will stand before it of itself.

Are the conditions heaved away, which sanction Superfluity to feed upon the marrow of Necessity: then of themselves arise the conditions which call the necessary, the true, the imperishable, to life. Are the conditions heaved away, which permit the continuance of the need of Luxury: then

* For who can nurse less hopes of the success of his reforming efforts, than he who acts therein with greatest *honesty*?—R. WAGNER.

of themselves are given the conditions which allow the stilling of the *necessary* need of man in the teeming overflow of Nature and of his own productive human faculties, in unimaginably rich but ever fitting measure. And yet once more,—are the conditions of the tyranny of *Fashion* heaved away: then of themselves are the conditions of *True Art* at hand; and with one waive of the enchanter's wand, will holy, glorious Art, the daughter of the noblest Manhood, blossom in like fulness and perfection with Mother Nature, the conditions of whose now completed harmony of form have issued from the birth-pangs of the elements. Like to this blissful harmony of Nature, will she endure and ever show her fruitfulness, as the purest and most perfect satisfaction of the truest, noblest need of perfected mankind; *i.e.* of men who *are* all that which of their essence they *can* be, and therefore *should* and shall be.

5.

The Art-antagonistic shape of Present Life, under the sway of Abstract Thought and Fashion.

The first beginning and foundation of all that exists and all that is conceivable, is actual physical being. The inner recognition of his life-need as the *common* life-need of his *Species*, in contradistinction to Nature and all her countless living species that lie apart from Man,—is the beginning and foundation of man's Thinking. Thought is therefore the faculty possessed by Man, not merely to sense the actual and physical from its external aspect, but to distinguish all its parts according to their essence, and finally to grasp and picture to himself their intimate connection. The idea ("*Begriff*") of a thing is the image formed in Thought of its actual substance; the portrayal of the images of all discernible substances in one joint-image, in which the faculty of Thought presents to itself the picture of the essence of all realities in their connected sequence, is the work of the highest energy of the human soul,—the *Spirit*

(“*Geist*”). If in this joint-image man must necessarily have included the image, the idea, of his own being also,—nay, if this his own prefigured being must be, before all else, the artistic force that pictures forth the whole conceptual art-work: then does this force, with all its joint portrayal of each reality, proceed alone from the real, physical man; and thus, at bottom, from his life-need, and finally from that which summoned forth this life-need, the physical reality of Nature. But where Thought casts aside this linking cable; where, after doubled and again redoubled presentment of itself, it fain would look upon itself as its original cause; where Mind (“*Geist*”) instead of as the last and most conditioned, would conceive itself as the first and least conditioned energy (“*Thätigkeit*”), and therefore as the ground and cause of Nature,—there also is the fly-wheel of Necessity upheaved, and blind Caprice runs headlong—free, boundless, and unfettered, as our metaphysicians fancy—through the workshops of the brain, and hurls herself, a raging stream of madness, upon the world of actuality.

If Mind has manufactured Nature, if Thought has made the Actual, if the Philosopher comes before the Man: then Nature, Actuality and Man are no more necessary, and their existence is not only superfluous but even harmful; for the greatest superfluity of all is the lagging of the Incomplete *when once the Complete has come to being*. In this wise Nature, Actuality and Man would only then have any meaning, or any pretext for their presence, when Mind—the unconditioned Spirit, the only cause and reason, and thus the only law unto itself—employed them for its absolute and sovereign pleasure. If Mind is *in itself* Necessity, then Life is mere caprice, a fantastic masquerade, an idle pastime, a frivolous whim, a “*car tel est notre plaisir*” of the mind; then is all purely human virtue, and Love before all else, a thing to be approved or disallowed according to occasion; then is all purely human Need a luxury, and Luxury the only current need; then is the wealth of Nature a thing to be dispensed with, and the parasitic growth of Culture the only indispensable; then is the happiness of man a secondary matter, and the abstract State the main

consideration ; the Folk the accidental stuff, and the prince and savant the necessary consumers of this stuff.

If we take the end for the beginning, the assuagement for the need, satiety for hunger ; then is all movement, all advance, not even conceivable except in line with a concocted need, a hunger brought about by stimulation ; and this, in very truth, is the lifespring of our whole Culture of to-day, and its utterance is—*Fashion*.

Fashion is the artificial stimulus that rouses an unnatural need where the natural is not to hand ; but whatsoever does not originate in a real need, is arbitrary, uncalled-for, and tyrannical. *Fashion* is therefore the maddest, most unheard-of tyranny that has ever issued from man's perversity ; it demands from Nature an absolute obedience ; it dictates to real need a thorough self-disownment in favour of an artificial ; it compels man's natural sense of beauty to worship at the shrine of what is hateful ; it kills his health, to bring him to delight in sickness ; it breaks his strength and all his force, to let him find content in weakness. Where the absurdest *Fashion* reigns, there must Nature be regarded as the height of absurdity ; where the most criminal un-Nature reigns, there must the utterance of Nature appear the fellest crime ; where craziness usurps the place of truth, there must Truth herself be prisoned under lock and bar, as crazy.

The soul of *Fashion* is the most absolute uniformity, and its god an egoistic, sexless, barren god. Its motive force is therefore arbitrary alteration, unnecessary change, confused and restless striving after the opposite of its essential uniformity. Its might is the might of habit. But *Habit* is the invincible despot that rules all weaklings, cowards, and those bereft of veritable need. *Habit* is the communism of egoism, the tough, unyielding swathe of mutual, free-from-want self-interest ; its artificial life-pulse is even that of *Fashion*.

Fashion is therefore no artistic begetting from herself, but a mere artificial deriving from her opposite, Nature ; from whom alone she must at bottom draw her nourish-

ment, just as the luxury of the upper classes feeds only on the straining of the lower, labouring classes towards assuagement of their natural life-needs. The caprice of Fashion, therefore, can only draw upon the stores of actual Nature ; all her reshapings, flourishes, and gewgaws have at the last their archetype in Nature. Like all our abstract thinking, in its farthest aberrations, she finally can think out and invent naught else than what already is at hand in Nature and in Man, in substance and in form. But her procedure is an arrogant one, capriciously cut loose from Nature ; she orders and commands, where everything in truth is bound to hearken and obey. Thus with all her figurings she can but disfigure Nature, and not portray her ; she can but *derive*, and not *invent* ; for invention, in effect, is naught but *finding out*, the finding and discerning of Nature.

Fashion's invention is therefore mechanical. But the mechanical is herein distinguished from the artistic : that it fares from derivative to derivative, from means to means, to finally bring forth but one more mean, the *Machine*. Whereas the artistic strikes the very opposite path : throws means on means behind it, pierces through derivative after derivative, to arrive at last at the source of every derivation, of every mean, in *Nature's* self, and there to slake its need in understanding.

Thus the *Machine* is the cold and heartless ally of luxury-craving men. Through the machine have they at last made even human reason their liege subject ; for, led astray from Art's discovery, dishonoured and disowned, it consumes itself at last in mechanical refinements, in absorption into the Machine, instead of in absorption into Nature in the Art-work.

The need of *Fashion* is thus the diametrical antithesis of the need of *Art* ; for the artistic need cannot possibly be present where Fashion is the lawgiver of Life. In truth, the endeavour of many an enthusiastic artist of our times could only be directed to rousing first that necessary Need, from the standpoint and by the means of Art ; yet we

must look on all such efforts as vain and fruitless. The one impossibility for Mind is, to awaken a real need:—to answer to an actual present need, man always has the speedy means to hand, but never to evoke it where Nature has withheld it, where its conditionments are not contained in her economy. But if the craving for art-work does not exist, then art-work is itself impossible and only the Future can call it forth for us, and that by the natural begetting of its conditionments from out of Life.

Only from *Life*, from which alone can even the need for her grow up, can Art obtain her *matter* and her *form*; but where Life is modelled upon Fashion, Art can never fashion aught from Life. Straying far away from the necessity of Nature, Mind wilfully—and even in the so-called 'common' life, involuntarily—exercises its disfiguring influence upon the matter and the form of Life; in such a manner that Mind, at last unhappy in its separation, and longing for its healthy sustenance by Nature and its complete re-union with her, can no more find the matter and the form for its assuagement in actual present life. If, in its striving for redemption, it yearns for unreserved acknowledgment of Nature, and if it can only reconcile itself with her in her faithfulest portrayal, in the physical actuality of the Art-work: yet it sees that this reconciliation can nevermore be gained by acknowledgment and portrayal of its actual surroundings, of this Fashion-governed parody of life. (Involuntarily, therefore, must it pursue an arbitrary course in its struggle for redemption by Art; it must seek for Nature—which in sound and wholesome life would rush to meet it—amid times and places where it can recognise her in less, and finally in least, distortion. Yet everywhere and everywhen has natural man thrown on the garment, if not of Fashion, still of *Custom* ("Sitte") The simplest and most natural, the fairest and the noblest Custom is certainly the least disfigurement of Nature,—nay, her most fitting human garb. But the copying and reproduction of this Custom,—without which the modern artist can never manage to effect his portraiture of Nature,

—is still, in face of modern Life, an irreclaimably arbitrary and purpose-governed dealing; and whatsoever has been thus formed and fashioned by even the honestest striving after Nature, appears, so soon as e'er it steps before our present public life, either a thing incomprehensible, or else another freshly fangled Fashion.

In truth we have nothing for which to thank this mode of striving after nature, within the bounds of modern life and yet in contrast to it, but *Mannerism* and its ceaseless, restless change. The character of Fashion has once more unwittingly betrayed itself in Mannerism; without a shred of consequent coherence with actual life, it trips up to Art with just the same despotic orders as Fashion wields on Life; it bands itself with Fashion, and rules with equal might each separate branch of art. Beneath its serious mien it shows itself—almost as inevitably as does its colleague—in utmost ridicule. Not only the Antique, the Renaissance and Middle Ages, but the customs and the garb of savage races in new-discovered lands, the primal fashions of Japan and China, from time to time usurp as “Mannerisms,” in greater or in less degree, each several department of our modern art. Nay, with no other effect than that of an insufficient stimulus, our lightly veering ‘manner of the day’ sets before the least religiously disposed and most genteel of theatre-goers the fanaticism of religious sects; * before the luxurious un-nature of our fashionable world the naïvety of Swabian peasants; before the pampered gods of commerce the want of the hungry rabble.

Here, then, does the artist whose spirit strives to be re-knit with Nature see all his hopes thrust forward to the Future, or else his soul thrust back upon the mournful exercise of resignation. (He recognises that his thought can only gain redemption in a physically present art-work, thus only in a truly art-demanding, *i.e.* an art-conditioning Present that shall bring forth Art from its own native truth and beauty; he therefore sets his hopes upon the Future,

* The slap at Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, *Prophète*, etc, is obvious.—Tr.

his trust upon the power of Necessity, for which this Work of the Future is reserved. But in face of the actual Present, he renounces all appearing of the Art-work upon the surface of this present, *i.e.* in public show; and consequently he quits publicity itself, so far as it is ruled by fashion. (The great United Art-work, which must gather up each branch of art to use it as a mean, and in some sense to undo it for the common aim of *all*, for the unconditioned, absolute portrayal of perfected human nature,—this great United Art-work he cannot picture as depending on the arbitrary purpose of some human unit, but can only conceive it as the instinctive and associate product of the Manhood of the Future. The instinct that recognises itself as one that can only be satisfied in fellowship, abandons modern fellowship—that conglomerate of self-seeking caprice—and turns to find its satisfaction in solitary fellowship with itself and with the manhood of the Future,—so well as the lonely unit can.

6.

Standard for the Art-work of the Future.

It is not the lonely spirit, striving by Art for redemption into Nature, that can frame the Art-work of the Future; only the spirit of Fellowship, fulfilled by Life, can bring this work to pass.) But yet the lonely one can prefigure it to himself; and the thing that saves his preconception from becoming a mere idle fancy, is the very character of his striving,—his striving after *Nature*. The mind that casts back longing eyes to Nature, and therefore goes a-hungering in the modern Present, sees not alone in Nature's great sum-total, but also in the *human nature* that history lays before it, the types by whose observing it may reconcile itself with life in general. It recognises in this nature a type for all the Future, already shown in narrower bounds; to widen out these bounds to broadest compass, rests on the imaginative faculty of its nature-craving instinct.

Two *cardinal moments* of his development lie clear before us in the history of Man: the *generic national*, and the *un-national universal*. If we still look forward to the Future for the completion of the second evolutionary step, yet in the Past we have the rounded-off conclusion of the first set clear as day before our eyes. To what a pitch man once—so far as, governed by generic ancestry, by community of mother-tongue, by similarity of climate, and the natural surroundings of a common fatherland, he yielded himself unconsciously to the influence of Nature—to what a pitch man once was able to unfold himself beneath these welnigh directly moulding influences, we have certainly full reason to acknowledge with most heartfelt thanks. It is in the natural customs of all peoples, so far as they embrace the normal man, and even of those decried as most uncultured, that we first learn the truth of human nature in its full nobility, and in its real beauty. Not *one* true virtue has any Religion soever taken into itself as its god's command, but it was already self-included in these natural customs; not *one* genuine idea of human right has the later civilised State developed—though, alas, to the point of complete distortion!—but it already found its sure expression in them; not *one* veritable discovery for the common weal has later Culture made her own—with arrogant ingratitude!—but she derived it from the fruits of the homely understanding of the stewards of those customs.

But that *Art* is not an *artificial* product,—that the need of Art is not an arbitrary issue, but an inbred craving of the natural, genuine, and uncorrupted man,—who proves this in more striking manner than just these Peoples? Nay, whence shall our uneasy “spirit” derive its proofs of Art's necessity, if not from the testimony of this artistic instinct and its glorious fruits afforded by these nature-fostered peoples, by the great *Folk* itself? Before what phenomenon do we stand with more humiliating sense of the impotence of our frivolous culture, than before the art of the *Hellenes*? To this, to the art of the darlings of all-loving Nature, of those fairest children whom the great

glad Mother holds up to us before the darksome cloud of modern modish culture, as the triumphant tokens of what she can bring forth,—let us look far hence to glorious Grecian Art, and gather from its inner understanding the outlines for the Art-work of the Future! Nature has done all that she could do,—she has given birth to the Hellenic people, has fed it at her breast and formed it by her mother-wisdom; she sets it now before our gaze with all a mother's pride, and cries to wide mankind with mother-love: "This have I done for you; now, of your love for one another, do ye that which ye can!"

Thus have we then to turn *Hellenic* art to *Human* art; to loose from it the stipulations by which it was but an *Hellenic* and not a *Universal* art. The *garment of Religion*, in which alone it was the common Art of Greece, and after whose removal it could only, as an egoistic, isolated art-species, fulfil the needs of Luxury—however fair—but no longer those of Fellowship,—this specific garb of the *Hellenic Religion*, we have to stretch it out until its folds embrace the Religion of the Future, the Religion of *Universal Manhood*, and thus to gain already a presage of the Art-work of the Future. But this bond of union, this *Religion of the Future*, we wretched ones shall never clasp the while we still are *lonely units*, howe'er so many be our numbers who feel the spur towards the Art-work of the Future. The Art-work is the living presentation of Religion;—but religions spring not from the artist's brain; their only origin is from the *Folk*.—

Let us then—without a spark of egoistic vanity, without attempting to console ourselves with any kind of self-derived illusion, but honestly and lovingly and hopefully devoted to the Art-work of the Future—content ourselves to-day by testing first the nature of the art-species which, in their shattered segregation, make up the general substance of our modern art; let us sharpen our gaze for this examination by glancing at Hellenic art; and thereafter let us draw a bold and confident conclusion anent the *great and universal Art-work of the Future!*

II.

ARTISTIC MAN, AND ART AS DERIVED DIRECTLY FROM HIM.

I.

Man as his own Artistic Subject and Material.



MAN'S nature is twofold, an *outer* and an *inner*. The senses to which he offers himself as a subject for Art, are those of *Vision* and of *Hearing*: to the eye appeals the outer man, the inner to the ear.

The eye apprehends the *bodily form of man*, compares it with surrounding objects, and discriminates between it and them. The corporeal man and the spontaneous expression of his sensations of physical anguish or physical well-being, called up by outward contact, appeal directly to the eye; while indirectly he imparts to it, by means of facial play and gesture, those emotions of the inner man which are not directly cognisable by the eye. Again, through the expression of the eye itself, which directly meets the eye of the beholder, man is able to impart to the latter not only the feelings of the heart, but even the characteristic activity of the brain; and the more distinctly can the outer man express the inner, the higher does he show his rank as an artistic being.

But the inner man can only find *direct* communication through the ear, and that by means of *his voice's Tone*. Tone is the immediate utterance of feeling and has its physical seat within the heart, whence start and whither flow the waves of life-blood. Through the sense of hearing, tone urges forth from the feeling of one heart to the feeling of its fellow: the grief and joy of the emotional-man impart

themselves directly to his counterpart through the manifold expression of vocal tone; and where the outer corporeal-man finds his limits of expressing to the eye the qualities of those inner feelings of the heart he fain would utter and convey, there steps in to his aid the sought-for envoy, and takes his message through the voice to hearing, through hearing to the feelings of the heart.

Yet where, again, the direct expression of vocal tone finds its limits of conveying the separate feelings of the heart in clear and sharply outlined definition to the sympathies of the recipient inner man, there enters on the scene, through the vehicle of vocal tone, the determinative utterance of *Speech*. *Speech* is the condensation* of the element of Voice, and the Word is the crystallised measure of Tone. In *Speech*, feeling conveys itself by ear to feeling, but to that likewise to be condensed and crystallised feeling to which it seeks to bring itself in sure and unmistakable understanding. It is thus the organ of that special feeling which reasons with itself and yearns for others' understanding,—the Intellect.—For the more vague and general feeling the immediate attributes of Tone sufficed. This general feeling therefore abode by Tone, as its adequate and materially contenting utterance; in the *quantitative* value of its compass it found the means of, so to say, accenting its own peculiar *qualities* in their universal bearings. But the *definite* need which seeks by *Speech* to gain an understanding is more decided and more pressing; it abides not in contentment with its physical expression, for it has to differentiate its own subjective feeling from a general feeling, and therefore to depict and to describe what Tone gave forth directly as the expression of this general feeling. The speaker has therefore to take his images from correlative but diverse objects, and to weld them with each other. In this mediate and complex

* "*Verdichtete*" = "condensed"; but the mere English equivalent will not convey the hidden allusion—worked out later on—to "*Dichtkunst*" (Poetry), which is thus shown to be the condensation into spoken words of the nebulous ideas of fancy.—TR.

process he has to take a wider field; and, under pressure of his quest for comprehension, he accelerates this process by the utmost brevity of his lingering over Tone, and by complete abandonment of its general powers of expression. Through this enforced renunciation, through this giving up of all delight in the physical element of his own utterance—at least of that degree of pleasure which the corporeal and the emotional-man experience in their method of expression,—the intellectual-man attains the faculty of giving by means of his speech-organ that certain utterance in seeking which the former found their bounds, each in his own degree. His capability is unlimited: he collects and sifts the universal, parts and unites according to his need and pleasure the images which all his senses bear him from the outer world; he binds and looses the particular and general even as he judges best, in order to appease his own desire for a sure and intelligible utterance of his feelings, his reflections, or his will. Yet he finds once more his limit where, in the agitation of his feelings, in the living pulse of joy or the violence of grief,—there, where the particular and arbitrary draw back before the generality and spontaneity of the feeling that usurps his heart; where from out the egoism of his narrowed and conditioned personal sensations he finds himself again amid the wide communion of all-embracing world-emotions, a partaker in the unconditioned truth of universal feeling and emotion; where, finally, he has to subordinate his individual selfwill to the dictates of Necessity, be it of grief or joy, and to hearken in place of commanding,—he craves for the only adequate and direct expression of his endlessly enhanced emotion. Here must he reach back once more to the universal mode of utterance; and, in exact proportion as he has pressed forward to his special standpoint, has he now to retrace his steps and borrow from the emotional man the physical tones of feeling, from the corporeal man the physical gestures of the body. For where it is a question of giving utterance, immediate and yet most certain, to the highest and the truest that man can ever utter, there above all

must man display himself in his entirety; and this whole man is the man of understanding united with the man of heart and man of body,—but neither of these parts for self alone.—

The progress of the man of understanding, from the bodily man and through the man of feeling, is that of an ever increasing accommodation, just as his organ of expression, Speech, is the most mediate and dependent; for all the attributes that lie beneath him must be normally developed, before the conditions of *his* normal attributes can be at hand. But the most conditioned faculty is at like time the most exalted; and the joy in his own self, engendered by the knowledge of his higher, unsurpassable attributes, betrays the intellectual-man into the arrogant imagining that he may use those attributes which are really his foundation-props as the handmaids of his own caprice. The sovereign might of physical sensation and heart-emotion, however, breaks down his pride of intellect, as soon as these proclaim their sway as one which all men must obey in common, as that of feelings and emotions of the race. The isolated feeling, the separate emotion, which show themselves in the individual, aroused by this or that particular and personal contact with this or that particular phenomenon, he is able to suppress or subjugate in favour of a richer combination of manifold phenomena conceived by him; but the richest combination of all the phenomena that he can cognise leads him at last to *Man as a species and an integral factor in the totality of Nature*; and, in presence of this great, all-mastering phenomenon, his pride breaks down. He now can only will the universal, true, and unconditional; he yields himself, not to a love for this or that particular object, but to wide *Love* itself. Thus does the egoist become a communist, the unit all, the man God, the art-variety Art.

2.

The Three Varieties of Humanistic Art, in their original Union.*

The three chief artistic faculties of the entire man have once, and of their own spontaneous impulse, evolved to a trinitarian utterance of human Art; and this was in the primal, earliest manifested art-work, the *Lyric*, and its later, more conscious, loftiest completion, the *Drama*.

The arts of *Dance*,† of *Tone*, and *Poetry*: thus call themselves the three primeval sisters whom we see at once entwine their measures wherever the conditions necessary for artistic manifestation have arisen. By their nature they are inseparable without disbanding the stately minuet of Art; for in this dance, which is the very cadence of Art itself, they are so wondrously closely interlaced with one another, of fairest love and inclination, so mutually bound up in each other's life, of body and of spirit: that each of the three partners, unlinked from the united chain and bereft thus of her own life and motion, can only carry on an artificially inbreathed and borrowed life;—not giving forth her sacred ordinances, as in their trinity, but now receiving despotic rules for mechanical movement.

As we gaze on this entrancing measure of the truest and most high-born Muses of artistic man, we see the three first stepping forward, each with her loving arm entwined around her sister's neck; then, now this one and now that, as though to show the others her beauteous form in full and individual symmetry, loosing herself from their embrace, and merely brushing with her utmost finger-tips the others' hands. Again the one, rapt by the spectacle of the twin-beauty of her close-locked sisters, bending herself before them; next the two, transported by her unique charm,

* "*Reinmenschliche*," lit. "purely human."—Tr.

† It must be distinctly understood that by "Dance" Wagner does not refer to the Ballet, or anything approaching it; it is the grace of gesture and of motion which he sums up in this terse and comprehensive term.—Tr.

greeting the one with tender homage ; until at last, all three, tight-clasped, breast on breast, and limb to limb, melt with the fervour of love-kisses into one only, living shape of beauty.—Such is the love and life, the wooing and the winning of Art ; its separate units, ever themselves and ever for each other, severing in richest contrast and re-uniting in most blissful harmony.

This is Art the free. The sweet and forceful impulse in that dance of sisters, is the *impulse of Freedom* ; the love-kiss of their enlocked embraces, the *transport of a freedom won*.

The solitary unit is unfree, because confined and fettered in un-Love ; the *associate is free*, because unfettered and unconfined through Love.—

In every creature that exists the mightiest impulse is that of its *Life* ; this is the resistless force of the correlation of those conditions which have first called into being that which here exists,—thus, of those things or life-forces which, in that which has arisen through them, are *that* which they will to be—and, willing, can be—in this their point of common union. Man appeases his Life-need by *taking* from Nature : this is no theft, but a receiving, an adoptment, an absorption of that which, as a condition of man's life, wills to be adopted into and absorbed in him. For these conditions of man's Life, *themselves* his Life-needs, are not forsooth upheaved by birth,—rather do they endure and feed themselves within him and by him so long as e'er he lives ; and the dissolution of their bond, itself is—Death.

But the Life-need of man's life-needs is the *need of Love*. As the conditions of natural human life are contained in the love-bond of subordinated nature-forces, which craved for their agreement, their redemption, their adoption into the higher principle, Man ; so does man find his agreement, his redemption, his appeasement, likewise in something higher ; and this higher thing is the *human race, the fellowship of man*, for there is but one thing higher than *man's* self, and that is—*Men*. But man can only gain the stilling

of his life-need through *Giving*, through *Giving of himself* to other men, and in its highest climax, to *all the world of human beings*. The monstrous sin of the absolute egoist is that he sees in (fellow) Men also nothing but the natural conditionments of his own existence, and—albeit in a quite particular, barbaric-cultivated manner—*consumes* them like the fruits and beasts of nature; thus will not *give*, but only *take*.

Now as Man is not free except through Love, neither is anything that proceeds, or is derived, from him. Freedom is the satisfaction of an imperative Need, and the highest freedom is the satisfaction of the highest need: but the highest human need is *Love*.

No living thing can issue from the true and undistorted nature of mankind or be derived from it, unless it fully answers to the characteristic essence of that nature: but the most characteristic token of this essence is the need of Love.

Each separate faculty of man is limited by bounds; but his united, agreed, and reciprocally helping faculties—and thus his faculties in *mutual love* of one another—combine to form the self-completing, unbounded, universal faculty of men. Thus too has every *artistic* faculty of man its natural bounds, since man has not *one only Sense* but separate *Senses*; while every faculty springs from its special sense, and therefore each single faculty must find its bounds in the confines of its correlated sense. But the boundaries of the separate senses are also their joint meeting-points, those points at which they melt in one another and each agrees with each: and exactly so do the faculties that are derived from them touch one another and agree. Their confines, therefore, are removed by this agreement; but only those that love each other can agree, and 'to love' means: to acknowledge the other, and at like time to know one's self. Thus Knowledge through Love is Freedom; and the freedom of man's faculties is—*All-faculty*.

Only the Art which answers to this 'all-faculty' of man is, therefore, *free*; and not the *Art-variety*, which only

issues from a single human faculty. The Arts of Dance, of Tone, of Poetry, are each confined within their several bounds; in contact with these bounds each feels herself unfree, be it not that, across their common boundary, she reaches out her hand to her neighbouring art in unrestrained acknowledgment of love. The very grasping of this hand lifts her above the barrier; her full embrace, her full absorption in her sister—*i.e.* her own complete ascension beyond the set-up barrier—casts down the fence itself. And when every barrier has thus fallen, then are there no more *arts* and no more boundaries, but only *Art*, the universal, undivided.

It is a sorry misconception of Freedom—that of the being who would fain be free in loneliness. The impulse to loose one's self from commonalty, to be free and independent for individual self alone, can only lead to the direct antithesis of the state so arbitrarily striven after: namely to utmost lack of self-dependence.—Nothing in Nature is self-dependent excepting that which has the conditionments of its self-standing not merely in itself, but also outside of itself: for the inner are first possible by virtue of the outer. That which would separate* itself must, necessarily, first have that from which to separate. He who would fain be nothing but himself, must first know what he is; but this he only learns by distinguishing from what he is not: were he able to lop off entirely that which differs from him, then were he himself no differentiated entity, and thus no longer cognisable by himself. In order to will to be the whole thing which of and in himself he is, the individual must learn to be absolutely not the thing he is not; but the thing that is absolutely what *he* is not, is that thing which lies apart from him; and only in the fullest of communion

* The verb "*unterscheiden*" is here used in so many different shades of its meaning that it is impossible to do justice in a translation to the philosophical play of words. Literally it means: "to cleave asunder," and hence, "to separate, to distinguish, to discern, to discriminate, to differentiate." There being no one English word that will embrace the varying sense in which the term is here employed, I have been forced to replace it by varying expressions.

with that which is apart from him, in the completest absorption into the commonalty of those who differ from him, can he ever be completely *what* he is by nature, what he must be, and as a reasonable being, can but will to be. Thus only in Communism does Egoism find its perfect satisfaction.

That Egoism, however, which has brought such immeasurable woe into the world and so lamentable a mutilation and insincerity into Art, is of another breed to the natural and rational egoism which finds its perfect satisfaction in the community of all. In pious indignation it wards off the name of "Egoism" from it, and dubs itself "Brotherly-" and "Christian-" "Art-" and "Artist-Love"; founds temples to God and Art; builds hospitals, to make ailing old-age young and sound,—and schools to make youth old and ailing; establishes "faculties," courts of justice, governments, states, and what not else?—merely to prove that it is not Egoism. And this is just the most irredeemable feature of it, and that which makes it utterly pernicious both to itself and to the general commonalty. This is the isolation of the single, in which each severed nullity shall rank as somewhat, but the great commonalty as naught; in which each unit struts as something special and "original," while the whole, forsooth, can then be nothing in particular and for ever a mere imitation. This is the self-dependence of the individual, where every unit lives upon the charges of his fellows, in order to be "free by help of God;" pretends to be what others *are*; and, briefly, follows the inversion of the teaching of Jesus Christ: "To *take* is more blessed than to give."

This is the genuine Egoism, in which each *isolated art-variety* would give itself the airs of universal Art; while, in truth, it only thereby loses its own peculiar attributes. Let us pry a little closer into what, under such conditions, has befallen those three most sweet Hellenic sisters!—

3.

The Art of Dance.

The most realistic of all arts is that of Dance. Its artistic 'stuff' is the actual living Man; and in troth no single portion of him, but the whole man from heel to crown, such as he shows himself unto the eye. It therefore includes within itself the conditions for the enunciation of all remaining arts: the singing and speaking man must necessarily be a bodily man; through his outer form, through the posture of his limbs, the inner, singing and speaking man comes forth to view. The arts of Tone and Poetry become first understandable in that of Dance, the Mimetic art, by the entire art-receptive man, *i.e.* by him who not only hears, but also sees.

The Art-work cannot gain its freedom until it proclaims itself directly to the answering sense, until in addressing this sense the artist is conscious of the certain understanding of his message. The highest subject for Art's message is Man himself; and, for his own complete and conscious calming, man can at bottom only parley through his bodily form with the corresponding sense, the eye. Without addressing the eye, all art remains unsatisfying, and thus itself unsatisfied, unfree. Be its utterance to the Ear, or merely to the combining and mediately compensating faculty of Thought, as perfect as it may—until it makes intelligible appeal likewise unto the Eye, it remains a thing that merely *wills*, yet never completely *can*; but Art must '*can*,'* and from "*können*" it is that Art in our tongue has fittingly gotten itself its name "*Die Kunst*."—

The corporeal-man proclaims his sensations of weal and woe directly in and by those members of his body which feel the hurt or pleasure; his whole body's sense of weal or woe he expresses by means of correlated and complement-

* Compare Carlyle *On Heroes*:—"King, *Könning*, which means *Can*-ning, Able-man. . . . Find me the true *Könning*, King, or Able-man, and he *has* a divine right over me."—TR.

ary movements of all, or of the most expression-able of these members. From their relation with each other, then from the play of complementary and accenting motions, and finally from the manifold interchange of these motions—as they are dictated by the progressive change of feelings passing, now by slow degrees and now in violent haste, from soft repose to passionate turmoil—from these arise the very laws of endless-changing motion by the which man rules his artistic presentation of himself. The savage, governed by the rawest passions, knows in his dance almost no other change than that from monotonous tumult to monotonous and apathetic rest. In the wealth and multiform variety of his transitions speaks out the nobler, civilised man; the richer and more manifold are these transitions, the more composed and stable is the ordering of their mutual interchange. But the law of this ordering is *Rhythm*.

Rhythm is in no wise an arbitrary canon, according to which the artistic-man forsooth *shall* move his body's limbs; but it is the conscious soul of those necessitated (?—"reflex."—TR.) movements by which he strives instinctively to impart to others his own emotions. If the motion and the gestures are themselves the feeling *Tone* of his emotion, then is their Rhythm its articulate *Speech*. The swifter the play of emotion: the more passionately embarrassed and unclear is the man himself, and therefore the less capable is he of imparting his emotion in a clear and intelligible fashion. On the other hand, the more restful the change: so much the plainer will the emotion show its nature. Rest is continuance; but continuance of motion is repetition of motion: that which repeats itself allows of reckoning, and the law of this reckoning is *Rhythm*.

By means of Rhythm does Dance become an art. It is the *Measure* of the movements by which emotion mirrors forth itself,—the measure by which it first attains that perspicuity which renders understanding possible. But the 'stuff' by means of which this Rhythm makes itself outwardly discernible and measure-giving, as the self-

dictated Law of motion, is necessarily taken from another element than that of bodily motion ;—only through a thing apart from myself, can I first know myself ; but this thing which lies apart from bodily motion is that which appeals to a sense that lies apart from the sense to which the body's motion is addressed ; and this fresh sense is *Hearing*. Rhythm—which sprang from the inner Necessity which spurred corporeal motion on to gain an understanding—imparts itself to the dancer, as the outward manifestation of this Necessity, the Law of Measure, chiefly through the medium of that which is perceptible by the ear alone, namely *Sound* ;—just as in music the abstract measure of rhythm, the 'Bar,' is imparted by a motion cognisable only by the eye. This equal-meted repetition, springing as it does from Motion's innermost Necessity, invites alike and guides the dancer's movements by its exposition through the rhythmic beat of Sound, such as is at first evoked by simple clapping of the hands, and then from wooden, metal, or other sonorous objects.

However, the mere definition of the points of Time at which a movement shall repeat itself, does not suffice completely for the dancer who submits the ordering of his movements to an outwardly perceptible law. Just as the Motion, beside its swift change from time-point to time-point, is maintained abidingly, and thus becomes a continuous performance : so does the dancer require that the Sound, which had hitherto vanished as suddenly as it had appeared, shall be compelled to an abiding continuance, to an extension in regard of Time. He demands, in short, that the emotion which forms the living Soul of his movements shall be equally expressed in the continuance of the Sound ; for only so does the self-dictated rhythmic Measure become one that corresponds completely with the Dance, inasmuch as it embraces not merely *one* of the essential conditions of the latter but, as far as possible, *all*. This *Measure* must therefore be the embodiment of the essence of Dance in a separate, but allied, branch of art.

This other branch of art into which Dance yearns in-

stinctively to pass, therein to find again and know her own true nature, is the art of *Tone*; which, in its turn, receives the solid scaffold of its vertebration from Dance's rhythm.

Rhythm is the natural, unbreakable bond of union between the arts of Dance and Tone; without it, no art of Dance, and none of Tone. If Rhythm, as her regulating and unifying law, is the very *Mind* of Dance—to wit, the abstract summary of corporeal motion,—so is it, on the other hand, the moving, self-progressive *Skeleton* of Tone. The more this skeleton invests itself with tonal flesh, the more does the law of Dance lose its own features in the special attributes of Tone; so much the more, however, does Dance at like time raise herself to the capability of that expression of the deeper feelings of the heart by which alone she can keep abreast of the essential nature of Tone. But Tone's most living flesh is the *human voice*; and *the Word*, again, is as it were the bone-and-muscle rhythm of this human voice. And thus, at last, the movement-urging emotion, which overflowed from art of Dance to art of Tone, finds in the definite decision of the Word the sure, unerring utterance by means of which it can both seize itself as 'object' and clearly speak forth what it is. Thus, through tone become Speech, it wins at once its highest satisfaction and its most satisfying heightening in the tonal art become the art of Poesy; for it mounts aloft from Dance to *Mimicry*, from the broadest delineation of general bodily sensations to the subtlest and most compact* utterance of definite mental phases of emotion and of will-force.—

From this frank and mutual permeation, generation, and completion of each several art from out itself and through its fellow—which, as regards Music and Poetry, we have so far merely hinted at—is born the united *Lyric Art-work*. In it each art is what its nature accords to it; that which lies beyond its power of being, it does not egoistically borrow from

* The German equivalent for "compact" is "*dicht*"; the term seems to have been purposely chosen by the author, in order to bring out the true meaning of "*Dichtkunst*," "The art of Poetry," as a crystallisation—so to say—of ideas and emotions only vaguely felt before.—Tr.

its fellow, but its fellow *is that* in its place. But in *Drama*, the perfected form of Lyric, each several art unfolds its highest faculty; and notably that of Dance. In *Drama*, Man is at once his own artistic 'subject' and his 'stuff,' to his very fullest worth. Now as therein the art of Dance has to set directly forth the separate or joint expressive movements which are to tell us of the feelings both of units and of masses; and as the law of Rhythm, begotten from her, is the standard whereby the whole dramatic semblance is brought into agreement ("*Verständigung*"), — so does Dance withal exalt herself in *Drama* to her most spiritual expression, that of *Mimicry*. As Mimetic art, she becomes the direct and all-embracing utterance of the inner man; and it is now no longer the raw material rhythm of Sound, but the spiritual rhythm of Speech, that shows itself to her as law,—a law, however, which took its earliest rise from her dictation. What Speech endeavours to convey ("*verständlichen*"), the whole wide range of feelings and emotions, ideas and thoughts, which mount from softest tenderness to indomitable energy, and finally proclaim themselves as naked Will—all this becomes an unconditionally intelligible, unquestioned truth through Mimic art alone; nay, Speech itself cannot become a true and quite convincing physical utterance without the immediate aid of Mimicry. From this, the *Drama's* pinnacle, Dance broadens gradually down again to her original domain: where Speech now only hints and pictures; where Tone, as Rhythm's soul, restricts herself to homage of her sister; and where the beauty of the Body and its movements alone can give direct and needful utterance to an all-dominating, all-rejoicing feeling.

Thus Dance reaches in *Drama* her topmost height, entrancing where she orders, affecting where she subordinates herself; ever and throughout—herself: because ever spontaneous and, therefore, of indispensable Necessity. For only where an art is indispensable, is it alike the whole thing *that it is* and can and should be.—

Just as in the building of the Tower of Babel, when

their speech was confounded and mutual understanding made impossible, the nations severed from each other, each one to go its several way: so, when all national solidarity had split into a thousand egoistic severalties, did the separate art-branches cut-off themselves from the proud and heaven-soaring tree of Drama, which had lost the inspiring soul of mutual understanding.

Let us consider for a moment what fate befell the art of Dance, when she left the graceful chain of sisters, to seek her fortune in the world's great wilderness.—

Though Dance now ceased to offer to the mawkish and sentimental schoolmaster-poetry of Euripides the hand of fellowship which the latter cast away in sullen arrogance, only to take it later when humbly proffered for an '*occasional service*' ("*Zweckleistung*"); though she parted from her philosophical sister who, with sour-faced frivolity, could only *envy* and no longer love her youthful charms: yet she could not wholly dispense with the help of her bosom-comrade, Tone. By an indisruptible band was she linked to her, for the art of Tone held fast within her hands the *key* to her very soul. But, as after the death of a father in whose love his children have all been knit together, and have held their life-goods as one common store, the heirs in selfish strife compute the several stock of each,—so did Dance contend that this key was wrought by *her*, and claimed it back as the first condition of her now separate life. Willingly did she forego the feeling tones of her sister's Voice; for by this voice, whose marrow was the Word of *Poetry*, she must forsooth have felt herself inextricably chained to that proud leader! But this *instrument*, of wood or metal, the musical *tool* which her sister, in sweet urgency to inspire with her soulful breath even the dead stuff of Nature, had fashioned for the buttress and enhancement of her voice,—this tool, which verily was fit enough to mete for her the needful guiding measure of rhythm and of beat, nay even to wellnigh imitate the tonal beauty of her sister's voice,—the Musical Instrument she took with her. Not caring for aught else, she left her sister Tone to

float adown the shoreless stream of Christian harmony, tied to her faith in Words, the while she cast herself in easy-going self-sufficiency upon the pleasure-craving places of the world.

We know too well this tricked-out figure : who is it that has not come across her ? Wherever fatuous modern ease girds itself up to seek for entertainment, she sets herself with utmost complaisance upon the scene, and plays, for gold, whatever pranks one wills. Her highest faculty, the use of which she can no longer see, the faculty of ransoming by her mien and gestures the Thought of Poetry in its yearning for actual human birth, she has lost or made away in thoughtless foolishness, and minds her not—to whom. With all the features of her face, with all the gestures of her limbs, she has nothing now to bring to light but unconfined complaisance. Her solitary care is lest she should seem capable of making a refusal ; and of this care she unburdens herself by the only mimetic expression of which she still is mistress, by the most unruffled smile of unconditional surrender to each and all. With her features set in this unchangeable and fixed expression, she answers the demand for change and motion by her lower limbs alone ; all her artistic capability has sunk down from her vertex, through her body, to her feet. Head, neck, trunk and thighs are only present as unbidden guests ; whereas her feet have undertaken to show alone what she can do, and merely for the sake of needful balance call on her arms and hands for sisterly support. What in private life—when our modern citizens, in accordance with tradition and the time-killing habits of society, indulge themselves in dance, in our so-called 'Balls'—it is only allowable to timidly suggest with all the woodenness of civilised vapidty : *that* is permitted to the kindly *ballerina* to tell aloud upon the public stage with frankest candour ; for—her gestures, forsooth, are merely art and not reality, and now that she has been declared *beyond* the law, she stands *above* the law. In effect, we may let ourselves be incited by her, without, for all that, following in our moral life her incitations,—just as,

on the other hand, Religion also offers us its incitations, to goodness and to virtue, and yet we are not in the smallest bound to yield to them in everyday existence. Art is *free*,—and the art of Dance draws her profit from this freedom. And she does right in this: else what were Freedom made for?—

How comes it that this noble art has fallen so low that, in our public art-life, she can only find her passport and her lease of life as the hasp of all the banded arts of harlotry? That she must give herself beyond all ransom into the most dishonouring chains of nethermost dependence?—(Because everything torn from its connexions, every egoistic unit, must needs become in truth *unfree*, *i.e.* dependent on an alien master. The mere corporeal man, the mere emotional, the mere intellectual man, are each incapable of any self-sufficiency of the genuine Man. The exclusiveness of their nature leads them into every excess of immoderation; for the salutary Measure arises only—and of itself—from the community of natures like and yet unlike. But immoderation is the absolute un-freedom of any being; and this unfreedom must of necessity evince itself as dependence upon sheer externals.—)

In her separation from true Music, and especially from Poetry, Dance not only gave up her highest attributes, but she also lost a portion of her *individuality*. Only that is individual, which can beget from out itself: Dance was a completely individual art for just so long as she could bring forth from her inmost nature, and her Need, the laws in accordance with which she came to an intelligible manifestation. To-day the *only* remaining individual dance is the *national* dance of the *Folk*; for, as it steps into the world of show, it proclaims its own peculiar nature in inimitable fashion by gestures, rhythm, and beat, whose laws itself had made instinctively; while these laws only become cognisable and communicable when they have really issued from the art-work of the People as the abstract of its essence. Further evolution of the folk-dance towards the richer capabilities of Art is only

possible by union with the arts of Tone and Poetry, no longer tyrannised by Dance, but bearing themselves as free agents; for only amid the correlated faculties, and under the stimulation, of these arts can she unfold and broaden out her individual faculties to their fullest compass.

The Grecian Lyric art-work shows us how the laws of Rhythm, the individual mark of Dance, were developed in the arts of Tone and, above all, of Poetry to endless breadth and manifold richness of characterisation by the individuality of these very arts, and thus gave back to Dance an inexhaustible store of novel stimulus to the finding of fresh movements peculiar to herself; and how, in lively joy of fecund interaction, the individuality of each several art was able thus to lift itself to its most perfect fill. The modern folk-dance could never bring to bearing the fruits of such an interaction: for as all folk-art of the modern nations was nipped in the bud by Christianity and Christian-political civilisation, neither could *it*, a solitary shrub, bush out in rich and manifold development. Yet the only individual phenomena in the domain of Dance known to our world of today are the sheer products of the Folk, such as they have budded, or even now still bud, from the character of this or that nationality. All our actual civilised Dance is but a compilation from these dances of the Folk: the folk-styles of every nationality are taken up by her, employed, and mutilated,—but not developed farther; because, as an art, she only feeds herself on foreign food. Her procedure, therefore, is ever a mere intentional and artificial copying, patching together, and dovetailing; in no wise a bringing forth and new-creating. Her nature is that of Mode, which, of sheer craving for vicissitude, gives today to this style, tomorrow to that, the preference. She is therefore forced to found her arbitrary systems, to set her purpose down in rules, and to proclaim her will in needless axioms and assumptions, in order to enable her disciples to comprehend and execute it. But these rules and systems wholly *isolate* her as an art, and fence her off from any healthy union with

another branch of art for mutual collaboration. Un-nature, held to artificial life by laws and arbitrary formulæ, is from top to bottom egoistic; and as it is incapable of bringing forth from out itself, so also is any wedding of it a thing impossible.

This art has therefore no love-need; she can only *take*, but not *give*. She draws all foreign life-stuff into herself, disintegrates and devours it, assimilating it with her own unfruitful being; but cannot blend herself with any element whose life is based on grounds outside her, because she cannot give herself.

Thus does our modern Dance attempt in *Pantomime* the task of Drama. Like every isolated, egoistic branch of art, she fain would be all things unto herself, and reign in lonely all-sufficiency. She would picture men and human haps, conditions, conflicts, characters and motives, without employing that faculty by which man first attains completion, —*Speech*. She would poetise, without the faintest comradeship with Poetry. And what does she breed, in this demure exclusiveness and "independence"? The most utterly dependent and cripple-like monstrosity: men who cannot talk; and not forsooth since some mischance has robbed them of the gift of speech, but since their stubborn choice forbids their speaking; actors whose release from some unholy spell we look for every moment, if only they could gain the courage to end the painful stammering of their Gestures by a wholesome spoken Word, but whom the rules and prescripts of pantomimic art forbid to dishallow by one natural syllable the unflecked sense of Dance's self-dependence.

And yet so lamentably dependent is this absolute dumb *Spectacle*, that in its happiest moments it only ventures to concern itself with dramatic stuffs that require to enter on no relations with the human reason,—nay, even in the most favourable of such cases, still sees itself compelled to the ignominious expedient of acquainting the spectators with its particular intention by means of an *explanatory programme!*

Yet herewith is undeniably manifested the remnant of Dance's noblest effort; she would still at least be somewhat, and soars upward to the yearning for the highest work of Art, the Drama; she seeks to withdraw from the wanton gaze of frivolity, and clutches after some artistic veil wherewith to cloak her shameful nakedness. But into what a dishonouring dependence must she cast herself, in the very manifestment of this effort! With what pitiable distortion must she expiate the vain desire for unnatural self-dependence! She, without whose highest and most individual help the highest, noblest Art-work cannot attain to show, must—severed from the union of her sisters—take refuge from prostitution in absurdity, from absurdity in prostitution!—

O glorious Dance! O shameful Dance!—

4

The Art of Tone.

(The ocean binds and separates the land: so does Music bind and separate the two opposite poles of human Art, the arts of Dance and Poetry.

She is the *heart* of man; the blood, which takes this heart for starting-point, gives to the outward-facing flesh its warm and lively tint,—while it feeds the inward-coursing brain-nerves with its welling pulse. Without the heart's activity, the action of the brain would be no more than of a mere automaton; the action of the body's outer members, a mechanical and senseless motion. Through the heart the understanding feels itself allied with the whole body, and the man of mere 'five-senses' mounts upwards to the energy of Reason.

But the organ of the heart is *tone*; its conscious speech, the *art of Tone*. She is the full and flowing heart-love, that ennobles the material sense of pleasure, and humanises immaterial thought. Through Tone are Dance and

Poetry brought to mutual understanding : in her are intercrossed in loving blend the laws by which they each proclaim their own true nature ; in her, the wilfulness of each becomes instinctive ' Will ' (" *Unwillkürlichen* "), the Measure of Poetry and the Beat of Dance become the undictated Rhythm of the Heart-throb.)

Does she receive from her sisters the conditions under which she manifests herself, so does she give them back to them in infinite embellishment, as the conditions of their own enunciation. If Dance conveys to Tone her own peculiar law of motion, so does Tone bring it back to her with soul and sense embodied in her Rhythm, for the measure of more noble, more intelligible motion. If Tone obtains from Poetry her pregnant coil of sharp-cut Words, entwined by meaning and by measure, and takes it as a solid mesh of thought wherewith to gird her boundless fluid mass of sound : so does she hand her sister back this ideal coil of yearning syllables, that indirectly shadow forth in images, but cannot yet express their thought with all the truth and cogence of necessity,—and hands it as the direct utterance of Feeling, the unerring vindicator and redeemer, *Melody*.

In *Rhythm* and in *Melody*, ensouled by Tone, both Dance and Poetry regain their own true essence, materialised and endlessly enhanced and beautified ; and thus they learn to know and love themselves. (But melody and rhythm are the *arms* of Tone, with which she locks her sisters in the close embrace of triple growth ; they are the *shores* through which *the sea*, herself, unites two continents. If this sea draws backward from the shores, and broadens out the waste of an abyss between itself and each of them, then can no light-winged ship bear aught from either continent unto the other ; forever must they rest dis-sundered,—until some outcome of machinery, perchance a railroad, shall bridge the waste ! Then men shall start therefrom, forsooth upon their steamboats, to cross the open sea ; the breath of all-enlivening breezes replaced by sickening fumes from the machine. Blow the winds of

heaven eastward : what matters it?—the machine shall clatter westward, or wherever else men choose to go. Even as the dance-wright fetches from the continent of Poetry, across the steam-tamed ocean crests of Music, the programme for his novel ballet ; while the play-concoctor imports from the far-off continent of Dance just so much leg-gymnastics as he deems expedient for filling up a halting situation.—

Let us see, then, what has come to sister Tone, since the death of all-loving father, *Drama* !—

We cannot yet give up our simile of the *Ocean*, for picturing Tone's nature. If *Melody* and *Rhythm* are the shores through which the art of Tone lays fruitful hands upon twain continents of art, allied to her of yore : so is Sound itself her fluent, native element, and its immeasurable expanse of waters make out the sea of *Harmony*. The eye knows but the surface of this sea ; its depth the depth of Heart alone can fathom. Upwards from its lightless bottom it expands into a sun-bright mirror ; the ever-widening rings of Rhythm cross over on it from one shore ; from the shady valleys of the other arise the yearning zephyrs that rouse this restful surface to the grace of swelling, sinking waves of Melody.

Man dives into this sea ; only to give himself once more, refreshed and radiant, to the light of day. His heart feels widened wondrously, when he peers down into this depth, pregnant with unimaginable possibilities whose bottom his eye shall never plumb, whose seeming bottomlessness thus fills him with the sense of marvel and the presage of Infinity. It is the depth and infinity of Nature herself, who veils from the prying eye of Man the unfathomable womb of her eternal Seed-time, her Begetting, and her Yearning ; even because man's eye can only grasp the already manifested, the Blossom, the Begotten, the Fulfilled. This Nature is, however, none other than *the nature of the human heart itself*, which holds within its shrine the feelings of desire and love in their most infinite capacity ; which is *itself* Desire and Love, and—as in its insatiable-

longing it yet wills nothing but itself—can only grasp and comprehend itself.

If this sea stir up its waters of itself, if it beget the ground of its commotion from the depths of its own element: then is this agitation an endless one and never pacified; for ever returning on itself unstilled, and ever roused afresh by its eternal longing. But if the vast reach of this Desire be kindled by an outward object; if this measure-giving object step toward it from the sure and sharply outlined world of manifestment; if sun-girt, slender, blithely-moving Man incend the flame of this desire by the lightning of his glancing eye,—if he ruffle with his swelling breath the elastic crystal of the sea,—then let the fire crackle as it may, let the ocean's bosom heave with ne'er so violent a storm: yet the flame at last, when its wild glow has smouldered down, will shine with mild serenity of light,—the sea-rind, the last foam-wreath of its giant crests dissolved, will crisp itself at last to the soft play of rippling waves; and Man, rejoicing in the sweet harmony of his whole being, will entrust himself to the beloved element in some frail coracle, and steer his steadfast course towards the beacon of that kindly light.—

(The *Greek*, when he took ship upon his sea, ne'er let the coast line fade from sight: for him it was the trusty stream that bore him from one haven to the next,) the stream on which he passed between the friendly strands amidst the music of his rhythmic oars,—here lending glances to the wood-nymphs' dance, there bending ear to sacred hymns whose melodious string of meaning words was wafted by the breezes from the temple on the mountain-top. On the surface of the water were truly mirrored back to him the jutting coasts, with all their peaks and valleys, trees and flowres and men, deep-set within the æther's blue; and this undulating mirror-picture, softly swayed by the fresh fan of gentle gusts, he deemed was *Harmony*.—

The *Christian* left the shores of Life.—Farther afield, beyond all confines, he sought the sea,—to find himself at last upon the Ocean, twixt sea and heaven, boundlessly

alone. The *Word*, the word of *Faith* was his only compass; and it pointed him unswervingly toward Heaven. This heaven brooded far above him, it sank down on every side in the horizon, and fenced his sea around. [But the sailor never reached that confine; from century to century he floated on without redemption, towards this ever imminent, but never reached, new home; until he fell a-doubting of the virtue of his compass, and cast it, as the last remaining human bauble, grimly overboard. And now, denuded of all ties, he gave himself without a rudder to the never-ending turmoil of the waves' caprice. In unstilled, ireful love-rage, he stirred the waters of the sea against the unattainable and distant heaven: he urged the insatiate greed of that desire and love which, rest of an external object, must ever only crave and love itself,—that deepest, unredeemable hell of restless Egoism, which stretches out without an end, and wills and wishes, yet ever and forever can only wish and will itself,—he urged it 'gainst the abstract universalism of heaven's blue, that universal longing without the shadow of an 'object'—against the very vault of absolute un-objectivity. Bliss, unconditioned bliss,—to gain in widest, most unbounded measure the *height of bliss*, and yet to stay completely *wrapt in self*: this was the unallayable desire of Christian passion. So reared the sea from out its deepest depth to heaven, so sank it ever back again to its own depths; ever its unmixed self, and therefore ever unappeased,—like the all-usurping, measureless desire of the heart that ne'er will give itself and dare to be consumed in an external object, but damns itself to everlasting *selfish solitude*.)

(Yet in Nature each immensity strives after Measure; the unconfined draws bounds around itself; the elements condense at last to definite show (and even the boundless sea of Christian yearning found the new shore on which its turbid waves might break. Where on the farthest horizon we thought to find the ever made-for, never happened-on gateway into the realms of Heaven unlimited, there did the boldest of all seafarers discover *land* at last,—man-tenanted,

real, and blissful land. Through his discovery the wide ocean is now not only meted out, but made for men an inland sea, round which the coasts are merely broadened out in unimaginably ampler circle. Did Columbus teach us to take ship across the ocean, and thus to bind in one each continent of Earth; did his world-historical discovery convert the narrow-seeing national-man into a universal and all-seeing *Man*: so, by the hero who explored the broad and seeming shoreless sea of absolute Music unto its very bounds, are won the new and never dreamt-of coasts which this sea no longer now divorces from the old and primal continent of man, but *binds together* with it for the new-born, happy art-life of the Manhood of the Future.

↳ And this hero is none other than—*Beethoven*.—

When Tone unloosed her from the chain of sisters, she took as her unrelinquishable, her foremost life's-condition—just as light-minded sister Dance had filched from *her* her rhythmic measure—from thoughtful sister Poetry her *Word*; yet not the human-breathing spirit of the musing (“*dichtende*”) word, but only its bare corporeal condensation (“*verdichtete*”) into tones. As she had abandoned her rhythmic beat to parting Dance's use and pleasure, she thenceforth built upon the Word alone; the word of Christian Creed, that toneless, fluid, scattering word which, un-withstanding and right gladly, soon gave to her complete dominion over it. But the more this word evaporated into the mere stammer of humility, the mere babbling of implicit, childlike love, so much the more imperatively did Tone see herself impelled to shape herself from out the exhaustless depths of her own liquid nature. The struggle for such shaping is the building up of *Harmony*.

Harmony grows from below upwards as a perpendicular pillar, by the joining-together and overlaying of correlated tone-stuffs. Unceasing alternation of such columns, each freshly risen member taking rank beside its fellows, constitutes the only possibility of absolute harmonic movement ‘in breadth.’ The feeling of needful care for the

beauty of this motion 'in breadth' is foreign to the nature of absolute Harmony; she knows but the beauty of her columns' changing play of colour, but not the grace of their marshalling in point of 'time,'—for that is the work of Rhythm. On the other hand, the inexhaustible variety of this play of colours is the ever-fruitful source on which she draws, with immoderate self-satisfaction, to show herself in constant change of garb; while the life-breath which en-souls and sets in motion this restless, capricious, and self-conditioning change, is the essence of elemental tone itself, the outbreathing of an unfathomable, all-dominating heart's-desire. In the kingdom of Harmony there is therefore no beginning and no end; just as the objectless and self-devouring fervour of the soul, all ignorant of its source, is nothing but itself, nothing but longing, yearning, tossing, pining—and *dying out*, i.e. dying without having assuaged itself in any 'object'; thus dying without death,* and therefore everlasting falling back upon itself.

So long as the Word was in power, it commanded both beginning and ending; but when it was engulfed in the bottomless depths of Harmony, when it became naught but "groanings and sighings of the soul,"†—as on the ardent summit of the music of the Catholic Church,—then was the word capriciously hoisted to the capitals of those harmonic columns, of that unrhythmic melody, and cast as though from wave to wave; while the measureless harmonic possibilities must draw from out themselves the laws for their own finite manifestment. There is no other artistic faculty of man that answers to the character of Harmony: it cannot find its mirror in the physical precision of the

* Compare *Tristan u. Isolde*, Act 3, "Sehnen! Sehnen—im Sterben mich zu sehnen, vor Sehnsucht nicht zu sterben!"—a passage which has more than any other been ascribed to Schopenhauer's influence, but which is almost a literal reproduction of the words used in the present instance.—TR.

† See Wagner's *Letters to Uhlig* (Letter 67,—July, 1852). "E. D. defends music against me. Is not that delicious? He appeals to 'harmonies of the spheres,' and 'groanings and sighings of the soul!' Well, I have got a pretty millstone hung about my neck!"—TR.

movements of the body, nor in the logical induction of the thinking brain,—it cannot set up for itself its standard in the recognised necessity of the material world of show, like Thought, nor like corporeal Motion in the periodic calculation of its instinctive, physically governed properties: it is like a nature-force which men perceive but cannot comprehend. Summoned by outer—not by inner—necessity to resolve on surer and more finite manifestation, Harmony must mould from out its own immensurate depths the laws for its own following. These laws of harmonic sequence, based on the nature of Affinity,—just as those harmonic columns, the chords, were formed by the affinity of tone-stuffs,—unite themselves into one standard, which sets up salutary bounds around the giant playground of capricious possibilities. They allow the most varied choice from amid the kingdom of harmonic families, and extend the possibility of union by elective-affinity (*“Wahlverwandschaftliche Verbindungen”*) with the members of neighbouring families, almost to free liking; they demand, however, before all a strict observance of the house-laws of affinity of the family once chosen, and a faithful tarrying with it, for sake of a happy end. But this end itself, and thus the measure of the composition's extension *in time*, the countless laws of harmonic decorum can neither give nor govern. As the scientifically teachable or learnable department of the art of Tone, they can cleave the fluid tonal masses of Harmony asunder, and part them into fenced-off bodies; but they cannot assign the periodic measure of these fenced-off masses.

When the limit-setting might of Speech was swallowed up, and yet the art of Tone, now turned to Harmony, could never find her time-assigning law within herself: then was she forced to face towards the remnant of the rhythmic beat that Dance had left for her to garner. Rhythmic figures must now enliven harmony; their change, their recurrence, their parting and uniting, must condense the fluid breadths of Harmony—as Word had earlier done with Tone—and bring their periods to more sure conclusion.

But no inner necessity, striving after purely human exposition, lay at the bottom of this rhythmic livening; not the feeling, thinking, will-ing Man, such as proclaims himself by speech and bodily motion, was its motive power; nothing but an *outer* necessity, which Harmony, in struggle for her selfish close, had taken up into herself. This rhythmic interchange and shaping, which moved not of its inner, own necessity, could therefore only borrow life from arbitrary laws and canons. These laws and canons are those of *Counterpoint*.

Counterpoint, with its multiple births and offshoots, is Art's artificial playing-with-itself, the mathematics of Feeling; the mechanical rhythm of egoistic Harmony. In its invention, abstract Tone indulged her whim to pass as the sole and only self-supporting Art;—as that art which owes its being, its absolute and godlike nature, to no human Need soever, but purely to *itself*. The wilful quite naturally believes itself the absolute and right monopolist; and it is certain that to her own caprice alone could Music thank her self-sufficient airs, for that mechanical, contrapunctal artifice was quite incapable of answering any *soul-need*. Music therefore, in her pride, had become her own direct antithesis: from a *heart's* concern, a matter of the *intellect*; from the utterance of unshackled Christian soul's-desire, the cashbook of a modern market-speculation.

The living breath of fair, immortal, nobly-feeling Human Voice, streaming ever fresh and young from the bosom of the Folk, blew this contrapunctal house of cards, too, of a heap. The *Folk-tune*, that had rested faithful to its own untarnished grace; the simple, surely outlined *Song*, close-woven with the poem, soared-up on its elastic pinions to the regions of the beauty-lacking, scientifically-musical artworld, with news of joyous ransom. This world was longing to paint *men* again, to set men to sing—not pipes; so it seized the folk-tune for its purpose, and constructed out of it the *opera-air*. But just as Dance had seized the folk-dance, to freshen herself therewith when needed, and to convert it to an artificial compost according to the

dictates of her modish taste,—so did this genteel Operatic tone-art behave to the folk-tune. She had not grasped the *entire* man, to show him in his whole artistic stature and nature-bidden necessity, but only the *singing* man; and in his song she had not seized the Ballad of the Folk, with all its innate generative force, but merely the melodic Tune, abstracted from the poem, to which she set conventional and purposely insipid sentences, according to her pleasure; it was not the beating heart of the nightingale, but only its warbling throat that men could fathom, and practised themselves to imitate. Just as the art-dancer had set his legs, with their manifold but still monotonous bendings, flingings, and gyrations, to *vary* the natural folk-dance which he could not of himself develop further,—so did the art-singer set his throat to paraphrase with countless ornaments, to alter by a host of flourishes, those tunes which he had stolen from the People's mouth, but whose nature he could never fertilise afresh; and thus another species of mechanical dexterity filled up the place which contrapunctal ingenuity had left forlorn. We need not further characterise the repugnant, ineffably repulsive disfigurement and rending of the folk-tune, such as cries out from the modern operatic *Aria*—for truly it is nothing but a mutilated folk-tune, and in no wise a specific fresh invention—such as, in entire contempt of Nature and all human feeling, and severed from all basis of poetic speech, now tickles the imbecile ears of our opera-frequenters with its lifeless, soul-less toy of fashion. We must content ourselves with candidly, though mournfully, avowing that our modern public sums up in *it* its whole idea of Music's essence.—

But apart from this public and its subservient fashion-mongers and mode-purveyors, (the inmost individual essence of Tone was yet to soar up from its plumbless depths, in all the unlost plenitude of its unmeasured faculties, to redemption in the sunlight of the universal, *one Art of the Future*.) And this spring it was to take from off *that* ground which is the ground of all sheer

human art: the *plastic motion of the body*, portrayed in musical *Rhythm*.

Though in the Christian lisp of the stereotyped Word, eternally repeated until it lost itself in utter dearth of Thought, the human *voice* had shrunk at last to a mere physical and flexile implement of Tone: yet, by its side, those tone-implements which mechanism had devised for Dance's ample escort had been elaborated to ever more enhanced expressive faculty. As bearers of the dance-tune, the *rhythmic Melody* had been consigned to their exclusive care; and, by reason of the ease with which their blended forces took up the element of Christian Harmony, to them now fell the call for all further evolution of the art of Tone from out itself. *The harmonised dance* is the basis of the richest art-work of the modern *Symphony*.—Even this 'harmonised dance' fell as a savoury prey into the hands of counterpoint-concocting mechanism; which loosed it from obedient devotion to its mistress, body-swaying Dance, and made it now to take its turns and capers from *its* rules. Yet it needed but the warm lifebreath of the natural folk-tune to beat upon the leathern harness of this schooled and contrapunctal dance,—and lo! it stretched at once to the elastic flesh of fairest human artwork. This artwork, in its highest culmination, is *the Symphony of Haydn, of Mozart, and Beethoven*.

In the Symphony of Haydn the rhythmic dance-melody moves with all the blithesome freshness of youth: its entwinnings, disseverings, and re-unitings, though carried out with highest contrapunctal ingenuity, yet hardly show a trace of the results of such ingenious treatment; but rather take the character peculiar to a dance ordained by laws of freest Phantasy,—so redolent are they of the warm and actual breath of joyous human Life. To the more tempered motion of the middle section of the symphony we see assigned by Haydn a broad expansion of the simple song-tune of the Folk; in this it spreads by laws of *melos* peculiar to the character of Song, through soaring gradations and 'repeats' enlivened by most manifold expression.

This form of melody became the very element of the Symphony of song-abundant, and song-glad *Mozart*. He breathed into his instruments the passionate breath of *Human Voice*, that voice toward which his genius bent with overmastering love. He led the stanchless stream of teeming Harmony into the very heart of Melody; as though in restless care to give it, only mouthed by Instruments, in recompense the depth of feeling and of fervour that forms the exhaustless source of human utterance within the inmost chambers of the heart. Whilst, in his Symphonies, Mozart to some extent but made short work of everything that lay apart from this his individual impulse and, with all his remarkable dexterity in counterpoint, departed little from those traditional canons which he himself helped forward to stability: he lifted up the 'singing' power of instrumental music to such a height that it was now enabled, not only to embrace the mirth and inward still content which it had learnt from Haydn, but the whole depth of endless heart's-desire.

It was *Beethoven* who opened up the boundless faculty of Instrumental Music for expressing elemental storm and stress. His power it was, that took the basic essence of the Christian's Harmony, that bottomless sea of unhedged fulness and unceasing motion, and clove in twain the fetters of its freedom. *Harmonic Melody*—for so must we designate this melody divorced from speech, in distinction from the Rhythmic Melody of dance—was capable, though merely borne by instruments, of the most limitless expression together with the most unfettered treatment. In long, connected tracts of sound, as in larger, smaller, or even smallest fragments, it turned beneath the Master's poet hand to vowels, syllables, and words and phrases of a speech in which a message hitherto unheard, and never spoken yet, could promulgate itself. Each letter of this speech was an infinitely soul-full element; and the measure of the joinery of these elements was utmost free commensuration, such as could be exercised by none but a tone-poet who longed for the unmeasured utterance of this unfathomed yearning.

Glad in this unspeakably expressive language, but suffering beneath the weight of longing of his artist soul—a longing which, in its infinity, could only be an 'object' to itself, not satisfy itself outside—the happy-wretched, sea-glad and sea-weary mariner sought for a surer haven wherein to anchor from the blissful storms of passionate tumult. Was his faculty of speech unending—so also was the yearning which inspired that speech with its eternal breath. How then proclaim the end, the satisfaction, of this yearning, in the selfsame tongue that was naught but its expression? If the utterance of immeasurable heart-yearning be vented in this elemental speech of absolute tone, then the *endlessness* of such utterance, like that of the yearning itself, is its only true Necessity; the yearning cannot find contentment in any finite *shutting-off* of sound,—for that could only be Caprice. Now by the definite expression which it borrows from the rhythmic dance-melody, Instrumental Music may well portray and bring to close a placid and self-bounded mood; for reason that it takes its measure from an originally outward-lying object, namely the motion of the body. If a tone-piece yield itself *ab initio* to this expression, which must always be conceived as that of mirth, in greater or in less degree,—then, even mid the richest, most luxuriant unfolding of the faculty of tonal speech, it holds within itself the necessary grounds of every phase of 'satisfaction'; while equally inevitably must this 'satisfaction' be a matter of caprice, and therefore in truth unsatisfying, when that sure and sharp-cut mode of utterance endeavours merely *thus* to terminate the storms of endless yearning. The transition from the endless agitation of desire to a mood of joyous satisfaction, can necessarily take place no otherwise than by the ascension of desire into an *object*. But, in keeping with the character of infinite yearning, this 'object' can be none other than such an one as shows itself with finite, physical and ethical exactitude. Absolute Music, however, finds well-marked bounds dividing her from such an object; without indulging in the most arbitrary of

assumptions, she can now and never, of her own unaided powers, bring the physical and ethical Man to distinct and plainly recognisable presentment. Even in her most infinite enhancement, she still is but *emotion*; she enters *in the train* of the ethical deed, but not as that *Deed itself*; she can set moods and feelings side by side, but not evolve one mood from out another by any dictate of her own Necessity;—she lacks the *Moral Will*.

What inimitable art did Beethoven employ in his "C-minor Symphony," in order to steer his ship from the ocean of infinite yearning to the haven of fulfilment! He was able to raise the utterance of his music *almost* to a moral resolve, but not to speak aloud that final word; and after every onset of the Will, without a moral handhold, we feel tormented by the equal possibility of falling back again to suffering, as of being led to lasting victory. Nay, this falling-back must almost seem to us more 'necessary' than the morally ungrounded triumph, which therefore—not being a necessary consummation, but a mere arbitrary gift of grace—has not the power to lift us up and yield to us that *ethical* satisfaction which we demand as outcome of the yearning of the heart.

Who felt more discontented with this victory than Beethoven himself? Was he lief to win a second of the sort? 'Twas well enough for the brainless herd of imitators, who from glorious 'major'-jubilation, after vanquished 'minor'-tribulation, prepared themselves unceasing triumphs,—but not for the Master, who was called to write upon his works the *world-history of Music*.

With reverent awe, he shunned to cast himself afresh into that sea of boundless and insatiate yearning. He turned his steps towards the blithesome, life-glad Men he spied encamped on breezy meads, along the outskirts of some fragrant wood beneath the sunny heaven; kissing, dancing, frolicking. There in shadow of the trees, amid the rustling of the leaves, beside the tender gossip of the brook, he made a happy pact with Nature; there he felt that he was Man, felt all his yearning thrust back deep

into his breast before the sovereignty of sweet and blissful *manifestment*. So thankful was he toward this manifestment that, faithfully and in frank humility, he superscribed the separate portions of the tone-work, which he built from this idyllic mood, with the names of those life-pictures whose contemplation had aroused it in him :—"Reminiscences of Country Life" he called the whole.

But in very deed they were only "Reminiscences"—pictures, and not the direct and physical actuality. Towards this actuality he was impelled with all the force of the artist's inexpugnable ("*nothwendig*") yearning. To give his tone-shapes that same compactness, that directly cognisable and physically sure stability, which he had witnessed with such blessed solace in Nature's own phenomena,—this was the soul of the joyous impulse which created for us that glorious work the "Symphony in A major." All tumult, all yearning and storming of the heart become here the blissful insolence of joy, which snatches us away with bacchanalian might and bears us through the roomy space of Nature, through all the streams and seas of Life, shouting in glad self-consciousness as we tread throughout the Universe the daring measures of this human sphere-dance. This symphony is the *Apotheosis of Dance* herself : it is Dance in her highest aspect, as it were the loftiest Deed of bodily motion incorporated in an ideal mould of tone. Melody and Harmony unite around the sturdy bones of Rhythm to firm and fleshy human shapes, which now with giant limbs' agility, and now with soft, elastic pliance, *almost before our very eyes*, close up the supple, teeming ranks ; the while now gently, now with daring, now serious,* now wanton, now pensive, and again

* Amid the solemn-striding rhythm of the second section, a secondary theme uplifts its wailing, yearning song ; to that rhythm, which shows its firm-set tread throughout the entire piece, without a pause, this longing melody clings like the ivy to the oak, which without its clasping of the mighty bole would trail its crumpled, straggling wreaths upon the soil, in forlorn rankness ; but now, while weaving a rich trapping for the rough oak-rind, it gains for itself a sure and undishevelled outline from the stalwart figure of the tree. How brainlessly has this deeply significant device of Beethoven been exploited by

exulting, the deathless strain sounds forth and forth ; until, in the last whirl of delight, a kiss of triumph seals the last embrace.

And yet these happy dancers were merely shadowed forth in tones, mere sounds that imitated men ! Like a second Prometheus who fashioned men of clay (" *Thon* ") Beethoven had sought to fashion them of *tone*. Yet not from ' *Thon* ' or *Tone*, but from both substances together, must Man, the image of live-giving Zeus, be made. Were Prometheus' mouldings only offered to the *eye*, so were those of Beethoven only offered to the *ear*. But only *where eye and ear confirm each other's sentience of him, is the whole artistic Man at hand.*

But where could Beethoven find *those* men, to whom to stretch out hands across the element of his music ? Those men with hearts so broad that he could pour into them the mighty torrent of his harmonic tones ? With frames so stoutly fair that his melodic rhythms should *bear* them and not *crush* them ?—Alas, from nowhere came to him the brotherly Prometheus who could show to him these men ! He needs must gird his loins about, and start *to find out for himself the country of the Manhood of the Future.*

From the shore of Dance he cast himself once more upon that endless sea, from which he had erstwhile found a refuge on this shore ; the sea of unallayable heart-yearning. But 'twas in a stoutly-built and giant-bolted ship that he embarked upon the stormy voyage ; with firm-clenched fist he grasped the mighty helm : he *knew* the journey's goal, and was determined to attain it. No imaginary triumphs would he prepare himself, nor after boldly overcome privations tack back once more to the lazy haven of his home ; for he desired to measure out the ocean's bounds, and find the land which needs must lie beyond the waste of waters.

Thus did the Master urge his course through unheard-of our modern instrumental-composers, with their eternal " subsidiary themes !
—R. WAGNER.

possibilities of absolute tone-speech—not by fleetly slipping past them, but by speaking out their utmost syllable from the deepest chambers of his heart—forward to where the mariner begins to sound the sea-depth with his plumb; where, above the broadly stretched-forth shingles of the new continent, he touches on the heightening crests of solid ground; where he has now to decide him whether he shall face about towards the bottomless ocean, or cast his anchor on the new-found shore. But it was no madcap love of sea-adventure, that had spurred the Master to so far a journey; with might and main he willed to land on this new world, for toward *it* alone had he set sail. Staunchly he threw his anchor out; and this anchor was *the Word*. Yet this Word was not that arbitrary and senseless cud which the modish singer chews from side to side, as the gristle of his vocal tone; but the necessary, all-powerful, and all-uniting word into which the full torrent of the heart's emotions may pour its stream; the steadfast haven for the restless wanderer; the light that lightens up the night of endless yearning: the word that the redeemed world-man cries out aloud from the fulness of the world-heart. This was the word which Beethoven set as crown upon the forehead of his tone-creation; and this word was:—“*Freude!*” (“Rejoice!”) With this word he cries to men: “*Breast to breast, ye mortal millions! This one kiss to all the world!*”—And *this Word* will be the language of the *Art-work of the Future*.—

The Last Symphony of Beethoven is the redemption of Music from out her own peculiar element into the realm of *universal Art*. It is the human Evangel of the art of the Future. Beyond it no forward step is possible; for upon it the perfect Art-work of the Future alone can follow, the *universal Drama* to which Beethoven has forged for us the key.

Thus has Music of herself fulfilled what neither of the other severed arts had skill to do. Each of these arts but eked out her own self-centred emptiness by taking, and egoistic borrowing; neither, therefore, had the skill to be

herself, and of herself to weave the girdle wherewith to link the whole. But Tone, in that she *was herself* completely, and moved amid her own unsullied element, attained the force of the most heroic, most lovable self-sacrifice,—of mastering, nay of renouncing her own self, to reach out to her sisters the hand of rescue. (She thus has kept herself as *heart* that binds both head and limbs in one; and it is not without significance, that it is precisely the art of Tone which has gained so wide extension through all the branches of our modern public life.

To get a clearer insight into the *contradictory* spirit of this public life, however, we must first bear in mind that it was *by no means a mutual coöperation between art-hood and publicity, nay, not even a mutual coöperation of tone-artists themselves*, that carried through the titanic process we have here reviewed: but *simply a richly-gifted individual*, who took up into his solitary self the spirit of community! that was absent from our public life; nay, from the fulness of his being, united with the fulness of musical resource, evolved within himself this spirit of community which his artist soul had been the first to yearn for.) We see this wonderful creative process, which breathes the fashioning breath of Life through all the symphonies of Beethoven, not only completed by the Master in the most secluded loneliness, but not so much as *comprehended* by his artistic fellows; the rather, shamefully *misunderstood* by them. The forms in which the Master brought to light his world-historical wrestling after Art, remained but *forms* in the eyes of contemporaneous and succeeding music-makers, and passed through Mannerism across to Mode; and despite the fact that no other instrumental composer could, even within these forms, divulge the smallest shred of original inventiveness, yet none lost courage to write symphonies and suchlike pieces by the ream, without a moment happening on the thought that the *last* symphony had *already been written*.* Thus have we lived to see

* Whosoever may undertake to write the special history of instrumental music since Beethoven, will undoubtedly have to take account of isolated

Beethoven's great world-voyage of discovery—that unique and thoroughly unrepeatable feat whose consummation we have witnessed in his "*Freude*"-symphony, as the last and boldest venture of his genius—once more superfluously attempted in foolishness simplicity, and happily got over without one hardship. A new *genre*, a "Symphony with Choruses"—was all the dullards saw therein! Why should not X or Y be also able to write a "Symphony with Choruses"? Why should not "God the Lord" be praised from swelling throat in the Finale, after three preceding instrumental sections had paved the way as featly as might be? * Thus has Columbus only discovered America for the sugary hucksters of our times!

The ground of this repugnant phenomenon, however, lies deep within the very nature of our modern music. The art of Tone, set free from those of Dance and Poetry, is no longer an art instinctively necessary to man. It has been forced to construct itself by laws which, taken from its own peculiar nature, find no affinity and no elucidation in any purely human manifestation. Each of the other arts held fast by the measure of the outer human figure, of the outward human life, or of Nature itself,—howsoever capriciously it might disfigure this unconditional first principle. Tone,—which found alone in timid Hearing, susceptible to every phenomena which are of such a nature as to merit a particular and close attention. He who regards the history of Art, however, from so wide-reaching a point of view as here was necessary, can only keep to its decisive moments; he must leave unconsidered whatever lies aside from these 'moments,' or is merely their derivative. But the more undeniably is great ability evinced by such detached phenomena, so much the more strikingly do *they themselves* prove, by the barrenness of all their art-endeavour, that in their peculiar art-province somewhat may have yet been left to discover in respect of technical treatment, but nothing in respect of the living spirit, now that *that* has once been spoken which Beethoven spoke through Music. In the great universal Art-work of the Future there will ever be fresh regions to discover; but not in the separate branch of art, when once the latter—as Music, by Beethoven—has already been led to universalism but yet would linger in her solitary round.

—R. WAGNER.

* The original sentence is somewhat too forcible for English notions:—
 "nachdem er geholfen hat, drei vorangehende Instrumentalsätze so geschickt wie möglich zu Stande zu bringen." The reference is, of course, to Mendelssohn's "*Lobgesang*." —TR.

cheat and fancy, her outward, human measure,—must frame herself more abstract laws, perforce, and bind these laws into a compact scientific system. This system has been the basis of all modern music: founded on this system, tower was heaped on tower; and the higher soared the edifice, the more inalienable grew the fixed foundation,—this founding which was nowise that of Nature. To the sculptor, the painter, and the poet, their laws of Art explain the course of *Nature*; without an inner understanding of Nature they can make no thing of beauty. To the musician are explained the laws of Harmony, of Counterpoint; his learning, without which he can build no musical structure, is an abstract, scientific system. By attained dexterity in its application, he becomes a craftsman; and from this craftsmanlike standpoint he looks out upon the outer world, which must needs appear to *him* a different thing from what it does to the unadmitted worldling,—the *layman*. The uninitiate layman thus stands abashed before this artificial product of art-music, and very rightly can grasp no whit of it but what appeals directly to the heart; from all the built-up prodigy, however, this only meets him in the unconditioned ear-delight of Melody. All else but leaves him cold, or baffles him with its disquiet; for the simple reason that he does not, and cannot, understand it. Our modern concert-public, which feigns a warmth and satisfaction in presence of the art-symphony, merely lies and plays the hypocrite; and the proof of this hypocrisy is evident enough so soon as, after such a symphony, a modern and melodious operatic ‘number’ is performed,—as often happens even in our most renowned concert-institutes,—when we may hear the genuine musical pulse of the audience beat high at once in unfeigned joy.

A vital coherence between our art-music and our public taste, must be emphatically denied: where it would fain proclaim its existence, it is affected and untrue; or, with a certain section of our Folk which may from time to time be unaffectedly moved by the drastic power of a Beethovenian symphony, it is—to say the least—unclear, and

the impression produced by these tone-works is at bottom but imperfect and fragmentary. But where this coherence is not to hand, the guild-like federation of our art-professors can only be an outward one; while the growth and fashioning of art from within outwards cannot depend upon a fellowship which is nothing but an artificial system,—but only in the separate unit, from the individuality of its specific nature, can a natural formative and evolutionary impulse take operation by its own instinctive inner laws. Only on the fulness of the special gifts of an individual artist-nature, can that art-creative impulse feed itself which nowhere finds its nourishment in outer Nature; for this individuality alone can find in its particularity, in its personal intuition, in its distinctive longing, craving, and willing, the stuff wherewith to give the art-mass form, the stuff for which it looks in vain in outer Nature. In the individuality of this one and separate human being does Music first become a purely human art; she devours up this individuality,—from the dissolution of its elements to gain her own condensation, her own individualisation.

Thus we see in Music as in the other arts, though from totally different causes, mannerisms and so-called 'schools' proceeding for the most part from the individuality of a particular artist. These 'schools' were the guilds that gathered—in imitation, nay in repetition—round some great master in whom the soul of Music had individualised itself. So long as Music had not fulfilled her world-historical task: so long might the widely spreading branches of these schools grow up into fresh stems, under this or that congenial fertiliser. But so soon as that task had been accomplished by the greatest of all musical individualities, so soon as Tone had used the force of that individuality to clothe her deepest secrets with the broadest form in which she still might stay an egoistic, self-sufficient art,—so soon, in one word, as *Beethoven* had written his Last Symphony, —then all the musical guilds might patch and cobble as they would, to bring an absolute music-man to market: only a patched and cobbled harlequin, no sinewy, robust

son of Nature, could issue now from out their workshops. After Haydn and Mozart, a Beethoven not only could, but *must* come; the genie of Music claimed him of Necessity, and without a moment's lingering—he was there. Who now will be to Beethoven what *he* was to Mozart and Haydn, in the realm of absolute music? The greatest genius would not here avail, since the genie of Music no longer needs him.

Ye give yourselves a bootless labour, when, as an opiate for your egoistic tingling for 'production', ye fain would deny the cataclysmic significance of Beethoven's Last Symphony; and even your obtuseness will not save you, by which ye make it possible not once to understand this work! Do what ye will; look right away from Beethoven, fumble after Mozart, gird you round with Sebastian Bach; write Symphonies with or without choruses, write Masses, Oratorios,—the sexless embryos of Opera!—make songs without words, and operas without texts—:ye still bring naught to light that has a breath of true life in it. For look ye,—ye lack *Belief!* the great belief in the necessity of what ye do! Ye have but the belief of simpletons, the false belief in the possible necessity of your own selfish caprice!—

Un gazing across the busy wilderness of our musical art-world; in witnessing the hopeless sterility of this art-chaos, for all its everlasting ogling; in presence of this formless brew, whose lees are mouldering pedantic shamelessness, and from which, with all its solemn arrogance of musical 'old-master'-hood, at last but dissolute Italian opera-airs or wanton French *cancan*-tunes can rise as artificial distillate to the glare of modern public life;—in short, in pondering on this utter creative incapacity, we look, without an instant's blenching, towards the great catastrophe which shall make an end of the whole unwieldy musical monstrosity, to clear free space for the Art-work of the Future; in which true Music will truly have no minor rôle to play, but to which both breath and breathing space are utterly forbidden on such a musical soil as ours.*

* However lengthily I have here expressed myself upon the nature of Music, in comparison with what I have said upon the other branches of Art

5.

The Poetic Art.

If wont or fashion permitted us to take up again the old and genuine style of speech, and write instead of "*Dichten*," "*Tichten*"; then should we gain in the group of names for the three primeval human arts, "*Tanz-, Ton- und Tichtkunst*" (Dance, Tone, and Poetry), a beautiful word-picture of the nature of this trinity of sisters, namely a perfect *Stabreim*,* such as is native to the spirit of our language.

(my reasons lying in both the highly individual character of Music and its special and eventful evolutionary course, proceeding from this individuality), yet I am well aware of the countless gaps in my recital. But it would need not one book but an entire library, to lay bare the whole unseemliness, the flabbiness and ignominy of the bonds uniting our modern music with our modern life; to penetrate the piteous, over-sentimental idiosyncrasy of our art of Tone, which makes her the object of the speculation of our educational "Folk-improvers," who would trickle drops of Music's honey upon the acid sweat of ill-used factory-hands as the only possible alleviation of their sufferings (very much as our sages of the State and Bourse are all agog to stuff their pliant patches of religion between the gaping rents of the police-officials' tender care of men); and finally to explain the mournful psychological phenomenon, that a man may be not only base and bad, but also *dull*—without these qualities hindering him from being a quite respectable musician.—R. WAGNER.

* *Stabreim* and Alliteration.—A fuller explanation of this form of 'rhyme' will be found in "*Opera and Drama*" (Part II., chap. vi. and Part III., chap. ii.), which work will form the second volume of this series of translations. Meanwhile a few words of elucidation may not be found amiss.—The English equivalent, "Alliteration," does not convey the full force of this method of versification, as may be seen at once by the oft-quoted specimen from Churchill, "with apt alliteration's artful aid," for therein one of the fundamental rules is violated in such a manner as to show how little the true principle of this 'rhyme' is now understood in England; the rule in question being, that if vowels are employed for this artifice, they must be of different sound; as in Wagner's own lines "*Unheilig | acht' ich den Eid*" (the *stabreim* being here reduplicated in the immediately following line: "*der Unliebende eint*"). The simple rule, as given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, is that this rhyme is "indifferent as to the number of syllables in a couplet; but imperative as to the number of accented syllables, of which there must be four (two in each half), the first three beginning with the same letter" (in the case of consonants), the writer adducing the lines from *Piers the Ploughman*: "I was weary of wandering | and went me to rest" &c. In Brockhaus' *Conversations-lexikon*, however, it is stated that the original rule was: that in a couplet the first half

This *Stabreim*, moreover, would be especially appropriate by reason of the position which it gives to "*Tichtkunst*" (Poetry): as the last member of the 'rhyme,' this word would first decide that rhyme; since two alliterative words are only raised to a perfect *Stabreim* by the advent or begettal of the third; so that without this third member the earlier pair are merely accidental, being first shown as necessary factors by the presence of the third,—as man and wife are first shown in their true and necessary interdependence by the child which they beget. *

But just as the effective operation of this rhyme works backward from the close to the commencement, so does it also press onward with no less necessity in the reverse direction: the beginning members, truly, gain their first significance as rhyme by the advent of the closing member,

should contain *one* or *two* rhyming initials, the second only *one*—in each case the rhyme being borne by the strongly accented syllable; but that this rule was extended to allow of the use of *two* rhymes also in the second half, but never more. This authority cites a couplet from the 9th Century Saxon poem "*Heliand*," which runs thus: "so Ierda he tho thea Liudi | Iot hon wordon"; and adds that the word "*Stabreim*" is an abbreviation from "*Buchstabenreim*" (lit. = "spelling-rhyme"); that the first verse-half of the couplet ("*Langzeile*" or "*Liedstäbe*") was called "*Stollen*," the second: "*Hauptstab*," or principal rhyme,—a circumstance emphasised by Wagner above. In his great tetralogy, the *Ring des Nibelungen*, the poet-composer has made almost exclusive use of this form of versification, amplifying its rules much in the same way as he amplified those of Music, from that plastic power of genius which melts all rules into new moulds. But the great characteristic of the *Stabreim* proper, he has almost invariably preserved, viz.:—the marking thereby of the accented, *i.e.* the *root* word, and the commencing of the line by a strong (or 'long') syllable. As a perfect specimen may be instanced: "*Lachend muss ich dich lieben; | lachend will ich erblinden*" (*Siegfried*,—last Scene); while a rich example of doubled and re-doubled *Stabreim* is found at the end of the *Götterdämmerung*: "*Nicht Gut, nicht Gold, | noch Göttliche Pracht; | nicht Haus, nicht Hof, | noch herrischer Prunk*:"—These specimens, taken at random from the *Ring*, must suffice for the present purpose.—TR.

* Compare *Die Meistersinger*, Act 3.—"*Ob euch gelang ein rechtes Paar zu finden, das zeigt sich jetzt an den Kindern*," "If you've had wit to match your pair, that we shall see in their son and heir,"—where Hans Sachs is instructing Walther in the mysteries of the old Meistersingers' 'After-song.'—It is curious also that Wagner should have again hit upon the same thought as Schopenhauer, who explains the love of man to woman as governed by the 'Will-to-live' of their future progeny.—TR.

but the closing member is not so much as conceivable without the earlier pair. Thus the Poetic art can absolutely not create the genuine art-work—and this is only such an one as is brought to direct physical manifestation—without those arts to which the physical show belongs directly. Thought, that mere phantom of reality, is formless by itself; and only when it retraces the road on which it rose to birth, can it attain artistic perceptibility. In the Poetic art, the purpose of all Art comes first to consciousness: but the other arts contain within themselves the unconscious Necessity that forms this purpose. The art of Poetry is the creative process by which the Art-work steps into life: but out of Nothing, only the god of the Israelites can make some-thing,—the Poet must have that Some-thing; and that something is the whole artistic man, who proclaims in the arts of Dance and Tone the physical longing become a longing of the soul, which through its force first generates the poetic purpose and finds in that its absorption, in its attainment its own appeasing.

Wheresoever *the Folk* made poetry,—and only by the Folk, or in the footsteps of the Folk, can poetry be really made,—there did the Poetic purpose rise to life alone upon the shoulders of the arts of Dance and Tone, as the *head* of the full-fledged human being. The Lyrics of Orpheus would never have been able to turn the savage beasts to silent, placid adoration, if the singer had but given them forsooth some dumb and printed verse to read: their ears must be enthralled by the sonorous notes that came straight from the heart, their carrion-spying eyes be tamed by the proud and graceful movements of the body,—*in such a way* that they should recognise instinctively in this whole man no longer a mere object for their maw, no mere objective for their feeding-, but for their hearing- and their seeing-powers,—before they could be attuned to duly listen to his moral sentences.

Neither was the true *Folk-epic* by any means a mere recited poem: the songs of Homer, such as we now possess them, have issued from the critical siftings and compilings

of a time in which the genuine Epos had long since ceased to live. When Solon made his laws and Pisistratus introduced his political regime, men searched among the ruins of the already fallen Epos of the Folk and pieced the gathered heap together for reading service,—much as in the Hohenstaufen times they did with the fragments of the lost *Nibelungen-lieder*. But before these epic songs became the object of such literary care, they had flourished mid the Folk, eked out by voice and gesture, as a bodily enacted Art-work; as it were, a fixed and crystallised blend of lyric song and dance, with predominant lingering on portrayal of the action and reproduction of the heroic dialogue. These epic-lyrical performances form the unmistakable middle stage between the genuine older Lyric and Tragedy, the normal point of transition from the one to the other.

Tragedy was therefore the entry of the Art-work of the Folk upon the public arena of political life; and we may take its appearance as an excellent touchstone for the difference in procedure between the *Art-creating* of the Folk and the mere literary-historical *Making* of the so-called cultured art-world. At the very time when live-born Epos became the object of the critical dilettantism of the court of Pisistratus, it had already shed its blossoms in the People's life—yet not because the Folk had lost its true afflatus, but since it was already able to surpass the old, and from unstanchable artistic sources to build the less perfect art-work up, until it became the more perfect. For while those pedants and professors in the Prince's castle were labouring at the construction of a *literary Homer*, pampering their own unproductivity with their marvel at their wisdom, by aid of which they yet could only understand the thing that long had passed from life,—*Thespis* had already slid his car to Athens, had set it up beside the palace walls, dressed out his *stage* and, stepping from the chorus of the Folk, had *trodden* its planks; *no longer aid he shadow forth* the deeds of heroes, as in the Epos, but *in these heroes' guise enacted them*.

With the Folk, all is reality and deed; it *does*, and then

rejoices in the thought of its own doing. Thus the blithe Folk of Athens, enflamed by persecution, hunted out from court and city the melancholy sons of Pisistratus; and then bethought it how, by this its deed, it had become a free and independent people. Thus it raised the platform of its stage, and decked itself with tragic masks and raiment of some god or hero, in order itself to be a god or hero: and *Tragedy* was born; whose fruits it tasted with the blissful sense of its own creative force, but whose metaphysical basis it handed, all regardless, to the brain-racking speculation of the dramaturgists of our modern court-theatres.

Tragedy flourished for just so long as it was inspired by the spirit of the Folk, and as this spirit was a veritably popular, *i.e.* a *communal* one. When the national brotherhood of the Folk was shivered into fragments, when the common bond of its Religion and primeval Customs was pierced and severed by the sophist needles of the egoistic spirit of Athenian self-dissection,—then the Folk's art-work also ceased: then did the professors and the doctors of the literary guilds take heritage of the ruins of the fallen edifice, and delved among its beams and stones; to pry, to ponder, and to re-arrange its members. With Aristophanian laughter, the Folk relinquished to these learned insects the refuse of its meal, threw Art upon one side for two millennia, and fashioned of its innermost necessity the history of the world; the while those scholars cobbled up their tiresome history of Literature, by order of the supreme court of Alexander.

The career of Poetry, since the breaking-up of Tragedy, and since her own departure from community with mimetic Dance and Tone, can be easily enough surveyed,—despite the monstrous claims which she has raised. The lonely art of Poetry—prophesied no more*; she no longer

* "Die einsame Dichtkunst—*dichtete* nicht mehr."—Again it is impossible to translate "*dichten*," for lack of an English *verb*; our "poetise" has a derogatory strain in it; 'compose' and 'indite' will neither of them here take the place of the German original; and we are forced upon a paraphrase, which may perhaps find justification from the analogous term for him who 'prophesies,' namely, 'Seer,'—which Carlyle has so often applied to the true Poet.—TR.

showed, but only *described*; she merely played the go-between, but gave naught from herself; she pieced together what true seers had uttered, but without the living bond of unity; she suggested, without satisfying her own suggestions; she urged to life, without herself attaining life; she gave the catalogue of a picture-gallery, but not the paintings. The wintry stem of Speech, stripped of its summer wreath of sounding leaves, shrank to the withered, toneless signs of *Writing*: instead of to the Ear, it dumbly now addressed the *Eye*; the poet's strain became a *written dialect*,—the poet's breath the *penman's scrawl*.

There sate she then, the lonely, sullen sister, behind her reeking lamp in the gloom of her silent chamber,—a female *Faust*, who, across the dust and mildew of her books, from out the uncontenting warp and woof of Thought, from off the everlasting rack of fancies and of theories, yearned to step forth into actual life; with flesh and bone, and spick and span, to stand and go mid real men, a genuine human being. Alas! the poor sister had cast away her flesh and bone in over-pensive thoughtlessness; a disembodied soul, she could only now *describe* that which she lacked, as she watched it from her gloomy chamber, through the shut lattice of her thought, living and stirring its limbs amid the dear but distant world of Sense; she could only picture, ever picture, the beloved of her youth: "so looked his face, so swayed his limbs, so glanced his eye, so rang the music of his voice." But all this picturing and describing, however deftly she attempted to raise it to a special art, how ingeniously soever she laboured to fashion it by forms of speech and writing, for Art's consoling recompense,—it still was but a vain, superfluous labour, the stilling of a need which only sprang from a failing that her own caprice had bred; it was nothing but the indigent wealth of alphabetical signs, distasteful in themselves, of some poor mute.

The sound and sturdy man, who stands before us clad in panoply of actual body, describes not what he wills and whom he loves; but *wills* and *loves*, and imparts to us by

his artistic organs the joy of his own willing and his loving. This he does with highest measure of directness in the enacted Drama. But it is only to the straining for a shadowy substitute, an artificially objective method of description,—on which the art of Poetry, now loosed from all substantiality, must exercise her utmost powers of detail,—that we have to thank this million-membered mass of ponderous tomes, by which she still, at bottom, can only trumpet forth her utter helplessness. This whole impassable waste of stored-up literature—despite its million phrases and centuries of verse and prose, without once coming to the living Word—is nothing but the toilsome stammering of aphasia-smitten Thought, in its struggle for transmutation into natural articulate utterance.

This Thought, the highest and most conditioned faculty of artistic man, had cut itself adrift from fair warm Life, whose yearning had begotten and sustained it, as from a hemming, fettering bond that clogged its own unbounded freedom :—so deemed the Christian yearning, and believed that it must break away from physical man, to spread in heaven's boundless æther to freest waywardness. But this very severance was to teach that thought and this desire how inseparable they were from human nature's being: how high soever they might soar into the air, they still could do this in the form of bodily man alone. In sooth, they could not take the carcase with them, bound as it was, by laws of gravitation; but they managed to abstract a vapoury emanation, which instinctively took on again the form and bearing of the human body. Thus hovered in the air the poet's Thought, like a human-outlined cloud that spread its shadow over actual, bodily earth-life, to which it evermore looked down; and into which it needs must long to shed itself, just as from earth alone it sucked its steaming vapours. The natural cloud dissolves itself, in giving back to earth the conditions of its being: as fruitful rain it sinks upon the meadows, thrusts deep into the thirsty soil, and steeps the panting seeds of plants, which open then their rich luxuriance to the sunlight,—to

that light which had erstwhile drawn the lowering cloud from out the fields. So should the Poet's thought once more impregnate Life; no longer spread its idle canopy of cloud twixt Life and Light.

What Poetry perceived from that high seat, was after all but Life: the higher did she raise herself, the more panoramic became her view; but the wider the connection in which she was now enabled to grasp the parts, the livelier arose in her the longing to fathom the depths of this great whole. Thus Poetry turned to *Science*, to *Philosophy*. To the struggle for a deeper knowledge of Nature and of Man, we stand indebted for that copious store of literature whose kernel is the poetic musing (*gedankenhaftes Dichten*) which speaks to us in Human- and in Natural- History, and in Philosophy. The livelier do these sciences evince the longing for a genuine portrayal of the known, so much the nearer do they approach once more the artist's poetry; and the highest skill in picturing to the senses the phenomena of the universe, must be ascribed to the noble works of this department of literature. (But the deepest and most universal science can, at the last, know nothing else but Life itself; and the substance and the sense of Life are naught but Man and Nature. Science, therefore, can only gain her perfect confirmation in the work of Art; in *that work* which takes both Man and Nature—in so far as the latter attains her consciousness in Man—and shows them forth directly. Thus the consummation of Knowledge is its redemption into Poetry; into that poetic art, however, which marches hand in hand with her sister arts towards the perfect Artwork;—and this artwork is none other than the *Drama*.)

Drama is only conceivable as the fullest expression of a joint artistic longing to impart; while this longing, again, can only parley with a common receptivity. Where either of these factors lacks, the drama is no necessary, but merely an arbitrary art-product. Without these factors being at hand in actual Life, the poet, in his striving for immediate presentation of the life that he had apprehended,

sought to create the drama for himself alone ; his creation therefore fell, perforce, a victim to all the faults of arbitrary dealing. Only in exact measure as his own proceeded from a common impulse, and could address itself to a common interest, do we find the necessary conditions of Drama fulfilled—since the time of its recall to life—and the desire to answer those conditions rewarded with success.

A common impulse toward dramatic art-work can only be at hand in those who actually enact the work of art in common ; these, as we take it, are the *fellowships of players*. At the end of the Middle Ages, we see such fellowships arising directly from the Folk ; while those who later overmastered them and laid down their laws from the standpoint of absolute poetic art, have earned themselves the fame of destroying root-and-branch *that* which the man who sprang directly from such a fellowship, and made his poems for and with it, had created for the wonder of all time. From out the inmost, truest nature of the Folk, *Shakespeare* created (*dichtete*) for his fellow-players that Drama which seems to us the more astounding as we see it rise by might of naked speech alone, without all help of kindred arts. *One* only help it had, the *Phantasy* of his audience, which turned with active sympathy to greet the *inspiration* of the poet's comrades. A genius the like of which was never heard, and a group of favouring chances ne'er repeated, in common made amends for what they lacked in common. Their joint creative force, however, was—*Need* ; and where this shows its nature-bidden might, there man can compass even the impossible to satisfy it : from poverty grows plenty, from want an overflow ; the boorish figure of the homely Folk's-comedian takes on the bearing of a hero, the raucous clang of daily speech becomes the sounding music of the soul, the rude scaffolding of carpet-hung boards becomes a world-stage with all its wealth of scene. But if we take away this art-work from its frame of fortunate conditions, if we set it down outside the realm of fertile force which bore it from the need of

this one definite epoch, then do we see with sorrow that the poverty was still but poverty, the want but want; that Shakespeare was indeed the mightiest Poet of all time, but his Artwork was not yet the work for every age; that not his genius, but the incomplete and merely will-ing, not yet *can-ning*, spirit of his age's art had made him but the *Thespis of the Tragedy of the Future*. In the same relation as stood the car of Thespis, in the brief time-span of the flowering of Athenian art, to the stage of Æschylus and Sophocles: so stands the stage of Shakespeare, in the unmeasured spaces of the flowering time of universal human art, to the Theatre of the Future. The deed of the one and only Shakespeare, which made of him a universal Man, a very god, is yet but the kindred deed of the solitary Beethoven, who found the language of the Artist-manhood of the Future: only where these twain Prometheus'—Shakespeare and Beethoven—shall reach out hands to one another; where the marble creations of Phidias shall bestir themselves in flesh and blood; where the painted counterfeit of Nature shall quit its cribbing frame on the chamberwalls of the egoist, and stretch its ample breadths on the warm-life-blown framework of the Future Stage,—there first, in the communion of all his fellow-artists, will the *Poet* also find redemption.

It was on the long journey from Shakespeare's stage to the art-work of the future, that the poet was first to gain full consciousness of his unhappy loneliness. Out of the fellowship of actors, had the *Dramatic poet* evolved by natural law; but, in his foolish arrogance, he fain would now exalt himself above his comrades, and *without* their love, without their impulse, dictate the drama from behind his pedant desk to *those* from whose free gift of personation it could gain alone a natural growth, and to whose joint will he had only power to point the informing aim. Thus the organs of dramatic art, reduced to slavish drudgery, grew dumb before the poet, who desired not merely now to *utter*, but to *dominate* the artistic impulse. As the virtuoso presses or releases at his will the pianoforte's

keys, so would the poet play upon the automaton troupe of actors; as on an instrument of wood and steel erected to display his own particular dexterity, and from which men should expect to hear no other thing but *him* the playing marvel. But the keys of the instrument made *their own* rejoinder to the ambitious egoist: the harder he hammered, in his gymnastic frenzy, the more they stuck and clattered.

Goethe once reckoned up but four weeks of pure happiness in all his well-filled life: his most unhappy years he made no special count of; but we know them:—they were those in which he sought to tune that jangling instrument for his use. This man of might was longing to take refuge from the soundless desert of art-literature in the living, sonorous art-work. Whose eye was surer, and wider-ranging in its knowledge of life than his? What he had seen, described, and pictured, he now would bring to ear upon that instrument. Great heavens! how deformed and past all recognition did his views of life confront him, when forced into this metric music!* How must he wrench his tuning-key, how tug and stretch the strings, until at last they snapped with one great whine!—He was forced to see that everything is possible in this world, excepting that abstract spirit should govern men: where this spirit is not

* "O himmel! wie entstellt, wie unkenbar klangen ihm seine, in dichterische Musik gebrachten, Anschauungen entgegen!" Probably Wagner here refers to the opera-texts, such as *Proserpina*, written by Goethe for the Weimar Court-theatre, the direction of which was entrusted to him by the Duke; for in his article, "Zukunftsmusik" (The "Music of the Future," vol. vii. of the *Ges. Schriften*) our author writes as follows: "Goethe himself indited several opera-texts (libretti), and, in order to place himself on the level of that *genre*, he thought right to keep both his invention and his working-out as trivial as possible; so that it is only with regret, that we can see these extremely mawkish pieces numbered in the ranks of his poems."—As to the allusion to the "poodle" at the end of the present paragraph, it is an absolute statement of fact. In 1817 Goethe, who had long felt the growing impossibility of maintaining the high standard of the Weimar theatrical performances, in face of the favour shown to Kotzebue and his claptrap, finally laid down the reins of direction in consequence of the production, against his express desire, of a piece called the "*Hund des Aubry*." We cannot discover whether Kotzebue had a hand in this piece or not, for it is merely described in Schaefer's "Life of Goethe" as imported from France; the biographer adds, that in it a rôle was assigned to a trained Poodle!—Tr.

seeded in the whole sound man and blossomed out of him, it can never be poured into him from above. The egoistic poet can make mechanical puppets move according to his wish, but never turn machines to actual living men. From the stage where Goethe wished to make his *men*, he was chased at last by a performing *poodle*:—as an exemplary warning to all unnatural government from on high!

Where Goethe shipwrecked, it could but become "good tone" to look upon oneself as shipwrecked in advance: the poets still wrote plays, but not for the unpolished stage; simply for their cream-laid paper. Only the second- or third- rate poetasters, who here and there adapted their conceits to local exigence, still busied their brains with the players; but not the eminent poet, who wrote "out of his own head" and, of all the many hues of life, found only abstract, Prussian-territorial, black-on-white respectable. Thus happened the unheard-of: *Dramas written for dumb reading!*

Did Shakespeare, in his stress for unadulterated Life, take shelter in the uncouth scaffold of his People's-stage: so did the egoistic resignation of the modern dramatist content itself with the bookseller's counter; on which he laid him out for market half-dead and half-alive. Had the physically embodied drama cast itself upon the bosom of the Folk: so did the "published" incarnation of the play lie down beneath the feet of the art-critic's good pleasure. Accommodating herself to one servile yoke after the other, Dramatic Poetry swung herself aloft—in her own idle fancy—to unbound freedom. Those burdensome conditions under which alone a drama can step into life, she might now forsooth cast overboard without ado; for only that which wills to *live*, must hearken to necessity,—but that which wills to do much *more* than live, namely to lead a *dead* existence, can make of itself what it pleases: the most arbitrary is to it the most necessary; and the more her independence of the terms of physical show, the more freely could Poetry abandon herself to her own self-will and absolute self-admiration.

Thus by the taking up of Drama into literature, a mere new form was found in which the art of Poetry might indite herself afresh; only borrowing from Life the accidental stuff which she might twist and turn to suit her solitary need, her own self-glorification. All matter and each form were only there to help her introduce to the best graces of the reader one abstract thought, the poet's idealised, beloved 'I.' How faithlessly she forgot, the while, that she had first to thank them all—even the most complex of her forms—to just this haughtily-despised material Life! From the Lyric through all the forms of poetry down to this literary Drama, there is not one which has not blossomed in *far purer and more noble* shape from the bodily directness of the People's life. What are all the products of the seeming spontaneous action of abstract poetic art, exhibited in language, verse, and expression, compared with the ever fresh-born beauty, variety, and perfection of the *Folk's-lyric*, whose teeming riches the *spirit of research* is toiling now at last to drag from under the rubbish-heap of ages?

But these Folk-ballads are not so much as thinkable without their twin-bred melodies: and what was not only said but also *sung*, was part and parcel of Life's immediate utterance. Who speaks and sings, at the same time expresses his feelings by *gestures* and by *motion*—at least whoever does this from sheer instinct, like the *Folk*,—though not the tutored foundling of our song-professors.—Where such an art still flourishes, it finds of itself a constant train of fresh turns of expression, fresh forms of composition ("*Dichtung*"); and the Athenians teach us unmistakably, how, in the progress of this self-unfolding, the highest artwork, Tragedy, could come to birth.—Opposed to this, the art of Poetry must ever stay unfruitful when she turns her back on Life; all her shaping then can never be aught else but that of Fashion, that of wiful combination,—not invention. Unfortunate in her every rub with Matter, she therefore turns for ever back to *thought*: that restless mill-wheel of the Wish, the ever craving, ever unstilled

Wish which—thrusting off its only possible assuagement, in the *world of sense*—must only wish *itself* eternally, eternally consume *itself*.

The Literary Drama can only redeem itself from this state of misery by becoming the actual *living* Drama. The path of that redemption has been repeatedly entered, and even in our latter days,—by many an one from honest yearning, but alas! by the majority for no other reason than that the Theatre had imperceptibly become a more remunerative market than the counter of the Publisher.

The judgment⁽¹⁾ of the *public*, in howsoever great a social disfigurement it may show itself, holds ever by the direct and physical reality; nay, the mutual give-and-take of the world of sense (*die Wechselwirkung des Sinnlichen*) makes up, at bottom, what we call “publicity.”⁽²⁾ Had the impotent conceit of Poetry withdrawn her from this immediate interaction: so, as regards the Drama, had the *players* seized it for their own advantage. Most rightly does the public aspect⁽³⁾ of the stage belong *de facto* to the performing fellowship alone; but where everything was selfishly dis-sundering,—like the poet from this fellowship, to which in the natural order of affairs he immediately belonged,—there did the fellowship itself cut through the common band which alone had made it an *artistic* one. Would the poet unconditionally see *himself* alone upon the stage,—did he thus dispute in advance the artistic value of the fellowship,—so, with far more natural excuse, did the individual actor break his bonds in order to unconditionally stamp *himself* as the only current coin; and herein he was supported by the encouraging plaudits of the Public, which ever holds by instinct to the sheer and absolute show.

The art of Comedy became through this the art of *the Comedian*, a personal virtuosity: *i.e.* that egoistic form of

(1), (2), (3)—The same word, “Öffentlichkeit,” is used in these three instances; it has seemed, however, impossible to translate this half abstract, half concrete term, excepting by the use of three different expressions, in order to keep touch with the meaning.—Tr.

art which exists for its exclusive *self*, and wills but the glory of the absolute personality. The common aim, through which alone the Drama becomes a work of Art, lay quite beyond the ken of the individual virtuoso; and that which should generate the art of comedy from out itself, as a common outcome of the spirit of communion,—to wit the dramatic Art-work,—*that* is entirely neglected by this virtuoso or this guild of virtuosi, who only seek the special thing that answers to their personal dexterity, the thing that alone can pay its tribute to their vanity. Yet hundreds of the *best-skilled* egoists, though all collected on one spot of earth, cannot fulfil *that task* which can only be the work of communism (*Gemeinsamkeit*); at least until they cease to be mere egoists. But so long as they are this, their ground of common action—only attainable under *external* pressure—is that of mutual hate and envy; and our theatre, therefore, often resembles the battlefield of the two lions, on which we can discover nothing but their tails, the sole remainder of their mutual meal off one another.

Nevertheless, where this very *virtuosity of the performer* makes up the total of the public's notion of theatric art, as in the generality of the French theatres and even in the opera-world of Italy, we have at hand a more natural expression of the bent to artistic exhibition, than where the 'abstract' poet would fain usurp this bent for his own self-glorification. Experience has often proved that from out that world of virtuosi, given a true *heart* to beat in unison with the *artistic* talent, there may come forth a dramatic performer who by one solitary impersonation* shall disclose to us the inmost essence of dramatic art far more distinctly than a hundred art-dramas *per se*. Where, on the other hand, dramatic art-poetry would experiment with living actors, she can only manage in the end to quite confuse both virtuosi and public; or else, for all her self-

* From all that Wagner has written about Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, it cannot be doubted that it is to her that he here refers. Compare page 9 of the "*Autobiographic Sketch*," also "*A Pilgrimage to Beethoven*," the "*Communication to my Friends*," and "*On Actors and Singers*."—TR.

inflation, to betake herself to shamefullest subservience. She either brings but stillborn children into the world,—and that is the best result of her activity, for then she does no harm,—or else she inoculates her constitutional disease, of *willing* without *can-ning*, like a devastating plague into the still half-healthy members of the art of comedy. In any case she needs must follow the coercive laws of the most dependent lack of self-dependence: in order to attain some semblance of a form, she must look around for any form that may have sometime emanated from the life of genuine comedy. This then she almost always borrows, in our latest times, from the disciples of *Molière* alone.

With the lively, abstraction-hating people of France, the art of Comedy—in so far as it was not governed by the influence of the Court—lived for the most part its own indigenous life: amid the overpowering hostility to Art of our general social condition, whatever healthy thing has been able to evolve from Comedy, since the dying out of the Shakespearian drama, we owe to the French alone. But even among them—under pressure of the ruling world-*geist* that kills all common weal, whose soul is Luxury and Fashion—the true, complete, Dramatic Art-work could not so much as distantly appear: 'the only universal factor of our modern world, the spirit of *usury and speculation*, has with them also held each germ of true dramatic art in egoistic severance from its fellow. Art-forms to answer to this sordid spirit, however, the French dramatic school has found, without a doubt: with all the unseemliness of their contents, they evince uncommon skill in making these contents as palatable as may be; and these forms have this distinctive merit, that they have actually emanated from the inborn spirit of the *French* comedian's art, and thus from life itself.

Our German dramatists, in their longing for some seeming-necessary form wherewith to clothe the arbitrary contents of their poetic thought, and since they lacked the inborn plastic gift, set up this needful form in pure caprice; for they seized upon the Frenchman's 'scheme,'

without reflecting that this scheme had sprung from quite another, and a *genuine* Need. But he who does not act from sheer necessity, may choose where'er he pleases. Thus our dramatists were not quite satisfied with their adoption of French forms: the stew still lacked of this or that,—a pinch of Shakespearian audacity, a spice of Spanish pathos, and, for a sauce, a remanet of Schiller's ideality or Iffland's burgher bonhomie. All this is now dished up with unheard archness, according to the French recipe, and served with journalistic reminiscences of the latest scandal; the favourite actor—since the real poet had not learnt how to play his comedies—provided with the rôle of some fictitious poet, wherever possible;—with a further slice from here or there thrown in to suit the special circumstance—: and so we have the modernest dramatic art-work, the poet who in sooth *writes down himself, i.e., his palpable poetic incapacity.*

Enough! of the unexampled squalor of our *theatric* poetry! with which indeed we here have alone to do; since we need not draw the special subdivision of *literary poesy* within our closer ken. For, with our eyes directed toward the Artwork of the Future, we are seeking out Poetic art where she is struggling to become a living and immediate art, and this is in the *Drama*; not where she renounces every claim to this life-issue, and yet—for all her fill of thought—but takes the terms of her peculiar manufacture from the hopeless artistic unfitness of our modern public life. This Literature-poesy (*die litteraturpoesie*) supplies the only solace—however sad and impotent!—of the lonely human being of the Present who longs to taste poetic food. Yet the solace that she gives is truly but an access of the *longing after Life*, the longing for the living Artwork; for the urgency of this longing is her very soul,—where *this* does not speak out, does not proclaim itself with might and main, there has the last trace of verity departed from this poesy too. The more honestly and tumultuously, however, does it throb within her, so much the more veraciously does she admit her own unsolaceable plight, and confess the only

possible assuagement of her longing, to be *her own self-abrogation, her dissolution into Life, into the living Art-work of the Future.*

Let us ponder how this fervent, noble longing of Literary Poesy must one day be responded to; and meanwhile let us leave our modern Dramatic Poetry to the pompous triumphs of her own ridiculous vanity!

6.

Whilom attempts at re-uniting the three humanistic Arts.

In our general survey of the demeanour of each of the three humanistic (*rein menschlich*) arts after its severance from their initial communion, we could not but plainly see that exactly where the one variety touched on the province of the next, where the faculty of the second stepped-in to replace the faculty of the first, there did the first one also find its natural bounds. Beyond these bounds, it might stretch over from the second art-variety to the third; and through this third, again, back to itself, back to its own especial individuality,—but only in accordance with the natural laws of *Love*, of *self-offering* for the common good impelled by Love. As Man by love sinks his whole nature in that of Woman, in order to pass over through her into a third being, the Child,—and yet finds but himself again in all the loving trinity, though in this self a widened, filled, and finished whole: so may each of these individual arts find its own self again in the perfect, thoroughly liberated Artwork—nay, look upon itself as broadened to this Artwork—so soon as, on the path of genuine love and by sinking of itself within the kindred arts, it returns upon itself and finds the guerdon of its love in the perfect work of Art to which it knows itself expanded. Only that art-variety, however, which wills the common art-work, reaches therewith the highest fill of its own particular nature; whereas that art which merely wills *itself*, its own exclusive fill of

self, stays empty and unfree—for all the luxury that it may heap upon its solitary semblance. But the *Will* to form the common artwork arises in each branch of art by instinct and unconsciously, so soon as e'er it touches on its own confines and *gives* itself to the answering art, not merely strives to take from it. It only stays *throughout itself*, when it *thoroughly gives itself away*: whereas it must fall to its very opposite, if it at last must only feed upon the other:—"whose bread I eat, his song I'll sing." But when it gives itself *entirely* to the second, and stays *entirely* enrapt therein, it then may pass from that *entirely* into the third; and thus become once more *entirely itself*, in highest fulness, in the associate Art-work.

Of all these arts not one so sorely needed an espousal with another, as that of *Tone*; for her peculiar character is that of a fluid nature-element poured out betwixt the more defined and individualised substances of the two other arts. Only through the Rhythm of Dance, or as bearer of the Word, could she brace her deliquescent being to definite and characteristic corporeality. But neither of the other arts could bring herself to plunge, in love without reserve, into the element of *Tone*: each drew from it so many bucketsful as seemed expedient for her own precise and egoistic aims; each took from *Tone*, but gave not in return; so that poor *Tone*, who of her life-need stretched out her hands in all directions, was forced at last herself to *take* for very means of maintenance. Thus she engulfed the Word at first, to make of it what suited best her pleasure: but while she disposed of this word as her wilful feeling listed, in Catholic music, she lost its bony framework—so to say—of which, in her desire to become a human being, she stood in need to bear the liquid volume of her blood, and round which she might have crystallised a sinewy flesh. A new and energetic handling of the Word, in order to gain shape therefrom, was shown by *Protestant* church-music; which, in the "*Passion-music*," pressed on towards an ecclesiastical drama, wherein the word was no longer a mere shifting vehicle for the expression of feeling, but girt

itself to thoughts depicting Action. In this church-drama, Music, while still retaining her predominance and building everything else into her own pedestal, almost compelled Poetry to behave in earnest and like a man towards her. But coward Poetry appeared to dread this challenge; she deemed it as well to cast a few neglected morsels to swell the meal of this mightily waxing monster, Music, and thus to pacify it; only, however, to regain the liberty of staying undisturbed within her own peculiar province, the egoistic sphere of Literature. It is to this selfish, cowardly bearing of Poetry toward Tone that we stand indebted for that unnatural abortion the *Oratorio*, which finally transplanted itself from the church into the concert-hall. The *Oratorio* would give itself the airs of Drama; but only precisely in so far as it might still preserve to *Music* the unquestioned right of being the chief concern, the only leader of the drama's 'tone.'

Where Poetry fain would reign in solitude, as in the spoken Play, she took Music into her menial service, for her own convenience; as, for instance, for the entertainment of the audience between the acts, or even for the enhancement of the effect of certain dumb transactions, such as the irruption of a cautious burglar, and matters of that sort! Dance did the selfsame thing, when she leapt proudly on to saddle, and graciously condescended to allow Music to hold the stirrup. Exactly so did Tone behave to Poetry in the *Oratorio*: she merely let her pile the heap of stones, from which she might erect her building as she fancied.

But Music at last capped all this ever-swelling arrogance, by her shameless insolence in the *Opera*. Here she claimed tribute of the art of Poetry down to its utmost farthing: it was no longer to merely make her verses, no longer to merely suggest dramatic characters and sequences, as in the *Oratorio*, in order to give her a handle for her own distention,—but it was to lay down its whole being and all its powers at her feet, to offer up complete dramatic characters and complex situations, in short the entire ingredients

of Drama; in order that she might take this gift of homage and make of it whatever her fancy listed.

The *Opera*, as the seeming point of reunion of all the three related arts, has become the meeting-place of these sisters' most self-seeking efforts. Undoubtedly Tone claims for herself the supreme right of legislation therein; nay, it is solely to her struggle—though led by egoism—towards the genuine artwork of the Drama, that we owe the Opera at all. But in degree as Poetry and Dance were bid to be her simple slaves, there rose amid *their* egoistic ranks a growing spirit of rebellion against their domineering sister. The arts of Dance and Poetry had taken a personal lease of Drama *in their own way*: the spectacular Play and the pantomimic Ballet were the two territories between which Opera now deployed her troops, taking from each whatever she deemed indispensable for the self-glorification of Music. Play and Ballet, however, were well aware of her aggressive self-sufficiency: they only lent themselves to their sister against their will, and in any case with the mental reservation that on the first favourable opportunity they each would clear themselves an exclusive field. So Poetry leaves behind her feeling and her pathos, the only fitting wear for Opera, and throws her net of modern Intrigue around her sister Music; who, without being able to get a proper hold of it, must willy-nilly twist and turn the empty cobweb, which none but the nimble play-*sempstress* herself can plait into a tissue: and there she chirps and twitters, as in the French confectionary-operas, until at last her peevish breath gives out, and sister Prose steps in to fill the stage. Dance, on the other hand, has only to espy some breach in the breath-taking of the tyrannising songstress, some chilling of the lava-stream of musical emotion,—and in an instant she flings her legs astride the boards; trounces sister Music off the scene, down to the solitary confinement of the orchestra; and spins, and whirls, and runs around, until the public can no longer see the wood for wealth of leaves, *i.e.* the opera for the crowd of legs.

Thus Opera becomes the mutual compact of the egoism of the three related arts. To rescue her supremacy, Tone contracts with Dance for so many quarters-of-an-hour which shall belong to the latter *alone*: during this period the chalk upon the shoe-soles shall trace the regulations of the stage, and music shall be made according to the system of the *leg-*, and not the *tone-*, vibrations; item, that the singers shall be expressly forbidden to indulge in any sort of graceful bodily motion,—this is to be the exclusive property of the dancer, whereas the singer is to be pledged to complete abstention from any fancy for mimetic gestures, a restriction which will have the additional advantage of conserving his voice. With Poetry Tone settles, to the former's highest satisfaction, that she will not employ her in the slightest on the stage; nay, will as far as possible not even articulate her words and verses, and will relegate her instead to the printed text-book, necessarily to be read *after* the performance, in Literature's decorous garb of black and white. Thus, then, is the noble bond concluded, each art again itself; and between the dancing legs and written book, Music once more floats gaily on through all the length and breadth of her desire.—*This is modern Freedom in the faithful counterfeit of Art!*

Yet after such a shameful compact the art of Tone, however brilliantly she seem to reign in Opera, must needs be deeply conscious of her humiliating *dependence*. Her life-breath is the heart's affection; and if this also be centred on itself and its own contentment, then not only is it as much in need of the wherewithal of this contentment as are the yearnings of the senses and the understanding, but it feels its need of that object far more piercingly and vividly than they. The keenness of this need gives to the heart its courage of self-sacrifice; and just as Beethoven has spoken out this courage in a valiant deed, so have tone-poets like *Gluck* and *Mozart* expressed by glorious deeds of love the joy with which the lover sinks himself within his object; ceasing to be himself, but becoming in reward an infinitely greater thing. Wherever the edifice

of Opera—though originally erected for the egoistic manifestoes of segregated arts—betrayed within itself the trace of a condition for the full absorption of Music into Poetry, these masters have accomplished the redemption of their art into the conjoint artwork. But the baleful influence of the ruling evil plight explains to us the utter isolation of such radiant deeds, together with the isolation of the very tone-poets who fulfilled them. That which was possible to the unit under certain fortunate, but almost purely accidental circumstances, is very far indeed from forming a law for the great mass of phenomena; and in the latter we can only recognise the distracted, egoistic oscillations of Caprice; whose methods indeed are those of all mere copying, since it cannot originate anything of itself. Gluck and Mozart, together with the scanty handful of kindred tone-poets,* serve us only as load-stars on the midnight sea of operatic music, to point the way to the pure artistic possibility of the ascension of the richest music into a still richer dramatic poetry, namely into *that* Poetic art which by this free surrender of Music to her shall first become an all-effectual Dramatic art. How impossible is the perfect artwork amid the ruling state of things, is proved by the very fact that, after Gluck and Mozart had disclosed the highest capabilities of Music, these deeds have yet remained without the smallest influence on our actual modern art's demeanour,—that the sparks which flew from their genius have only hovered before our art-world like sputtering fireworks, but have been absolutely unable to incend the fire which must have caught its flame from them, had the fuel for it been to hand.

But even the deeds of Gluck and Mozart were but one-sided deeds, *i.e.* they revealed the capability and the instinctive will of Music without their being understood by her sister arts, without the latter contributing towards those deeds from a like-felt genuine impulse to be absorbed

* Among these, the masters of the French-school of the beginning of this century should be specially noted.—R. Wagner.—See also p. 16, "*Autobiographic Sketch.*"—Tr.

in one another, and in fact without any response from their side. Only, however, from a like and common impulse of all three sister arts, can their redemption into the true Art-work, and thus this artwork itself, become a possibility. When at last the pride of all three arts in their own self-sufficiency shall break to pieces, and pass over into love for one another; when at last each art can only love itself when mirrored in the others; when at last they cease to be dissevered arts,—then will they all have power to create the perfect artwork; aye, and their own desistence, in this sense, is already of itself this Art-work, their death immediately its life.

Thus will the Drama of the Future rise up of itself, when nor Comedy, nor Opera, nor Pantomime, can any longer live; when the conditions which allowed their origin and sustained their unnatural life, shall have been entirely upheaved. These conditions can only be upheaved by the advent of those fresh conditions which breed from out themselves the Art-work of the Future. The latter, however, cannot arise alone, but only in the fullest harmony with the conditions of our whole Life. Only when the ruling religion of Egoism, which has split the entire domain of Art into crippled, self-seeking art-tendencies and art-varieties, shall have been mercilessly dislodged and torn up root and branch from every moment of the life of man, can the *new religion* step forth of itself to life; the religion which includes within itself the conditions of the Artwork of the Future.)

Before we turn with straining eyes to the prefigurement of this Artwork—such as we have to win for ourselves from the utter disowning of our present art-surroundings—it is necessary, however, to cast a glance upon the nature of the so-called *plastic arts*.

III.

MAN SHAPING ART FROM NATURE'S STUFFS.*

I.

Architectural Art.



S Man becomes the subject and the matter of his own artistic treatment, in the first and highest reference, so does he extend his longing for artistic portrayal to the objects of surrounding, allied, ministering *Nature*.

Exactly in proportion as Man knows how to grasp the reference of Nature to *himself*, in his portrayal of her, and to set himself in the centre of his survey of the world as the conscience-woken and the conscience-waker,† is he able to picture Nature to himself *artistically*; and thereafter to *impart* her to the only beings for whom this portrait can be destined—to wit, to Men. In this he proceeds from a like, though not an equally imperative, impulse to that which urged the art-work whose subject and whose stuff he was himself. But only the man who has already brought forth from and in himself the directly human artwork, and can thus both comprehend and impart himself artistically, is also able to represent *Nature* to

* The title of this chapter, "*Der Mensch als künstlerischer Bildner aus natürlichen Stoffen*," presents many difficulties to the translator. If we possessed a good equivalent for "Bildner" (from "*bilden*," to fashion, shape or form, e.g. a picture) that would cover the three different varieties of 'plastic' artist, we should still be short of a generally accepted substitute for "*Stoff*." The idea of the original is: to include in the term "stuff" not only the *raw material*, as in Architecture or Sculpture, but also the *subject-matter*, as in Landscape-painting. This being thus, perhaps we may be permitted to employ the word in the sense in which Shakespeare uses it, in the line "We are such stuff as dreams are made on."—TR.

† Compare *Götterdämmerung*, Act 3, "Der Wecker kam; er küsst dich wach . . . da lacht ihm Brünnhilde's Lust!"—TR.

himself artistically ; not the unawakened thrall of Nature. The *Asiatic* peoples, and even the *Egyptians*—to whom Nature only showed herself as a self-willed, elementary, or brutish force, to which Man stood in the relation either of unconditioned suffering or of grovelling self-debasement—set Nature up *above* them as the object of their adoration, the graven symbol of their worship ; without, for that very reason, being able to exalt themselves to free, artistic consciousness. Here, then, Man could never form the subject of his own artistic exposition ; but seeing that, whether he willed or no, he could only conceive all personality—such as the personal nature-force—according to a human standard, he made over his own image, in sooth in horrible distortion, to those objects of Nature which he fain would portray.

It was reserved for the *Hellenes* to first evolve the humanistic (*rein menschliche*) art-work in their own person, and from that to expand it to the exposition of Nature. But they could not be ripe for this human art-work itself until they had conquered Nature, in the sense in which she presented herself to the Asiatic peoples, and had so far set Man on Nature's pinnacle that they conceived those personal nature-forces as clothed with the perfect shape of human beauty, as Gods that bore themselves as men. First when Zeus breathed life throughout the world from his Olympian height, when Aphrodite rose from out the sea-foam, and Apollo proclaimed the spirit and the form of his own being as the law of beauteous human life, did the uncouth nature-deities of Asia vanish with their idols, and fair artistic Man, awakening to self-consciousness, apply the laws of human beauty to his conception and his portraiture of Nature.

Before the *God's-oak* at Dodona the Pelasgian (" *Urhellene* ") bowed himself, in waiting for the oracle ; beneath the shady thatch of leaves, and circled by the verdant pillars of the *God's-grove*, the *Orpheist* raised his voice ; but under the fair-ceiled roof, and amid the symmetry of marble columns of the *God's-temple*, the art-glad *Lyrist* led the mazes of his dance, to strains of sounding hymns,—and

in the *Theatre*, which reared itself around the God's-altar—as its central point—on the one hand to the message-giving stage, on the other to the ample rows where sat the message-craving audience, the *Tragedian* brought to birth the living work of consummated Art.

Thus did *artistic Man*, of his longing for *artistic commune with himself*, rule Nature to his own *artistic needs* and bid her serve his highest purpose. Thus did the Lyrist and Tragedian command the *Architect* to build the artistic edifice which should answer to their art in worthy manner.

The foremost, natural need urged men to build them homes and strongholds: but in that land and mid that folk from which our whole Art originates, it was not this purely physical need, but the need of men engaged in artistic presentation of themselves, that was destined to convert the Handicraft of building into a genuine Art. Not the royal dwellings of Theseus and Agamemnon, not the rude rock-built walls of Pelasgian citadels, have reached our physical or even our mental field of vision,—but the *Temples* of the Gods, the *Tragic theatres* of the Folk. Every relic that has come to us of architectural art applied to objects outside *these*, dates after the decline of Tragedy, *i.e.* of the completed Grecian Art, and is essentially of Asiatic origin.

As the Asiatic, that perpetual thrall of Nature, could only show the majesty of man in the *one* and absolute ruling despot, so did he heap all pomp of circumstance around this "God on earth" alone: and all this heaping-up was merely reckoned for the satisfaction of that egoistic sensuous longing which, even to the pitch of brutish fury, but wills *itself*, but loves *itself* to madness, and in such never-sated appetite piles object upon object, mass on mass, in order to attain a final satisfaction of its prodigiously developed physicality. *Luxury*, therefore, is the root of all the Asiatic architecture: its monstrous, soulless sense-confounding outcrop we witness in the city-seeming palaces of Asiatic despots.

Sweet repose and noble charm breathe on us, on the

other hand, from the radiant aspect of Hellenic temples ; in which we recognise the form of Nature, but spiritualised by human Art. The broadening of the temple of the Gods to the assembled People's show-place of the highest human art, was *the Theatre*. Herein Art, and verily that common-nurtured art which communed with a commonwealth, was a law and standard to herself ; proceeding by her own Necessity and answering that necessity to the fullest,—nay, bringing forth *therefrom* the boldest and most marvellous creations.

Meanwhile the dwellings of the individual units but answered to the need from which they sprang. Originally carpentered of wooden logs, and fitted—like the pavilion of Achilles—in accordance with the simplest laws of usefulness : in the heyday of Hellenic culture they were indeed adorned with walls of polished stone, and duly broadened out to give free space for hospitality ; but they never stretched themselves beyond the natural needs of private persons, and neither in nor by them did the individual seek to satisfy a longing which he found appeased in noblest fashion in the common polity ; from which alone, at bottom, it can spring.

The attitude of Architecture was entirely reversed, when the common bonds of public life dissolved, and the self-indulgence of the unit laid down her laws. When the private person no longer sacrificed to gods in common, to *Zeus* and to *Apollo*, but solely to the lonely bliss-purveyor *Plutus*, the God of Riches,—when each would be for his particular self what he had erstwhile only been amid the general community,—then did he take the architect also into his pay, and bade him build a temple for his idol, Egoism.) But the slender temple of chaste Athene sufficed not the rich egoist for his private pleasures : his household goddess was Voluptuousness, with her all-devouring, never sated maw. To her must Asiatic piles be reared, for her consumption ; and only bizarre curves and flourishes could seek to stanch her whim. Thus we see the despotism of Asia stretching out its beauty-crushing arms into the very

heart of Europe—as though in vengeance for Alexander's conquest—and exercising its might to such effect beneath the imperial rule of Rome, that Beauty, having fled completely from the living conscience of mankind, could now be only conned from memory of the past.

The most prosperous centuries of the Roman era present us, therefore, with the repugnant spectacle of pomp swelled up to a monstrosity in the palaces of the Emperors and richer classes, and *Utilitarianism*—however colossal in its proportions—stalking naked through the public buildings.

Public life, having sunk to a mere general expression of the universal egoism, had no longer any care for the beautiful; it now knew naught but *practical utility*. The beautiful had withdrawn in favour of the absolutely useful; for the delight in *man* had contracted to the exclusive lust of the belly. To speak plainly, it is to the satisfaction of the belly that all this public utilitarianism * leads back, especially in our modern time with its boasted practical inventions, this time which—characteristically enough!—the more it invents, in this sense, the less is able to really fill the stomachs of the hungry classes.) But where men had forgotten that the truly beautiful is likewise the highest expression of the useful, in so much as it can only manifest itself in life when the needs of life are secured a natural satisfaction, and not made harder, or interdicted, by useless precepts of utility,—where the public care was concentrated on the catering for food and drink, and the utmost stilling of this care proclaimed itself as the vital condition of the rule of Cæsars and of plutocrats alike; and that in such gigantic measure as during the Roman mastery of the world:—there arose those astounding causeways and aque-

* Certainly the provision of the useful, is the first and greatest necessity: but an epoch which can never soar beyond this care nor cast it behind it in order to attain the beautiful, but makes this care the sole prescriber of every branch of public life and drags it even into Art,—that epoch is in truth *barbarian*. Yet it is only the most unnatural *civilisation*, that can produce such absolute barbarism: it is for ever heaping up obstructions to the useful, to give itself the air of for ever taking thought for utility alone.—R. WAGNER.

ducts which we seek to-day to rival by our railway-tracks; there did Nature become a *milk-cow*, and Architecture a *milking-pail*; the wanton splendour of the rich lived on the skilful skimming of the cream from off the gathered milk, which then was taken, blue and watery, along those aqueducts to the beloved rabble.

Yet with the Romans this utilitarian toil and moil, this ostentation, put on imposing forms: the radiant world of Greece lay not so far from them but that, for all their practical stolidity and all their Asiatic gaudiness, they still could cast an ogling glance towards her; so that our eyes discern, and rightly, outspread o'er all the buildings of the Roman world a majestic charm which almost seems to us a beauty. But whatever has accrued to *us* from that same world, across the steeples of the Middle Ages, lacks both the charm of beauty and of majesty; for where we still may trace a gloomy shade of undelighting *majesty*, as in the colossal domes of our cathedrals, we see alas! no longer any drop of *beauty*. (The genuine temples of our modern religion, the buildings of the Bourse, are certainly most ingenuously propped by *Grecian columns*; Greek tympana invite us to our railroad journeys; and from under the Athenian Parthenon the military guard is marched towards us, on its 'relief,'—but however elevating these exceptions may be, they are still but mere exceptions, and the rule of our utilitarian architecture is desperately vile and trivial.) Let the modern Art of Building bring forth the gracefullest and most imposing edifice she can, she still can never keep from sight her shameful want of independence: for our public, as our private, needs are of such a kind that, in order to supply them, Architecture can never produce, but forever merely copy, merely piece together. Only a real *need* makes man inventive: whilst the real need of our present era asserts itself in the language of the rankest utilitarianism; therefore it can only get its answer from mechanical contrivances, and not from Art's creations. That which lies beyond this actual need, however, is with us the need of *Luxury*, of the

un-neededful; and it is only by the superfluous and un-neededful that Architecture can serve it—*i.e.* she reproduces the buildings which earlier epochs had produced from their felt need of beauty; she pieces together the individual details of these works, according to her wanton fancy; out of a restless longing for alteration, she stitches every national style of building throughout the world into her motley, disconnected botches; in short—she follows the caprice of Fashion, whose frivolous laws she needs must make her own because she nowhere hears the call of inner, beautiful Necessity.

Architecture has thus to share in all the humbling destiny of the divided humanistic arts; insomuch as she can only be incited to a true formative process by the need of men who manifest, or long to manifest, their inborn beauty. In step with the withering of Grecian Tragedy, *her* fall began; that is, her own peculiar productive power commenced to weaken. The most lavish of the monuments which she was forced to rear to the glory of the colossal egoism of later times—aye, even of that of the Christian faith—seem, when set beside the lofty simplicity and pregnant meaning of Grecian buildings at the flowering-time of Tragedy, like the rank, luxuriant parasites of some midnight dream, against the radiant progeny of the cleansing, all-enlivening light of day.

Only together with the redemption of the egoistically severed humanistic arts into the collective Art-work of the Future, with the redemption of *utilitarian man* himself into the *artistic manhood* of the Future, will Architecture also be redeemed from the bond of serfdom, from the curse of barrenness, into the freest, inexhaustible fertility of art-resource.

The Art of Sculpture.

Asiatics and Egyptians, in their representation of the nature-forces that governed them, had passed from the

delineation of the forms of beasts to that of the *human* figure itself; under which, although in immoderate proportions and disfigured by repugnant symbolism, they now sought to picture to themselves those forces. They had no wish to copy *man*; but since man, at bottom, can only conceive the highest in his own generic form, they involuntarily transferred the human stature—distorted for this very reason—to the objects of their nature-worship.

In this sense, and from a similar impulse, we also see the oldest Hellenic races portraying their gods, *i.e.*, their deified embodiments of nature-forces, under the human shapes they hewed from wood or stone for objects of their worship. The religious need for objectification of invisible, adored or dreaded godlike powers, was answered by the oldest Sculptural art through the shaping of natural substances to imitate the *human form*; just as Architecture answered an immediate human need by the fitting and framing of natural 'stuffs' into what we may call a condensation of *Nature's* features to suit the special aim: as, for instance, we may recognise in the *God's-temple* the condensed presentment of the *God's-grove*. Now we have seen that if the man whose purpose informed the builder's art had no thought for aught but the immediate practical use, then this art could only stay a handiwork, or return thereto; while if, on the contrary, he were an *artist* and set himself in the forefront of this purpose, as the man who had already become the subject and the matter of his own artistic treatment, he also raised the building-handicraft to Art. In like manner, so long as Man felt bound in brutish slavery to Nature, he might indeed conceive the objects of his nature-worship under the guise of a human form, but could only shape their plastic images according to the standard by which he measured *himself*, namely in the garb and with the attributes of that Nature on whom he felt so brutishly dependent. But in measure as he raised *himself*, his own uncrippled body, and his inborn human faculties, to the stuff and purport of his artistic handling, he gained the power to also show his

Gods in the image of a free, uncrippled human form ; until at last he frankly set before himself, in highest glee, this beauteous human shape itself as nothing but the likeness of a man.

Here we touch the fatal ridge on which the living Human Artwork splintered, and left its fragments to linger through an artificial life of petrefaction in the monumental fixity of Plastic art. The discussion of this vital question we have been forced to reserve for our present exposition of the art of Sculpture.—

The first and earliest association of men was the work of Nature. The purely tribal fellowship, *i.e.*, the circle of all those who claimed descent from a common ancestor and the lineal seed of his loins, is the original bond of union of every race of people that we meet in history. This tribal stem preserves in its traditional Sagas, as in an ever lively memory, the instinctive knowledge of its common ancestry : while the impressions derived from the particular natural features of its surroundings exalt these legendary recollections to the rank of religious ideas. Now, in however manifold accretion these ideas and reminiscences may have heaped themselves together and crowded into novel forms, among the quickest-witted historical nations, owing to racial admixture on the one hand, and on the other to change of natural surroundings as the result of tribal migration,—however broadly, in their Sagas and religions, these peoples may have stretched the narrowing bands of nationality, so that the idea of their own particular origin was expanded to the theory of a universal descent and derivation of men in general from their Gods, as from the Gods in general,—yet in every epoch and every land where Myth and Religion have flourished in the lively faith of any racial stem, the peculiar bond of union of this particular stem has always lain in its specific myth and its particular religion. The Hellenic races solemnised the joint memorial celebration of their common descent in their religious feasts, *i.e.*, in the glorification and adoration of the God or Hero in whose being they felt themselves included as one

common whole. Finally and with the greatest truth to life—as though from a felt need to fix with utmost definition their recollection of what was ever dropping farther back into the past—they materialised their national traditions in their Art, and most directly in that full-fledged work of art, the Tragedy. The lyric and the dramatic artworks were each a *religious act*: but there was already evinced in this act, when compared with the simple primitive religious rite, a taint of artificial effort; the effort, namely, to bring forward of set purpose that common memory which had already lost its immediate living impress on the life of every day. Thus Tragedy was the religious rite become a *work of Art*, by side of which the traditional observance of the genuine religious temple-rite was necessarily docked of so much of its inwardness and truth that it became indeed a mere conventional and soulless ceremony, whereas its kernel lived on in the Art-work.

In the highly important matter of the *externals* of the religious act, the tribal fellowship shows its communal character by certain ancestral usages, by certain forms and garments. The *garb* of Religion is, so to speak, the *costume* of the Race by which it mutually recognises itself, and that at the first glance. This garment, hallowed by the use of ages, this—in a manner—religio-social convention, had shifted from the religious to the artistic rite, the Tragedy; in it and by it the Tragic actor embodied the familiar, revered figure of the People's fellowship. It was by no means the mere vastness of the theatre and the distance of the audience, that prescribed the heightening of the human stature by the *cothurnus*, or, precisely, that admitted the employment of the immobile tragic mask;—but the cothurnus and the mask were necessary, religiously significant attributes which, accompanied by other symbolical tokens, first gave to the performer his weighty character of Priest. Now where a religion, commencing to fade from daily life and wholly withdrawing from its political aspect, is discernible by its outer garb alone, but this garment, as with the Athenians, can only now take on the folds of actual Life when it forms the in-

vestiture of Art: there must this actual life at last confess itself the core of that religion, by frankly throwing off its last disguise. But the core of the Hellenic religion, the centre round which its whole system revolved, and which instinctively asserted its exclusive rule in actual life, was: *Man*. It was for Art to formulate aloud this plain confession: she did it, when she cast aside the last concealing garment of Religion, and showed its core in simple nakedness, the *actual* bodily man.

Yet this unveiling was alike the final annihilation of the collective Artwork: for its bond of union had been that very garment of Religion. While the contents of the common mythical religion, the traditional subject of Dramatic art, were employed to point the poet's moral, developed to fit his purpose, and finally disfigured by his selfwilled fancy, the religious belief had already disappeared completely from the life of the Folk-fellowship, now only linked by political interests. This belief however, the honour paid to national Gods, the sure assumption of the truth of primal race-traditions, had formed the bond of all community. Was this now rent and hooted as a heresy, at least the core of that religion had come to light as unconditioned, actual, naked *Man*; but this Man was no longer the associate man, united by the bond of racial fellowship: only the *absolute, egoistic, solitary unit*,—man beautiful and naked, but loosed from the beauteous bond of brotherhood.

From here on, from the shattering of the Greek religion, from the wreck of the Grecian Nature-State, and its resolution into the Political State,—from the splintering of the common Tragic Artwork,—the manhood of world-history begins with measured tread its new, gigantic march of evolution, from the fallen *natural kinsmanship of national community* to the *universal fellowship of all mankind*. The band which the full-fledged Man, coming to consciousness in the national Hellenian, disrupted as a cramping fetter—*with this awakened consciousness*—must now expand into a universal girdle embracing *all* mankind. The period from

that point of time down to our own to-day is, therefore, the history of *absolute Egoism*; and the end of this period will be its redemption into *Communism*.^{*}

The art which has taken this solitary, egoistic, naked Man, the point of departure of the said world-historical period, and set him up before us as a beauteous monument of admonition—is the *art of Sculpture*, which reached its height exactly at the time when the conjoint human art-work of Tragedy declined from its meridian.—

The beauty of the human body was the foundation of all Hellenic Art, nay even of the natural State. We know that with the noblest of Hellenic stems, the Doric Spartans, the healthiness and unmarred beauty of the newborn child made out the terms on which alone it was allowed to live, while puling deformity was denied the right of life. This beauteous naked man is the kernel of all Spartanhood: from genuine delight in the beauty of the most perfect human body, that of the male, arose that spirit of comradeship which pervades and shapes the whole economy of the Spartan State. This love of man to man, in its primitive purity, proclaims itself as the noblest and least selfish utterance of man's sense of beauty, for it teaches man to sink and merge his entire self in the object of his affection. And exactly in degree as woman, in perfected womanhood, through love to man and sinking of herself within his being, has developed the manly element of that womanhood and brought it to a thorough balance with the purely womanly, and thus in measure as she is no longer merely man's *beloved* but his *friend*—can man find fullest satisfaction in the love of woman.†

* It is a political crime to use this word: however, there is none which will better describe the direct antithesis of *Egoism*. Whosoever is ashamed to-day to pass current as an Egoist—and indeed no one will openly confess himself as such—must allow us to take the liberty of calling him a Communist.—R. WAGNER.

† The redemption of woman into participation in the nature of man is the outcome of Christian-Germanic evolution. The Greek remained in ignorance of the psychic process of the ennobling of woman to the rank of man. To him everything appeared under its direct, unmediated aspect,—woman to him was woman, and man was man; and thus at the point where his love to

The higher element of that love of man to man consisted even in this: that it excluded the motive of egoistic physicalism. Nevertheless it not only included a purely spiritual bond of friendship, but this spiritual friendship was the blossom and the crown of the physical friendship. The latter sprang directly from delight in the beauty, aye, in the material, bodily beauty of the beloved comrade; yet this delight was no egoistic yearning, but a thorough stepping out of self into unreserved sympathy with the comrade's joy in himself, involuntarily betrayed by his life-glad, beauty-prompted bearing. This love, which had its basis in the noblest pleasures of both eye and soul—not like our modern postal correspondence of sober friendship, half businesslike, half sentimental—was the Spartan's only tutoress of youth, the never aging instructress alike of boy and man, the ordainer of the common feasts and valiant enterprises; nay, the inspiring helpmeet on the battlefield. For this it was that knit the fellowships of love into battalions of war and forewrote the tactics of death-daring, in rescue of the imperilled or vengeance for the slaughtered comrade, by the infrangible laws of the soul's most natural necessity.—

The Spartan who thus directly carried out in Life his purely human, communistic artwork, instinctively portrayed it also in his *Lyric*; that most direct expression of joy in self and life, which hardly reached in its impulsive (*nothwendig*) utterance to Art's self-consciousness. In the prime of the Doric State, the Spartan Lyric bent so irresistibly towards the original basis of all Art, the living *Dance*, that—characteristically enough!—it has scarcely handed down to us one single literary memento of itself; precisely because it was a pure, physical expression of lovely life, and warded off all separation of the art of Poetry from those of Dance and Tone. Even the transitional stage from the Lyric to the Drama, such as we may recognise in the Epic songs, remained a stranger to the Spartans; and it is sufficiently significant, that the Homeric songs were collected
 woman was satisfied in accordance with nature, arose the spiritual demand for man.—R. WAGNER.

in the Ionic, not the Doric dialect. Whereas the Ionic peoples, and notably in the event, the Athenians, developed themselves into political States under influence of the liveliest mutual intercourse, and preserved in Tragedy the artistic representation of the religion which was melting out of Life : the Spartans, as a shut-off inland people, kept faithful to their old-hellenic character, and held their unmixed Nature-state, as a living monument of art, against the changeful fashionings of the newer life of politics. Whatever in the hurry and confusion of the destructive restlessness of these new times sought rescue or support, now turned its gaze toward Sparta. The Statesman sought to scrutinise the forms of this primeval State, to convey them artificially to the political State of his day ; while the *Artist*, who saw the common artwork of the Tragedy sloughing and crumbling before his very eyes, looked forth to where he might descry the kernel of this artwork, the beauteous old-hellenic * man, and preserve it for his art. As Sparta towered up, a living monument of older times : so did the art of Sculpture crystallise in stone the old-hellenic human being which she had recognised within this living monument, and garner up the lifeless monument of bygone beauty for coming times of quickening barbarism.

But when Athens turned its eyes to Sparta, the worm of general egoism was already gnawing its destructive path into this fair State too. The Peloponnesian War had dragged it, all unwilling, into the whirlpool of the newer times ; and Sparta had only been able to vanquish Athens by the very weapons which the Athenians had erewhile made so terrible and unassailable to *it*. Instead of their simple iron-bars—those tokens of contempt for money, as compared with human worth—the minted gold of Asia was heaped within the Spartan's coffers ; leaving behind the

* One feels almost tempted to concoct a hybrid equivalent for this expressive "*ur-hellenisch*," and boldly write it down as "*ur-hellenic*;" but the fear of a literary Mrs Grundy is too powerful for the rash desire. We cannot, however, help envying the Germans their pregnant prefix "*ur*," a shadow of which we fancy we may still detect in our English "*early*," "*ere-while*" or "*erst*;" again perhaps in our "*hoary*"; and almost certainly in "*yore*."—TR.

ancient, frugal "public mess," he retired to his sumptuous banquet between his own four walls; and the noble love of man to man—whose motive had been an even higher one than that of love to woman—degenerated, as it had already done in the other Hellenic states, into its unnatural counterpart.

This is the Man, lovely in his person but unlovely in his selfish isolation, that the Sculptor's art has handed down to us in marble and in bronze,—motionless and cold, like a petrified remembrance, like the *mummy of the Grecian world*.

This art, the hireling of the rich for the adornment of their palaces, the easier won a troop of practisers as its creative process lent itself to speedy degradation to a mere mechanical labour. Certainly, the subject of the Sculptor's art is Man, that protean host of countless hues of character and myriad passions: but this art depicts alone his outer physical stature, in which there only lies the husk and not the kernel of the human being. True, that the inner man shows out most palpably through all his outward semblance; but this he only does *completely* in, and by means of, *motion*. The Sculptor can only seize and reproduce *one single* moment from all this manifold play of movements, and must leave the real motion itself to be unriddled from the physical relief of the work of art, by a process of mathematical computation. When once the most direct and surest mode of reaching from this poverty of means to a speaking likeness of actual life had been found,—when once the perfect measure of outward human show had been thought into the bronze and marble, and the power to persuade us of the truth of its reflection had been wrested from them,—this method, once *discovered*, could easily be *learned*; and Sculpture could live on from imitation to copy *ad infinitum*, bringing forth her store of products, graceful, beautiful, and true, without receiving any sustenance from real creative force. Thus we find that in the era of the Roman world-empire, when all artistic instinct had long since died away, the art of

Sculpture brought a multitude of works to mart in which there seemed to dwell an artist soul, despite their really owing all their being to a mere mechanical gift of imitation. She could become a lovely handicraft when she had ceased to be an art—and the latter she was for only just so long as she had aught to discover, aught to invent. But the repetition of a discovery is nothing more nor less than imitation.

Through the chinks of the iron-mailed, or monk-cowled, Middle Ages there shone at last the glimmer of the marble flesh of Grecian bodily beauty, and greeted hungry human-kind with its first new taste of life. It was in this lovely *stone*, and not in the actual Life of the ancient world, that the modern was to learn fair Man again. Our modern art of Sculpture sprang from no lively impulse to portray the actual extant man, whom it could scarcely see beneath his modish covering, but from a longing to copy the counterfeit presentment of a physically extinct race of men. It is the expression of an honourable wish to reach back from an unlovely present to the past, and therefrom to reconstruct lost beauty. As the gradual vanishing of human beauty from actual existence was the first cause of the artistic development of Sculpture, which, as though in a last effort to fix the fading image of a common good, would fain preserve it in a monumental token,—so the *modern* impulse to reproduce those monuments could only find its motive in the total absence of this beauteous man from modern life. Wherefore, since this impulse could never spring *from* life and find *in* life its satisfaction, but for ever swayed from monument to monument, from image to image, stone to stone: our Modern Sculpture, a mere plagiarism of the genuine art, was forced to take the character of a craftsman's trade, in which the wealth of rules and canons by which her hand was guided but bared her poverty as *art*, her utter inability to *invent*. But while she busily set forth her self and products, in place of vanished beauteous Man,—while, in a sense, her art was only fostered by this lack,—she fell at last into her present

selfish isolation, in which she, so to say, but plays the barometer to the ugliness that still prevails in life; and, indeed, with a certain complacent feeling of her—*relative*—necessity amid such atmospheric conditions.

Modern Sculpture can only answer to any vestige of a need, for precisely so long as the loveliness of man is not at hand in actual life: the resurrection of this beauty, its immediate influence on the fashioning of life, must inevitably throw down our present "plastics." For the need to which alone this art can answer—nay, the need which she herself concocts—is that which yearns to flee the unloveliness of life; not that which, springing from an actual lovely life, strives toward the exhibition of this life in living artwork. The true, creative, artistic craving proceeds from fulness, not from void: while the fulness of the modern art of Sculpture is merely the wealth of the monuments bequeathed to us by Grecian plastic artists. Now, from this fulness she cannot *create*, but is merely driven back to it from lack of beauty in surrounding life; she plunges herself within this fulness, in order to escape from lack.

Thus bare of all inventive power, she coquets at last with the forms to hand in present life, in her despairing attempt to invent—cost what it may. She casts around her the garment of Fashion, and so as to be recognised and rewarded by this life, she models the unbeautiful; in order to be *true*—that is to say, true according to *our* notions—she gives up all her hopes of *beauty*. So, during the continuance of those same conditions which maintain her in her artificial life, Sculpture falls into that wretched, sterile, or ugliness-begetting state in which she must inevitably yearn for nothing but redemption. The life-conditions, however, into which she desires to be released are, rightly measured, the conditions of that very life in presence of which the art of Sculpture must straightway cease to be an independent art. To gain the power of creating, she yearns for the reign of loveliness in actual life; from which she merely hopes to win the living matter

for her invention. But the fulfilment of this desire could only lay bare the egoism of its indwelling self-delusion; inasmuch as the conditions for the *necessary* operation of the art of Sculpture must, in any case, be utterly annulled when *actual life shall itself be fair of body*.

In present life the independent art of Sculpture but answers to a relative need: although to this she stands indebted for her existence of to-day, nay, for her very prime. But that other state of things, the antithesis of the modern state, is that in which an imperative *need* for the works of sculptural art cannot be so much as reasonably imagined. If man's whole life pay homage to the principle of beauty, if he make his living body fair to see, rejoicing in the beauty that he himself displays: then is the subject and the matter of the artistic exhibition of this beauty, and of the delight therein, without a doubt the whole warm, living man himself. His art-work is the *Drama*; and the redemption of Sculpture is just this: *the disenchantment of the stone into the flesh and blood of man; out of immobility into motion, out of the monumental into the temporal*. Only when the artistic impulse of the Sculptor shall have passed into the soul of the *Dancer*—the *mimetic expositor* who sings alike and speaks—can this impulse be conceived as truly satisfied. Only when the statuary's art no longer exists, or rather, has passed along another direction than that of the human body, namely as "sculpture" into "*architecture*";* when the frozen loneliness of this *solitary* stone-hewn man shall have been resolved into the endless-streaming multitude of actual living men; when we recall the memory of the beloved dead in ever newborn, soul-

* The words "*Skulptur*" and "*Architektur*" here appear for the first time, in the original. Hitherto these arts have been spoken of under the terms "*Baukunst*" (the building art) and "*Bildhauerkunst*" (the image- or likeness-hewer's art); but I have found it more convenient to employ, in general, the equivalents "Sculpture" and "Architecture." Here, however, I have deemed it necessary to use the more exact, though more cumbersome expression "the statuary's art," in the opening of the sentence, in order to reserve the term "Sculpture" to render the more general idea of "carving," in which sense it is evident that Wagner has here employed the Latin noun.—W.A.E.

filled flesh and blood, and no more in lifeless brass or marble; when we take the stones to build the living Art-work's shrine, and require them no longer for our imaging of living Man,—then first will the *true Plastique* be at our hand.

3

The Painter's Art.

Just as, when we are denied the pleasure of hearing the symphonic playing of an orchestra, we seek to recall our enjoyment by a pianoforte rendering; just as, when we are no longer permitted to gaze upon the colours of an oil-painting in a picture-gallery, we strive by aid of an engraving to refresh the impression which they have left,*—so had *Painting*, if not in her origination, yet in her *artistic* evolution, to answer to the yearning need of calling back to memory the lost features of the living Human Artwork.

We must pass by her raw beginnings, when, like Sculpture, she sprang from the as yet unartistic impulse toward the symbolising of religious ideas; for she first attained artistic significance at the epoch when the living artwork of Tragedy was paling, and the brilliant tints of Painting sought to fix the vision of those wondrous, pregnant scenes which no longer offered their immediate warmth of life to the beholder.

Thus the Grecian artwork solemnised its after-math in Painting. This harvest was not that which sprang by natural necessity from the wealth of Life; its necessity was the rather that of *Culture*; it issued from a conscious, arbitrary motive, to wit the *knowledge* of the loveliness of Art, united with the *wilful purpose* to force, as it were, this loveliness to linger in a life to which it no longer belonged

* The personality of the Zurich exile here peeps out from beneath the robes of the art-philosopher. No one could feel more keenly than Wagner himself, at the time of writing this essay, the insufficiency of the suggested substitute, cut off as he then was from enjoyment of all the higher walks of art.—Tr.

instinctively as the unconscious, necessary expression of that life's inmost soul. That Art which, unbidden and of her own accord, had blossomed from the communion of the People's life, had likewise by her active presence, and through the regardal of her demeanour, called up the *mental concept* (*Begriff*) of her essence; for it was not the *idea* of Art that had summoned her to life, but herself, the actual breathing Art, had evolved the "Idea" from out herself.

The artistic power of the Folk, thrusting forward with all the necessity of a nature-force, was dead and buried; what it had done, lived only now in memory, or in the artificial reproduction. Whereas the Folk, in all its actions and especially in its self-wrought destruction of national, pent-up insularity, has through all time proceeded by the law of inner necessity, and thus in thorough harmony with the majestic evolution of the human race: the lonely spirit of the Artist—to whose yearning for the beautiful the unbeauteous manifestments of the People's life-stress must ever stay a dark enigma—could only console itself by looking backward to the artwork of a bygone era, and, recognising the impossibility of arbitrarily relivening that artwork, could only make this solace as lasting as might be, by freshening up with lifelike details the harvest of its recollections,—just as through a portrait we preserve to our memory the features of a loved lost friend. Hereby Art herself became an object of art; the "idea" derived from her became her law; and *cultured art*—the art that can be learnt, and always points back to itself—began its life-career. The latter, as we may see to-day, can be pursued without a halt in the least artistic times and amid the most sordid circumstances,—yet only for the selfish pleasure of isolated, life-divorced, and art-repining Culture.—

The senseless attempt to reconstruct the Tragic Artwork, by purely imitative reproduction—such as was engaged in, for instance, by the poets of the Alexandrian court—was most advantageously avoided by Painting; for she gave up the lost as lost, and answered the impulse to restore it by

the cultivation of a special, and peculiar, artistic faculty of man. Though this faculty required a greater variety of media for its operation, yet Painting soon won a marked advantage over Sculpture. The sculptor's work displayed the material likeness of the *whole* man in lifelike form, and, thus far, stood nearer to the living artwork of self-portraying man than did the painter's work, which was only able to render, so to speak, his tinted shadow. As in both counterfeits, however, the breath of Life was unattainable, and motion could only be indicated to the thought of the spectator, to whose phantasy its conceivable extension must be left to be worked out by certain natural laws of inductive reasoning,—so Painting, in that she looked still farther aside from the reality, and depended still more on artistic illusion than did Sculpture, was able to take a more ideal poetic flight than she. Finally, Painting was not obliged to content herself with the representation of *this one* man, or of *that particular* group or combination to which the art of Statuary was restricted; rather, the artistic illusion became so preponderant a necessity to her, that she had not only to draw into the sphere of her portrayal a wealth of correlated human groups extended both in length and breadth, but also the circle of their extrahuman surroundings, the *scenes of Nature* herself. Hereon is based an entirely novel step in the evolution of man's artistic faculties, both perceptive and executive: namely, that of the inner comprehension and reproduction of *Nature*, by means of *Landscape-painting*.

This moment is of the highest importance for the whole range of plastic art: it brings this art—which began, in Architecture, with the observation and artistic exploitation of Nature for the benefit of Man,—which in Sculpture, as though for the deification of Man, exalted *him* as its only subject—to its complete conclusion, by turning it at last, with ever growing understanding, entirely back from Man to *Nature*; and this inasmuch as it enabled plastic art to take her by the hand of intimate friendship, and thus, as it were, to broaden Architecture out to a full and lifelike por-

traiture of Nature. Human Egoism, which in naked Architecture was forever referring Nature to its own exclusive self, to some extent broke up in Landscape-painting, which vindicated Nature's individual rights and prompted artistic Man to loving absorption into her, in order there to find himself again, immeasurably amplified.

When Grecian painters sought to fix the memory of the scenes which had erstwhile been presented to their actual sight and hearing in the Lyric, in the lyrical Epos, and in the Tragedy, and to picture them again in outline and in colour—without a doubt they considered men alone as worthy objects of their exhibition; and it is to the so-called *historical* tendency that we owe the raising of Painting to her first artistic height. As she thus preserved the *united* artwork green in memory, so when the conditions that summoned forth the passionate preservation of these memories vanished quite away, there yet remained two byways open, along which the art of Painting could carry on her further independent self-development: the Portrait and—the Landscape. True, that Landscape had already been appropriated for the necessary background of the scenes from Homer and the Tragic poets: but at the time of their painting's prime the Greeks looked on landscape with no other eye than that with which the peculiar bent of the Grecian character had caused them to regard the whole of Nature. With the Greeks, *Nature* was merely the distant background of the human being: well in the foreground stood *Man* himself; and the Gods to whom he assigned the force controlling Nature were anthropomorphic gods. He sought to endue everything he saw in Nature with human shape and human being; as humanised, she had for him that endless charm in whose enjoyment it was impossible for his sense of beauty to look on her from such a standpoint as that of our modern Judaistic utilism, and make of her a mere inanimate object of his sensuous pleasure. However, he but cherished this beautiful relationship between himself and Nature from an involuntary error: in his anthropomorphosis of Nature he credited her with

human motives which, necessarily contrasted with the true character of Nature, could be only arbitrarily assumed as operating within her.

As Man, in all his life and all his relations to Nature, acts from a necessity peculiar to his own being, he unwittingly distorts her character when he conceives Nature as behaving not according to her own necessity but to that of Man. Although this error took a beautiful form among the Greeks, while among other races, especially those of Asia, its utterances were for the most part hideous, it was none the less destructive in its influence on Hellenic life. When the Hellenian broke adrift from his ancestral bond of national communion, when he lost the standard of life's beauty that he had drawn from it instinctively, he was unable to replace this needful standard by one derived from a correct survey of surrounding Nature. He had unconsciously perceived in Nature a coherent, encompassing Necessity for just so long as this same Necessity came before his consciousness as a ground condition of his communal life. But when the latter crumbled into its egoistic atoms, when the Greek was ruled by naught but the caprice of his own selfwill, no longer harmonised by brotherhood, or eventually submitted to an arbitrary outer force that gained its leverage from this general selfwill,—then with his faulty knowledge of Nature, whom he deemed as capricious as himself and the worldly might that governed him, he lacked the certain standard by which he could have learnt to measure out himself again ; that standard which Nature offers as their highest boon to *those* men who recognise her innermost necessity and learn to know the eternal harmony of her creative forces, working in widest compass through every separate unit.

It is from this error alone, that arose those vast excesses of the Grecian mind which we see attaining under the Byzantine empire a pitch that quite obscures the old Hellenic character, yet which were but, at bottom, the normal blemishes of its good qualities. (Philosophy might put forth its honestest endeavour to grasp the harmony of

Nature: it only showed how impotent is the might of abstract Intellect. In defiance of all the saws of Aristotle, the Folk, in its desire to win itself an absolute bliss from the midst of this million-headed Egoism, formed itself a religion in which Nature was made the pitiful plaything of the quibbling search for human blessedness. It only needed the Grecian view of Nature's government by selfwilled, human-borrowed motives to be wedded to the Judao-oriental theory of her subservience to human Use,—for the disputations and decrees of Councils anent the essence of the Trinity, and the interminable strifes, nay national wars therefrom arising, to face astounded history with the irrefutable fruits of this intermarriage.

Towards the close of the Middle Ages, the Roman Church raised its assumption of the immobility of the earth to the rank of an article of belief: but it could not prevent America from being discovered, the conformation of the globe mapped out, and Nature's self at last laid so far bare to knowledge that the inner harmony of all her manifold phenomena has now been proved to demonstration. The impulse that led toward these discoveries sought, at like time, to find an utterance in that branch of art which was of all best fitted for its artistic satisfaction. With the Renaissance of Art, *Painting* also, in eager struggle for ennoblement, linked on her own new birth to the revival of the antique; beneath the shelter of the prosperous Church she waxed to the portrayal of its chronicles, and passed from these to scenes of veritable history and actual life, still profiting by the advantage that she yet could take her form and colour from this actual life. But the more the physical Present was crushed by the marring influence of Fashion, and the more the newer school of Historical painting, in order to be beautiful, saw itself compelled by the unloveliness of Life to construct from its own fancy and to combine from styles and manners twice borrowed from art-history—not from life,—the farther did Painting, departing from the portraiture of modish man, strike out that path to which we owe the loving understanding of Nature in the *Landscape*.

Man, around whom the landscape had erstwhile grouped itself as round its egoistic centre, shrank ever smaller mid the fulness of his surroundings, in direct proportion as he bowed beneath the unworthy yoke of disfiguring Fashion in his daily life ; so that at last he played the role in Landscape which before had been assigned to landscape as a foil to him. *Under the given circumstances*, we can only celebrate this advance of landscape as a victory of *Nature* over base and man-degrading *Culture*. For therein undisfigured Nature asserted herself, in the only possible mode, against her foe ; inasmuch as, seeking for a sanctuary the while, she laid bare herself, as though from very Want, to the inner understanding of artistic Man.

Modern Natural Science and *Landscape-Painting* are the only outcomes of the Present which, either from an artistic or a scientific point of view, offer us the smallest consolation in our impotence, or refuge from our madness. Amid the hopeless splintering of all our art-endeavours, the solitary genius who for a moment binds them into almost violent union, may accomplish feats the more astounding as neither the need nor the conditions for his art-work are now to hand : the general concensus of the Painter's art, however, takes almost solely the direction of the Landscape. For here it finds exhaustless subjects, and thereby an inexhaustible capacity ; whereas in every other attempt to shadow Nature forth, it can only proceed by arbitrary sifting, sorting, and selecting, to garner from our absolutely inartistic life an object worthy of artistic treatment.)

The more the so-called Historical school of painting is busied with its efforts to build up and explain to us the genuine beauteous Man and genuine beauteous Life, by reminiscences from the farthest past ; the more, with all its prodigious outlay of expedients, it confesses the heaviness of the burden imposed upon it, to seek to be *more* and *other* than behoves the nature of one single branch of art, —so much the more must it long for a redemption which, like that destined for Sculpture, can only consist in its ascension into *that* from which it drew the original force

that gave to it artistic life; and this is even the living human Art-work, whose very birth from Life must heave away the conditions that made possible the being and the prospering of Painting as an independent branch of art. The *man-portraying* art of Painting will never find it possible to lead a healthy, necessary life—when, without a pencil or a canvas, in liveliest artistic setting, the beauteous Man portrays *himself* in full perfection. What she now toils to reach by *honest* effort, she then will reach in perfect measure, when she bequeaths her colour and her skill of composition to the living “plastic” of the real dramatic representant; when she steps down from her canvas and her plaster, and stands upon the *Tragic stage*; when she bids the artist carry out in his own person what she toiled in vain to consummate by heaping up of richest means without the breath of actual Life.

But *Landscape-painting*, as last and perfected conclusion of all the plastic arts, will become the very soul of Architecture; she will teach us so to rear the *stage* for the dramatic Artwork of the Future that on it, herself imbued with life, she may picture forth the warm *background of Nature for living*, no longer counterfeited, *Man*.—

If we may thus regard the *scene* of the united Artwork of the Future as won by the highest power of Plastic-Art, and therewith as attained the inmost *knowledge of familiar Nature*: we may now proceed to take a closer view of the nature of this Artwork itself.

IV.

OUTLINES OF THE ARTWORK OF THE FUTURE.



SF we consider the relation of modern art—so far as it is truly *Art*—to public life, we shall recognise at once its complete inability to affect this public life in the sense of its own noblest endeavour. The reason hereof is, that our modern art is a mere product of Culture and has not sprung from Life itself; therefore, being nothing but a hot-house plant, it cannot strike root in the natural soil, or flourish in the natural climate of the present. Art has become the private property of an artist-caste; its taste it offers to those alone who *understand* it; and for its understanding it demands a special study, aloof from actual life, the study of *art-learning*. This study, and the understanding to be attained thereby, each individual who has acquired the gold wherewith to pay the proffered delicacies of art conceives to-day that he has made his own: if, however, we were to ask the Artist whether the great majority of art's amateurs are able to understand him in his best endeavours, he could only answer with a deep-drawn sigh. But if he ponder on the infinitely greater mass of those who are perforce shut out on every side by the evils of our present social system from both the understanding and the tasting of the sweets of modern art, then must the artist of to-day grow conscious that his whole art-doings are, at bottom, but an egoistic, self-concerning business; that his art, in the light of public life, is nothing else than luxury and superfluity, a self-amusing pastime. The daily emphasised, and bitterly deplored abyss between so-called

culture and un-culture is so enormous ; a bridge between the two so inconceivable ; a reconciliation so impossible ; that, had it any candour, our modern art, which grounds itself on this unnatural culture, would be forced to admit, to its deepest shame, that it owes its existence to a life-element which in turn can only base *its own* existence on the utter dearth of culture among the real masses of mankind.

The only thing which, in the position thus assigned to her, our Modern Art should be able to effect—and among honest folk, indeed, endeavours—namely, the *spreading abroad of culture*, she cannot do ; and simply for the reason that, for Art to operate on Life, she must be herself the blossom of a *natural* culture, *i.e.*, such an one as has grown up from below, for she can never hope to rain down culture from *above*. Therefore, taken at its best, our “cultured” art resembles an orator who should seek to address himself in a foreign tongue to a people which does not understand it : his highest flights of rhetoric can only lead to the most absurd misunderstandings and confusion.—

Let us first attempt to trace the *theoretic* path upon which Modern Art must march forward to redemption from her present lonely, misprised station, and toward the widest understanding of general public Life. That this redemption can only become possible by the *practical* intermeditation of public Life, will then appear self-evident.

We have seen that *Plastic Art* can only attain creative strength by going to her work in unison with *artistic Man*, and not with men who purpose mere *utility*.

Artistic Man can only fully content himself by uniting every branch of Art into the *common* Artwork : in every *segregation* of his artistic faculties he is *unfree*, not fully that which he has power to be ; whereas in the *common* Artwork he is *free*, and fully that which he has power to be.

The *true* endeavour of Art is therefore all-embracing : each unit who is inspired with a true *art-instinct* develops

to the highest his own particular faculties, not for the glory of these special faculties, but for the glory of *general Manhood in Art*.

The highest conjoint work of art is the *Drama*: it can only be at hand in all its *possible* fulness, when in it each *separate branch of art* is at hand in *its own utmost fulness*.

The true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from a *common urgency of every art* towards the most direct appeal to a *common public*. In this Drama, each separate art can only bare its utmost secret to their common public through a mutual parleying with the other arts; for the purpose of each separate branch of art can only be fully attained by the reciprocal agreement and co-operation of all the branches in their common message.

Architecture can set before herself no higher task than to frame for a fellowship of artists, who in their own persons portray the life of Man, the special surroundings necessary for the display of the Human Artwork. Only that edifice is built according to Necessity, which answers most befittingly an aim of man: the highest aim of man is the artistic aim; the highest artistic aim—the Drama. In buildings reared for daily use, the builder has only to answer to the lowest aim of men: beauty is therein a luxury. In buildings reared for luxury, he has to satisfy an unnecessary and unnatural need: his fashioning therefore is capricious, unproductive, and unlovely. On the other hand, in the construction of that edifice whose every part shall answer to a common and artistic aim alone,—thus in the building of the *Theatre*, the master-builder needs only to comport himself as *artist*, to keep a single eye upon the *art-work*. In a perfect theatrical edifice, Art's need alone gives law and measure, down even to the smallest detail. This need is twofold, that of *giving* and that of *receiving*, which reciprocally pervade and condition one another. The *Scene* has firstly to comply with all the conditions of "space" imposed by the joint (*gemeinsam*) dramatic action to be displayed thereon: but secondly,

it has to fulfil those conditions in the sense of bringing this dramatic action to the eye and ear of the spectator in intelligible fashion. In the arrangement of the *space for the spectators*, the need for optic and acoustic understanding of the artwork will give the necessary law, which can only be observed by a union of beauty and fitness in the proportions; for the demand of the collective (*gemeinsam*) audience is the demand for the *artwork*, to whose comprehension it must be distinctly led by everything that meets the eye.* Thus the spectator transplants himself upon the stage, by means of all his visual and aural faculties; while the performer becomes an artist only by complete absorption into the public. Everything, that breathes and moves upon the stage, thus breathes and moves alone from eloquent desire to impart, to be seen and heard within those walls which, however circumscribed their space, seem to the actor from his scenic standpoint to embrace the whole of humankind; whereas the public, that representative of daily life, forgets the confines of the auditorium, and lives and breathes now only in the artwork which seems to it as Life itself, and on the stage which seems the wide expanse of the whole World.

Such marvels blossom from the fabric of the Architect, to such enchantments can he give a solid base, when he takes the purpose of the highest human artwork for his own, when he summons forth the terms of its enlivening from the individual resources of his art. On the other hand, how rigid, cold, and dead does his handiwork appear when, without a higher helpmeet than the aim of luxury,

* The problem of the Theatrical edifice of the Future can in no wise be considered as solved by our modern stage buildings: for they are laid out in accord with traditional laws and canons which have nothing in common with the requirements of pure Art. Where speculation for gain, on the one side, joins forces with luxurious ostentation on the other, the absolute interests of Art must be cryingly affected; and thus no architect in the world will be able to raise our stratified and fenced-off auditoria—dictated by the parcelling of our public into the most diverse categories of class and civil station—to conformity with any law of beauty. If one imagine oneself, for a moment, within the walls of the common Theatre of the Future, one will recognise with little trouble, that an undreamt width of field lies therein open for invention.—R. WAGNER.

without the artistic necessity which leads him, in the Theatre, to invent and range each detail with the greatest sense of fitness, he is forced to follow every speculative whim of his self-glorifying caprice; to heap his masses and trick out his ornament, in order to stereotype to-day the vanity of some boastful plutocrat, to-morrow the honours of a modernised Jehovah!

But not the fairest form, the richest masonry, can alone suffice the Dramatic Artwork for the perfectly befitting spacial terms of its appearance. The Scene which is to mount the picture of Human Life must, for a thorough understanding of this life, have power to also show the lively counterfeit of Nature, in which alone artistic Man can render up a speaking likeness of himself. The casings of this Scene, which look down chill and vacantly upon the artist and the public, must deck themselves with the fresh tints of Nature, with the warm light of heaven's æther, to be worthy to take their share in the human artwork. Plastic *Architecture* here feels her bounds, her own unfreedom, and casts herself, athirst for love, into the arms of Painting, who shall work out her redemption into fairest Nature.

Here *Landscape-painting* enters, summoned by a common need which she alone can satisfy. What the painter's expert eye has seen in Nature, what he now, as artist, would fain display for the artistic pleasure of the full community, he dovetails into the united work of all the arts, as his own abundant share. Through him the scene takes on complete artistic truth: his drawing, his colour, his glowing breadths of light, compel Dame Nature to serve the highest claims of Art. That which the landscape-painter, in his struggle to impart what he had seen and fathomed, had erstwhile forced into the narrow frames of panel-pictures,—what he had hung up on the egoist's secluded chamber-walls, or had made away to the inconsequent, distracting medley of a picture-barn,—*therewith* will he henceforth fill the ample framework of the Tragic stage, calling the whole expanse of scène as witness to his power of recreating Nature. The

illusion which his brush and finest blend of colours could only hint at, could only distantly approach, he will here bring to its consummation by artistic practice of every known device of optics, by use of all the art of 'lighting.' The apparent roughness of his tools, the seeming grotesqueness of the method of so-called 'scene-painting,' will not offend him; for he will reflect that even the finest camel's-hair brush is but a humiliating instrument, when compared with the perfect Artwork; and the artist has no right to *pride* until he is *free, i.e.*, until his artwork is completed and alive, and *he*, with all his helping tools, has been absorbed into it. But the finished artwork that greets him from the *stage* will, set within this frame and held before the common gaze of full publicity, immeasurably more content him than did his earlier work, accomplished with more delicate tools. He will not, forsooth, repent the right to use this scenic space to the benefit of such an artwork, for sake of his earlier disposition of a flat-laid scrap of canvas! For as, at the very worst, his work remains the same no matter what the frame from which it looks, provided only it bring its subject to intelligible show: so will his artwork, in *this* framing, at any rate effect a livelier impression, a greater and more universal understanding, than the whilom landscape picture.

The organ for all understanding of Nature, is Man: the landscape-painter had not only to impart to men this understanding, but to make it for the first time plain to them by depicting Man in the midst of Nature. Now by setting his artwork in the frame of the Tragic stage, he will expand the individual man, to whom he would address himself, to the associate manhood of full publicity, and reap the satisfaction of having spread his understanding out to that, and made it partner in his joy. But he cannot fully bring about this public understanding until he allies his work to a joint and all-intelligible aim of loftiest Art; while this aim itself will be disclosed to the common understanding, past all mistaking, by the actual bodily man with all his warmth of life. Of all artistic things, the most directly

understandable, is the Dramatic-Action (*Handlung*), for reason that its art is not complete until every helping artifice be cast behind it, as it were, and genuine life attain the faithfullest and most intelligible show. And thus each branch of art can only address itself to the *understanding* in proportion as its core—whose relation to Man, or derivation from him, alone can animate and justify the artwork—is ripening toward the *Drama*. In proportion as it passes over into Drama, as it pulses with the Drama's light, will each domain of Art grow all-intelligible, completely understood and justified.*

On to the stage, prepared by architect and painter, now steps *Artistic Man*, as Natural Man steps on the stage of Nature. What the statuary and the historical painter endeavoured to limn on *stone* or *canvas*, they now limn upon *themselves*, their form, their body's limbs, the features of their visage, and raise it to the consciousness of full artistic life. The same sense that led the sculptor in his grasp and rendering of the human figure, now leads the *Mime* in the handling and demeanour of his actual body. The same eye which taught the historical painter, in drawing and in colour, in arrangement of his drapery and composition of his groups, to find the beautiful, the graceful and the characteristic, now orders the whole breadth of *actual human show*. Sculptor and painter once freed the

* It can scarcely be indifferent to the modern landscape-painter to observe by how few his work is really understood to-day, and with what blear-eyed stupidity his nature-paintings are devoured by the Philistine world that pays for them; how the so-called "charming prospect" is purchased to assuage the idle, unintelligent, visual gluttony of those same *need-less* men whose sense of hearing is tickled by our modern, empty music-manufacture to that idiotic joy which is as repugnant a reward of his performance to the *artist* as it fully answers the intention of the *artisan*. Between the "charming prospect" and the "pretty tune" of our modern times there subsists a doleful affinity, whose bond of union is certainly not the musing calm of Thought, but that vulgar slipshod *sentimentality* which draws back in selfish horror from the sight of human suffering in its surroundings, to hire for itself a private heavenlet in the blue mists of Nature's generality. These sentimentals are willing enough to see and hear everything: only *not* the *actual, undistorted Man*, who lifts his warning finger on the threshold of their dreams. *But this is the very man whom we must set up in the forefront of our show!*—R. WAGNER.

Greek Tragedian from his cothurnus and his mask, upon and under which the real man could only move according to a certain religious convention. With justice, did this pair of plastic artists annihilate the last disfigurement of pure artistic man, and thus prefigure in their stone and canvas the tragic Actor of the Future. As they once descried him in his undistorted truth, they now shall let him pass into reality and bring his form, in a measure sketched by them, to bodily portrayal with all its wealth of movement.

Thus the illusion of plastic art will turn to truth in Drama: the plastic artist will reach out hands to the *dancer*, to the *mime*, will lose himself in them, and thus become himself both mime and dancer.—So far as lies within his power, he will have to impart the inner man, his feeling and his will-ing, to the eye. The breadth and depth of scenic space belong to him for the plastic message of his stature and his motion, as a single unit or in union with his fellows. But where his power ends, where the fulness of his will and feeling impels him to the *uttering* of the inner man by means of *Speech*, there will the Word proclaim his plain and conscious purpose: he becomes a *Poet* and, to be poet, a *tone-artist* (*Tonkünstler*). But as dancer, tone-artist, and poet, he still is one and the same thing: nothing other than *executant, artistic Man, who, in the fullest measure of his faculties, imparts himself to the highest expression of receptive power.*

It is in him, the immediate executant, that the three sister-arts unite their forces in one collective operation, in which the highest faculty of each comes to its highest unfolding. By working in common, each one of them attains the power to be and do the very thing which, of her own and inmost essence, she longs to do and be. Hereby: that each, where her own power ends, can be absorbed within the other, whose power commences where her's ends,—she maintains her own purity and freedom, her independence as *that* which she is. The *mimetic dancer* is stripped of his impotence, so soon as he can sing and speak; the creations

of *Tone* win all-explaining meaning through the mime, as well as through the poet's word, and that exactly in degree as *Tone* itself is able to transcend into the motion of the mime and the word of the poet; while the *Poet* first becomes a Man through his translation to the flesh and blood of the *Performer*: for though he metes to each artistic factor the guiding purpose which binds them all into a common whole, yet this purpose is first changed from "will" to "can" by the poet's *Will descending to the actor's Can*.

Not one rich faculty of the separate arts will remain unused in the United Artwork of the Future; in *it* will each attain its first complete appraisalment. Thus, especially, will the manifold developments of *Tone*, so peculiar to our instrumental music, unfold their utmost wealth within this Artwork; nay, *Tone* will incite the mimetic art of *Dance* to entirely new discoveries, and no less swell the breath of *Poetry* to unimagined fill. For *Music*, in her solitude, has fashioned for herself an organ which is capable of the highest reaches of expression. This organ is the *Orchestra*. The tone-speech of *Beethoven*, introduced into *Drama* by the orchestra, marks an entirely fresh departure for the dramatic artwork. While *Architecture* and, more especially, scenic *Landscape-painting* have power to set the executant dramatic Artist in the surroundings of physical Nature, and to dower him from the exhaustless stores of natural phenomena with an ample and significant background,—so in the *Orchestra*, that pulsing body of many-coloured harmony, the personating individual Man is given, for his support, a stanchless elemental spring, at once artistic, natural, and human.

The *Orchestra* is, so to speak, the loam of endless, universal Feeling, from which the individual feeling of the separate actor draws power to shoot aloft to fullest height of growth: it, in a sense, dissolves* the hard immobile

* It is a little difficult to quite unravel this part of the metaphor, for the same word "*Boden*" is used twice over. I have thought it best to translate it in the first place as "loam," and in the second as "ground"; for it appears

ground of the actual scene into a fluent, elastic, impressionable æther, whose unmeasured bottom is the great sea of Feeling itself. Thus the Orchestra is like the *Earth* from which Antæus, so soon as ever his foot had grazed it, drew new immortal life-force. By its essence diametrically opposed to the scenic landscape which surrounds the actor, and therefore, as to locality, most rightly placed in the deepened foreground outside the scenic frame, it at like time forms the perfect complement of these surroundings; inasmuch as it broadens out the exhaustless *physical* element of Nature to the equally exhaustless *emotional* element of artistic Man. These elements, thus knit together, enclose the performer as with an atmospheric ring of Art and Nature, in which, like to the heavenly bodies, he moves secure in fullest orbit, and whence, withal, he is free to radiate on every side his feelings and his views of life,—broadened to infinity, and showered, as it were, on distances as measureless as those on which the stars of heaven cast their rays of light.

Thus supplementing one another in their changeful dance, the united sister-arts will show themselves and make good their claim; now all together, now in pairs, and again in solitary splendour, according to the momentary need of the only rule- and purpose-giver, the Dramatic Action. Now plastic Mimicry will listen to the passionate plaint of Thought; now resolute Thought will pour itself into the expressive mould of Gesture; now Tone must vent alone the stream of Feeling, the shudder of alarm; and now, in mutual embrace, all three will raise the Will of Drama to immediate and potent Deed. For One thing there is that all the three united arts must will, in order to be free: and that one thing is the Drama: the reaching of the Drama's aim must be their common goal. Are they conscious of this aim, do they put forth all their will to work out that alone:

as though the idea were, in the former case, that of what agriculturists call a "top-dressing," and thus a substance which could break up the lower soil and make it fruitful. The "it" which occurs after the colon may refer either to the "feeling" or to the "orchestra," for both are neuter nouns.—TR.

so will they also gain the power to lop off from their several stems the egoistic offshoots of their own peculiar being; that therewith the tree may not spread out in formless mass to every wind of heaven, but proudly lift its wreath of branches, boughs and leaves, into its lofty crown.

The nature of Man, like that of every branch of Art, is manifold and over-fruitful: but *one thing* alone is the *Soul* of every unit, its most imperious bent (*Nothwendigster Trieb*), its strongest need-urged impulse. When this One Thing is recognised by man as his fundamental essence, then, to reach this One and indispensable, he has power to ward off every weaker, subordinated appetite, each feeble wish, whose satisfaction might stand between him and Its attainment. Only the weak and impotent knows no imperious, no mightiest longing of the soul: for him each instant is ruled by accidental, externally incited appetites which, for reason that they are but appetites, he never can allay; and therefore, hurled capriciously from one upon another, to and fro, he never can attain a real enjoyment. But should this need-reft one have strength to obstinately follow the appeasement of his accidental appetite, there then crop up in Life and Art those hideous, unnatural apparitions, the parasites of headlong egoistic frenzy, which fill us with such untold loathing in the murderous lust of despots, or in the wantonness of—modern operatic music. If the individual, however, feel in himself a mighty longing, an impulse that forces back all other desires, and forms the necessary inner urgency which constitutes his soul and being; and if he put forth all his force to satisfy it: he thus will also lift aloft his own peculiar force, and all his special faculties, to the fullest strength and height that e'er can lie within his reach.

But the individual man, in full possession of health of body, heart, and mind, can experience no higher need than that which is common to all his kind; for, to be a *true* Need, it can only be such an one as he can satisfy in Community alone. The most imperious and strongest need of full-fledged artist-man, however, is to impart

himself in highest compass of his being to the fullest expression of Community; and this he only reaches with the necessary breadth of general understanding in the *Drama*. In Drama he broadens out his own particular being, by the portrayal of an individual personality not his own, to a universally human being. He must completely step outside himself, to grasp the inner nature of an alien personality with that completeness which is needful before he can portray it. This he will only attain when he so exhaustively analyses this individual in his contact with and penetration and completion by other individualities,—and therefore also the nature of these other individualities themselves,—when he forms thereof so lively a conception, that he gains a sympathetic feeling of this complementary influence on his own interior being. The perfectly artistic Performer is, therefore, the unit Man expanded to the *essence of the Human Species* by the utmost evolution of his own particular nature.)

The place in which this wondrous process comes to pass, is the *Theatric stage*; the collective art-work which it brings to light of day, the *Drama*. (But to force his own specific nature to the highest blossoming of its contents in this *one* and highest art-work, the separate artist, like each several art, must quell each selfish, arbitrary bent toward untimely bushing into outgrowths unfurtherosome to the whole; the better then to put forth all his strength for reaching of the highest common purpose, which cannot indeed be realised without the unit, nor, on the other hand, without the unit's recurrent limitation.)

This purpose of the Drama, is withal the only true artistic purpose that ever can be fully *realised*; whatsoever lies aloof from that, must necessarily lose itself in the sea of things indefinite, obscure, unfree. This purpose, however, the separate art-branch will never reach *alone*,* but only *all*

* The modern *Playwright* will feel little tempted to concede that Drama ought not to belong exclusively to *his* branch of art, the art of *Poesy*; above all will he not be able to constrain himself to share it with the Tone-poet,—to wit, as he understands us, allow the Play to be swallowed up by the Opera.

together; and therefore the most *universal* is at like time the only real, free, the only universally *intelligible* Art-work,

(Continuation of Footnote, page 193).

Perfectly correct!—so long as Opera subsists, the Play must also stand, and, for the matter of that, the Pantomime too; so long as any dispute hereon is thinkable, the Drama of the Future must itself remain un-thinkable. If, however, the Poet's doubt lie deeper, and consist in this, that he cannot conceive how *Song* should be entitled to usurp entirely the place of spoken dialogue: then he must take for rejoinder, that in two several regards he has not as yet a clear idea of the character of the Art-work of the Future. Firstly, he does not reflect that Music has to occupy a very different position in this Art-work to what she takes in modern Opera: that only where her power is the *fittest*, has she to open out her full expanse; while, on the contrary, wherever another power, for instance that of dramatic Speech, is the most *necessary*, she has to subordinate herself to that; still, that Music possesses the peculiar faculty of, without entirely keeping silence, so imperceptibly linking herself to the thought-full element of Speech that she lets the latter seem to walk abroad alone, the while she still supports it. Should the poet acknowledge this, then he has to recognise in the second place, that thoughts and situations to which the lightest and most restrained accompaniment of Music should seem impertunate and burdensome, can only be such as are borrowed from the spirit of our modern Play; which, from beginning to end, will find no inch of breathing-space within the Art-work of the Future. The Man who will portray himself in the Drama of the Future has done for ever with all the prosaic hurly-burly of fashionable manners or polite intrigue, which our modern "poets" have to tangle and to disentangle in their plays, with greatest circumstantiality. His nature-bidden action and his speech are: Yea, yea! and Nay, nay!—and all beyond is evil, *i.e.* modern and superfluous.—R. WAGNER.

V.

THE ARTIST OF THE FUTURE.



HAVING sketched in general outline the nature of the Art-work into which the whole art-family must be absorbed, to be there redeemed by universal understanding, it remains to ask: What are the life-conditions which shall summon forth the Necessity of this Art-work and this redemption? Will this be brought about by Modern Art, in impatient need of understanding, from out her own pre-meditated plan, by arbitrary choice of means, and with fixed prescription of the 'modus' of the union that she has recognised as necessary? Will she be able to draw up a constitutional chart, a tariff of agreement with the so-called un-culture of the Folk? And if she brought herself to stoop to this, would such an agreement be actually effected by that 'constitution'? Can Cultured Art press forward from her abstract standpoint *into Life*; or rather, must not *Life press forward into Art*,—Life bear from out itself its only fitting Art, and mount up into that,—instead of art (well understood: the *Cultured Art*, which sprang from regions outside Life) *engendering Life* from out herself and mounting thereinto?

Let us therefore first agree as to *whom* we must consider the creator of the Art-work of the Future; so that we may argue back from him to the life-conditions which alone can permit his art-work and himself to take their rise. ✓

Who, then, will be the Artist of the Future?

Without a doubt, the Poet.*

* We must beg to be allowed to regard the *Tone-poet* as included in the *Word-poet*,—whether personally or by fellowship, is here a matter of indifference.—R. WAGNER.

But *who* will be the Poet ?

Indisputably the *Performer** (*Darsteller*).

Yet *who*, again, will be the Performer ?

Necessarily the *Fellowship of all the Artists*.—

In order to see the Performer and the Poet take natural rise, we must first imagine to ourselves the artistic Fellowship of the future ; and that according to no arbitrary canon, but following the logical course which we are bound to take in drawing from the Art-work itself our conclusions as to those artistic organs which alone can call it into natural life.—

The Art-work of the Future is an associate work, and only an associate demand can call it forth. This demand, which we have hitherto merely treated theoretically, as a necessary essential of the being of each separate branch of art, is practically conceivable only in the *fellowship of every artist* ; and the union of every artist, according to the exigencies of time and place, and for *one definite aim*, is that which forms this fellowship. This definite aim is the *Drama*, for which they all unite in order by their participation therein to unfold their own peculiar art to the acme of its being ; in this unfoldment to permeate each other's essence, and as fruit thereof to generate the living, breathing, moving drama. But the thing that makes this sharing possible to all—nay that renders it necessary, and which without their coöperation can never come to manifestment—is the very kernel of the Drama, the *dramatic Action* (*dramatische Handlung*).

The dramatic Action, as the first postulate of Drama, is withal that moment in the entire art-work which ensures its widest *understanding*. Directly borrowed from *Life*, past or present, it forms the intelligible bond that links

* The terms derived from the root "*dar-stellen*"—to set, or show, forth—have been used throughout this essay so frequently and so variously, that I deem it necessary to call attention to the fact that in English we have no thoroughly satisfactory equivalent. I have, therefore, been obliged to render this concept by distinct expressions : sometimes as "performer," again as "executant," "actor," "representant," &c. ; while in the *verbal* sense I have taken refuge in "portray," "display," "perform," "impersonate," &c.—TR.

this work therewith ; exactly in degree as it mirrors back the face of Life, and fitly satisfies its claim for understanding. The dramatic Action is thus *the bough from the Tree of Life* which, sprung therefrom by an unconscious instinct, has blossomed and shed its fruit obediently to vital laws, and now, dis severed from the stem, is *planted in the soil of Art* ; there, in new, more beautiful, eternal life, to grow into the spreading tree which resembles fully in its inner, necessary force and truth the parent tree of actual Life. But now, become its 'objectivation,' it upholds to Life the picture of its own existence, and lifts unconscious Life to conscious knowledge of itself.

In the dramatic Action, therefore, the Necessity of the art-work displays itself ; without *it*, or some degree of reference thereto, all art-fashioning is arbitrary, unneeded, accidental, unintelligible. The first and truest fount of Art reveals itself in the impulse that urges from *Life* into the work of art ; for it is the impulse to bring the unconscious, instinctive principle of Life to understanding (*verständniss*) and acknowledgment as Necessity. * But (the impulse toward agreement (*verständigung*) presupposes *commonality* : the Egoist has need of no one with whom to agree. Therefore, only from a life in common, can proceed the impulse toward intelligible objectification of this life by Art-work ; the Community of artists alone can give it vent ; and only in communion, can they content it.) This impulse, however, can only find its full contentment in the faithful representation of an episode (*Handlung*) taken from Life : whilst only such an episode can be a fitting subject for artistic Treatment as has already come in Life to definite conclusion ; as to which, as a series of causes and effects,†

* If we substitute "Will" for "Necessity" in this sentence (see footnote on page 69) we shall here obtain a complete summary of Schopenhauer's system of aesthetics ; while, even as it stands, it significantly foreshadows E. von Hartmann's "*Philosophy of the Unconscious*."—TR.

† "Über die als reine Thatsache kein zweifel mehr vorhanden ist"—to translate this sentence literally, "as a matter of fact," could only be misleading. Taken apart from the context, it might then be read as a confession of faith in the realistic school ; whereas the whole passage shows that Wagner

there can no longer be any doubt ; and as to whose possible issue there is no longer room for arbitrary assumption. Only when a thing has been consummated in Life, can we grasp the necessity of its occurrence, the harmony of its separate movements. But an episode is not completed, until the *Man* who brought it about—who stood in the focus of a series of events which, as a feeling, thinking, will-ing person, he guided by the force of his own innate character,—until this man is likewise no longer subject to our arbitrary assumptions as to his possible doings. Now, every man is subject to these so long as he lives : by Death is he first freed from this subjection, for then we know All that he did, and that he was. That action, therefore, must be the best fitted for dramatic art—and the worthiest object of its rendering—which is rounded off together with the life of the chief person that evolved it, and whose denouement is none other than the conclusion of the life of this one man himself.

Only that action is completely truthful — and can thoroughly convince us of its plain necessity—on whose fulfilment a man had set the whole strength of his being, and which was to him so imperative a necessity that he needs must pass over into it with the whole force of his character. But hereof he conclusively persuades us by this alone : that, in the effectuation of his personal force, he literally *went under*, he veritably threw overboard his personal existence, for sake of bringing to the outer world the inner Necessity which ruled his being.* He proves to us the verity of his nature, not only in his actions—which might still appear capricious so long as he yet were doing

went strongly for a search below the incidental surface for the broad principles of life that govern human action. Witness, that, of the two schemes with which he was at this time busied, *Barbarossa* and *Siegfried*, he abandoned the historical in favour of the mythical.—Tr.

* In the original, the passage runs : “um der entäusserten Nothwendigkeit seines Wesens willen” ; it is impossible, however, to convey the idea of ‘renunciation’ connoted by the term “entäusserung” (as employed in the next sentence) at like time with that of the—so to speak—‘turning inside out’ of a man’s character.—Tr.

—but by the consummated sacrifice of his personality to this necessary course of action. The last, completest renunciation (*Entäusserung*) of his personal egoism, the demonstration of his full ascension into universalism, a man can only show us by his *Death*; and that not by his accidental, but by his *necessary* death, the logical sequel to his actions, the last fulfilment of his being.

The celebration of such a Death is the noblest thing that men can enter on. It reveals to us in the nature of this one man, laid bare by death, the whole content of universal human nature. But we fix this revelation in surest hold of memory by the conscious *representation* of that Death itself and, in order to make its purport clear to us, by the representation of those actions which found their necessary conclusion in that death.* Not in the repulsive funeral rites which, in our neo-christian mode of life, we solemnise by meaningless hymns and churchyard platitudes; but by the artistic re-animation of the lost one, by life-glad reproduction and portrayal of his actions and his death, in the dramatic Art-work, shall we celebrate that festival which lifts us living to the highest bliss of love for the departed, and turns his nature to our own.

Though the longing for this dramatic rite is present in the whole brotherhood of artists, and though *that* object alone can be a worthy one, and one that justifies the impulse toward its representation, which awakes in us this impulse *in common*: yet that *Love* which alone can be conceived as the active and effectual power hereto, has its unfathomable seat within the heart of each separate unit; in whom it exercises its specific motive force in accordance with his individual characteristics. This specific energy of Love will therefore show itself most strenuously in that unit who, by reason of his general character, or in this particular period of his life, feels drawn by the closest bond of affinity toward this particular Hero; who by his

* We must not forget that, only a few months before writing this essay, Wagner had prepared a sketch for a tragedy on the subject of *Jesus of Nazareth*.
—Tr.

Love

sympathy makes the nature of this hero the most especially his own, and trains his artistic faculties the fittest to requicken by his impersonation this hero, of all others, for the living memory of himself, his fellows, and the whole community. The *might of individuality* will never assert itself more positively than in the free artistic fellowship; since the incitation to resolves in common can only issue from precisely that unit in whom the individuality speaks out so strongly that it determines the *free* voices of the rest. The might of Individuality, however, will only be able to operate thus upon the fellowship in those specific cases where it has the wit to bring itself to real, and not to merely artificial, currency. Should an art-comrade proclaim his purpose to represent this one particular Hero, and thereto crave that mutual co-operation of the fellowship which alone can bring this to effect: he will not see his wish fulfilled until he has succeeded in arousing for his project the same love and enthusiasm which inspire himself, and which he can only impart to others when his individuality stands possessed of a force in complete accord with the specific object.

When once the artist has raised his project to a *common* one, by the energy of his own enthusiasm, the artistic undertaking becomes thenceforth *itself an enterprise in common*. But as the dramatic action to be represented has its focus in the Hero of that action, so does the common art-work group itself around the *Representant* of this hero. His fellow-actors, and all his other colleagues, bear to him the same relation in the *art-work* as that which the co-enacting persons—those, that is to say, who formed the foils of the hero's character and the 'objects' of his action,—and, withal, the general human and natural entourage,—bore in *Life* to the Hero; only with this difference, that the hero's impersonator shapes and arranges *consciously* that which came *instinctively* to the actual hero. In his stress for artistic reproduction of the Action, the performer thus becomes a poet; he arranges his own action, and all its living outward issues, in accordance with an artistic

standard. But he only attains his special purpose in measure as he has raised it to a general aim, as every unit is clamorous to lend himself to the furtherance of this general aim,—therefore in exact measure as he himself, above all others, is able to surrender his own specific personal purpose to the general aim; and thus, in a sense, not merely *represents* in the art-work the action of the fêted hero, but *repeats* its moral lesson; insomuch as he proves by this surrender of his personality that he also, in his artistic action, is obeying a dictate of Necessity which consumes the whole individuality of his being.*

The *free Artistic Fellowship* is therefore the foundation, and the first condition, of the Art-work itself. From it proceeds the *Performer*, who, in his enthusiasm for this one particular hero whose nature harmonises with his own, now raises himself to the rank of *Poet*, of artistic *Lawgiver* to the fellowship; from this height, again, to descend to complete absorption in the fellowship. The function of this lawgiver is therefore never more than *periodic*, and is confined to the one particular occasion which has been prompted by his individuality and thereby raised to a common 'objective' for the art of all; wherefore his rule can by no means be extended to *all* occasions. The dic-

* Whilst we here have only touched upon the *Tragic* element of the Art-work of the Future, in its evolution out of Life, and by artistic fellowship, we may infer its *Comic* element by reversing the conditions which bring the Tragic to a natural birth. The hero of the Comedy will be the obverse of the hero of the Tragedy. Just as the one instinctively directed all his actions to his surroundings and his foils—as a Communist, *i.e.* as a unit who of his inner, free Necessity, and by his force of character, ascends into the Generality—so the other in his rôle of Egoist, of foe to the principle of Generality, will strive to withdraw himself therefrom, or else to arbitrarily direct it to his sole self-interest; but he will be withstood by this principle of generality in its most multifarious forms, hard pressed by it, and finally subdued. The Egoist will be *compelled* to ascend into *Community*; and *this* will therefore be the virtual enacting, many-headed personality which will ever appear to the action-wishing, but never can-ning, egoist as a capriciously changing Chance; until it fences him around within its closest circle and, without further breathing-space for his self-seeking, he sees at last his only rescue in the unconditional acknowledgment of its necessity. The artistic Fellowship, as the representative of Generality, will therefore have in Comedy an even director share in the framing of the poem itself, than in Tragedy.—K. WAGNER.

tatorship of the poet-actor comes to its natural close together with the attainment of his specific purpose: that purpose which he had raised into a common one, and in which his personality was dissolved so soon as ever his message had been shared with the community. Each separate member may lift himself to the exercise of this dictatorship, when he bears a definite message which so far answers to his individuality that in its proclamation he has power to raise it to a common purpose. For in that artistic fellowship which combines for no other aim than the satisfaction of a joint artistic impulse, it is impossible that any other thing should come to definite prescription and resolve, than that which compasses the mutual satisfaction of this impulse: namely, Art herself, and the laws which summon forth her perfect manifestment by the union of the individual with the universal.—

In all the mutual federations of the Manhood of the Future, these selfsame laws of *inner* necessity will assert their sole determinative might. A natural and unforced association of men in larger or in smaller numbers, can only be called forth by a need they feel in common. The satisfaction of this need is the exclusive aim of the mutual undertaking: toward this aim are directed the actions of each unit, so long as the common need is alike his strongest personal need; this aim will then, and of itself, prescribe the laws for the associate action. For these laws are nothing but the fittest means for reaching the common goal. The knowledge of the fittest means is denied to him who is urged towards this goal by no sincere, imperative need: but where the latter is at hand, the certain knowledge of these means springs self-taught from the cogence of the need, and above all, from its communal character.

Natural unions have, therefore, only so long a natural continuance as the need on which they are grounded is a common one, and as its satisfaction is still to be accomplished: has the goal been reached, then this specific union is dissolved *together* with the need that called it

forth ; and first from fresh-arising needs will there likewise rise fresh unions of those who share these novel needs in common. Our modern *States* are thus far the most unnatural unions of fellow men, that—called into existence by mere external caprice, *e.g.* dynastic interests—they yoke together a certain number of men *for once and all*, in furtherance of an aim which either never answered to a need they shared in common, or, from the change of time and circumstance, is certainly no longer common to them now.—*All* men have but *one* lasting need in common ; a need, however, which only in its most general purport abides in them in equal measure: this is the need *to live and to be happy*. Herein lies the natural bond of all mankind ; a need to which our mother Earth may give us perfect answer.)

(In the reasonable state of Future Manhood, the special needs which take their rise, and mount aloft, in time and place and individuality, can alone lay down the bases of those special unions whose sum-total will make out the great association of *all* Mankind. These Unions will alternate, shape themselves afresh, unloose and knit themselves again, precisely as the Needs shall change and come back on their course. They will be lasting where they are of material sort, where they are rooted in the common ground and soil, and in general affect the intercourse of men in so far as this is necessarily founded on certain like-remaining, local limitations. But they will ever shape themselves anew, proclaim more complex and vivacious change, the more do they proceed from higher, universal, spiritual needs. Against the stiff political union of our time, upheld alene by outward force, the *free* communions of the Future in their pliant change—now spread out to bounds unheard-of, now linked in finest meshes—will display the future Human Life itself, whose inexhaustible charm will be preserved by ceaseless alternation of the richest individualities ; whereas our present life,* with its fashion and red-tape uniformity, affords alas ! the but too

* And especially our modern Theatrical institutions.—R. WAGNER.

faithful likeness of the modern *State*, with its *stations*, its *posts*, its *vested* interests,* its *standing* armies—and whatever else it has of *standing*.

Yet no alliances of men will enjoy a richer, more eventful change than those inspired by *Art*. For in these each individuality, so soon as ever it has wit to utter itself in consonance with the spirit of community, will, by the exposition of its passing purpose, call forth a fresh alliance to realise that *one specific* purpose; inasmuch as it will widen out its own particular need to the Need of a brotherhood which this very need will have summoned into being. Each dramatic art-work, as it enters upon life, will therefore be the work of a new and never-hitherto-existing, and thus a never-to-be-repeated fellowship of artists: its communion will take its rise from the moment when the poet-actor of the hero's rôle exalts his purpose to the common aim of the comrades whom he needed for its exposition, and will be dissolved the very instant that this purpose is attained.

In this wise naught can pass into a standstill, in this artistic union: it is formed for the one sole aim, attained to-day, of celebrating this one particular hero; to be to-morrow, under entirely fresh conditions, and through the inspiring purpose of an entirely different individual, resolved into a fresh association. While this fresh association will be as distinct from that preceding it, as it will bring its work to light of day according to *specific laws* which, constituting the fittest means for the realisation of the new-adopted scheme, will evince themselves as likewise new and never matched quite *thus* before.†

Thus, and thus only, must the future Artist-guild be constituted, so soon as ever it is banded by no other aim than that of the *Art-work*. Who, then, will be the *Artist* of

* "*Stand-rechten*," generally employed to signify a 'court-martial.' The whole group of derivatives from the root-idea of 'standing' reads thus:—"das getreue Abbild des modernen Staates, mit seinen Ständen, Anstellungen, Standrechten, stehenden Heeren—und was sonst noch Alles in ihm stehen möge"; the italics being reproduced from the original.—Tr.

† See *Meistersinger*, Act 3.—*Walther*: "Wie fang ich nach der Regel an?"—*Hans Sachs*: "Ihr stellt sie selbst, und folgt ihr dann."—Tr.

the Future? The poet? The performer? The musician? The plastician?—Let us say it in one word: the Folk. That selfsame Folk to whom we owe the only genuine Art-work, still living even in our modern memory, however much distorted by our restorations; to whom alone we owe all Art itself.

When we repiece the past and consummated, in order to conjure up the picture of a particular object in the light of its general bearings on the history of mankind, we can depict its singlest traits with surest touch,—nay, from the minute regardal of such single traits there often springs for us the surest understanding of the whole, which we are forced to rescue from its hazy generalism by holding to this one particular feature. Thus in our present inquiry into the phenomena of Art, the wealth of details that confront us is so excessive that, in order to present our object in its general bearings, we can only venture to select a limited portion, and that which seems the best to illustrate our line of thought; lest otherwise we lose ourselves in branching by-ways, and our eyes be turned aside from the higher general goal. Now the case is exactly opposite, when we desire to portray a future state of things; we have only one scale for such a picture, and that lies, decidedly not in the spaces of the Future, on which the combination is to shape itself, but in the Past and in the Present; even there where all those conditions are still in lusty life which make the longed-for future state impossible to-day, and allow its sheer antithesis to seem an unavoidable necessity. The force of Need impels us to a general preconception; yet we can only grasp it, not simply by an ardent aspiration of the heart, but rather by a logical induction which tells us that this state will be the very opposite of the evil which we recognise in our system of to-day. All individual features *

* Whosoever is unable to lift himself above his thralldom to the trivial, unnatural system of our Modern Art, will be sure to pose the vapidest of questions anent these details; to throw out doubts; to decline to understand.

must stay, perforce, outside this preconception ; since such could only figure as arbitrary assumptions of our phantasy, and must constantly bewray their nature as borrowed from the bad conditions of the present day. Only the consummated and fulfilled, can be matter of our knowledge ; the lifelike shaping of the Future must be the work of Life itself alone ! When this is brought to pass, we shall conceive at the first glance what to-day we could only palm off upon ourselves by the exercise of whim and fancy, submitted as we are to the insuperable influence of our present plight.

Nothing has been more destructive of human happiness, than this frenzied haste to regulate the Life of the Future by given present laws. This loathly care about the Future, which indeed is the sole heritage of moody, absolute Egoism, at bottom seeks but to *preserve*, to *ensure* what we possess to-day, for all our lifetime. It holds fast to Property—the to-all-eternity to be clinched and riveted, *property*—as the only worthy object of busy human forethought, and therefore seeks to do its best to swathe the Future's self-moved limbs, to pluck out by the roots its self-shaping quick of Life, as a poisonous and maddening sting ; in order to protect from every careless jog this undying fund of Property, that it may ever re-engender and swell out the fodder for its comfortable chewing and devouring, by the natural law of five per cent. Just as in this chief anxiety of the modern State, Man is looked-on, to all future time, as an utterly feeble or eternally to-be-mistrusted being, which can only be maintained by Property, or restrained within the proper path by Law : so, in respect of Art and Artists, we view the *Art-institute* as the only safeguard of their common welfare. Without Academies, Statutes, and Institutions, Art seems to us to run the constant danger of—so to phrase it—giving up the ghost ; for we cannot reconcile a free, That he should answer in advance the myriad possible doubts and questions of this sort, no one, surely, will demand of an author who addresses himself above all to the *thinking artist*, and not to the thick-headed modern art-industrial—no matter whether the latter's literary calling be critical or creative.—R. WAGNER. (Continuation of Footnote, page 205).

a self-determining activity with our modern notions of an Artist. The reason of this, however, is that in sooth we are no genuine Artists, no more than we are genuine Men. And thus the feeling of our pitiful incapacity, entirely brought upon ourselves by cowardice and weakness, casts us back upon the everlasting care to frame fixed canons for the Future; by whose forcible upholding we, at bottom, but ensure that we shall *never* be true Artists, and *never* truthful Men.

So is it! We always look towards the Future with the eye of the Present, with the eye that can only measure all future generations by the standard it has borrowed from the Men of the Present, and sets up as the universal standard of mankind. If we have finally proved that *the Folk* must of necessity be the Artist of the future, we must be prepared to see the intellectual egoism of the artists of the Present break forth in contemptuous amazement at the discovery. They forget completely that in the days of national blood-brotherhood, which preceded the epoch when the absolute Egoism of the individual was elevated to a religion,—the days which our historians betoken as those of prehistoric myth and fable,—the Folk, in truth, was already the only poet, the only artist; that all their matter, and all their form—if it is to have any sound vitality—they can derive alone from the fancy of these art-inventive Peoples. On the contrary, they regard the Folk exclusively under the aspect lent it nowadays by their culture-spectacled eyes. From their lofty pedestal, they deem that only their direct antithesis, the raw uncultured masses, can mean for them “the Folk.” As they look down upon the people, there rise but fumes of beer and spirits to their nostrils; they fumble for their perfumed handkerchiefs, and ask with civilised exasperation: “What! The *rabble* is in future to replace us in Art-making? The rabble, which does not so much as understand us, when *we* provide its art? Out of the reeking gin-shop, out of the smoking dung-heap, are we to see arise the mould of Beauty and of Art?”—

Quite so! Not from the filthy dregs of your Culture of

to-day, not from the loathsome subsoil of your modern 'polite education,' not from the conditions which give your modern civilisation the sole conceivable base of its existence, shall arise the Art-work of the Future. Yet reflect! that this rabble is in no wise a normal product of real human nature, but rather the artificial outcome of your denaturalised culture; that all the crimes and abominations with which ye now upbraid this rabble, are only the despairing gestures of the battle which the true nature of Man wages against its hideous oppressor, modern Civilisation; and that these revolting features are nowise the real face of Nature, but rather the reflection of the hypocritical mask of your State-, and Criminal-Culture. Further reflect: that, where one portion of the social system busies itself alone with *superfluous* art and literature, another portion must necessarily redress the balance by scavenging the dirt of your useless lives; that, where fashion and dilettantism fill up one whole unneedful life, there coarseness and grossness must make out the substance of another life,—a life ye cannot do without; that, where need-less luxury seeks violently to still its all-devouring appetite, the natural Need can only balance its side of the account with Luxury by drudgery and want, amidst the most deforming cares.

So long as ye intellectual egoists and egoistic purists shall blossom in your artificial atmosphere, there must needs be somewhere a "stuff" from whose vital juices ye may distil your own sweet perfumes; and this stuff, from which ye have sucked out all its inbred scent, is but that foul-breathed rabble whose approach inspires you with disgust, and from whom ye only ward yourselves by that very perfume ye have squeezed from out its native comeliness. So long as a great portion of any nation, installed in State, Judiciary, and University-posts, squanders its precious vital forces on the most useless of employments: so long must an equally great, or even greater portion replace those squandered forces by its own employment in the harshest tasks of bare Utility. And—saddest tale of all!—when in this disproportionately burdened section of the Folk the

sheerest utilitarianism has thus become the moving spirit of all its energy, then must the revolting spectacle be exhibited of absolute Egoism enforcing its laws of life on every hand and, from the visage of the town and country rabble, reflecting back its hatefullest grimaces upon yourselves.*

However, neither you nor this rabble do we understand by the term, *the Folk*: only when neither Ye nor It shall exist any longer, can we conceive the presence of the Folk. Yet even now the Folk is living, wherever ye and the rabble are not; or rather, it is living in your twin midst, but ye wist not of it. Did ye *know* it, then were ye yourselves the Folk; for no man can know the fulness of the Folk, without possessing a share therein. The highest educated alike with the most uneducated, the learned with the most unlearned, the high-placed with the lowly, the nestling of the amplest lap of luxury with the starveling of the filthiest den of Hunger, the ward of heartless Science with the wastrel of the rawest vice,—so soon as e'er he feels and nurtures in himself a stress which thrusts him out from cowardly indifference to the criminal assemblage of our social and political affairs, or heavy-witted submission thereunder,—which inspires him with loathing for the shallow joys of our inhuman Culture, or hatred for a Utilitarianism that brings its uses only to the need-less and never to the needy,—which fills him with contempt for those self-sufficient thralls, the despicable Egoists! or wrath against the arrogant outragers of human nature,—he, therefore, who *not* from this conglomerate of pride and baseness, of shamelessness and cringing, thus not from the *statutory rights* which hold this composite together, but from the fulness and the depth of naked *human nature* and the irrefutable right of its absolute Need, draws force for resistance, for revolt, for assault upon the oppressor of this nature,—he then who *must* withstand, revolt, and deal

* It would almost seem that the author had caught a slight foreboding of the character of the latest Parisian "Commune."—The Editor. (Tr.—*i.e.* of the edition of 1872; in other words—Richard Wagner.)

assault, and openly avows this plain necessity in that he gladly suffers every other sorrow for its sake, and, if need should be, will even offer up his life,—*he, and he alone belongs to the Folk*; for he and all his fellows feel a common *Want*.

‘This *Want* will give the Folk the mastery of Life, will raise it to the only living might. *This Want* once drove the *Israelites*, already turned to dull and sordid beasts of burden, through the waters of the salt Red Sea; and through the Red Sea also must *Want* drive *us*, if we are ever, cleansed from shame, to reach the promised land. We shall not drown beneath its waves; it is fatal only to the Pharaohs of this world, who once with host and captains, with horse and rider, were swallowed up therein,—those haughty, overweening Pharaohs who had forgotten that once a poor herdsman’s son had through his prudent counsels saved their land and them from death by hunger! But the *Folk*, the *chosen people*, passed scathless through that sea towards the Land of Promise: and reached it when the desert sand had washed its body of the last remaining stain of slavery.—

Since the poor Israelites have led me thus into the region of the fairest of all poetry, the ever fresh and ever truthful *poems of the Folk*, I will take my leave—by way of moral—with the outline of a glorious Saga which long ago the raw, uncultured Folk of oldtime Germany indited for no other reason than that of inner, free Necessity.

Wieland the Smith, out of very joy in his handiwork, forged cunning trinkets for himself, and weapons keen and fair to see. One day as he was bathing on the shore, he saw a Swan-maiden (*Schwanenjungfrau*) come flying with her sisters through the air and, putting off her swan-apparel, plunge down into the sea. Aflame with sudden love, he rushed into the deeper waters; he wrestled with, and won the wondrous woman. Love, too, broke down

her pride; in tender care for one another, they lived in blissful union.

A ring the Swan-maid gave to Wieland: this must he never let her win back from him; for greatly as she loved him, she had not lost her yearning for her ancient Freedom, for wind-borne passage to her happy island home; and this ring it was, that gave her strength to wing her flight. So Wieland wrought a goodly store of rings alike to that his Swan-wife gave him, and strung them on a hempen cord against his wall: amongst them all she should not recognise her own.

He came home once from journeying. Alack! There lay his house in ruins; his wife had flown away to farthest distance!

There was a King, *Neiding* (Envy) by name, who had heard much talk of Wieland's skill; he burned to trap the Smith, that thenceforth he might work for him alone. He found at last a valid pretext for such a deed of violence: the vein of gold which Wieland wrought into his smitheries belonged to Neiding's ground and soil; thus Wieland's art was a robbery of the royal possessions.—It was he who burst into the smithy; and now he fell upon the Smith himself; bound him with chains, and bore him off.

Set down in Neiding's court, Wieland must hammer for the King all kinds of objects, useful, strong, and durable: harness, tools, and armour, by aid of which the King might broaden-out his realm. But since, for such a labour, Neiding must loose the captive's bonds, his care was how to leave his body free to move, yet hinder him from flight: and so he craftily bethought him of severing the sinews of poor Wieland's feet. For he rightly guessed that the Smith had only need of hands, and not of feet, to do his work.

Thus sate he then, in all his misery, the art-rich Wieland, the one-time blithesome wonder-smith: crippled, behind his anvil, at which he now must slave to swell his master's wealth; limping, lamed, and loathly, whene'er he strove to

stand erect! Who might measure all his suffering, when he thought back to his Freedom, to his Art,—to his beloved wife! Who fathom all his grudge against this King, who had wrought him such an untold shame!

From his forge he gazed above to Heaven's blue, through which the Swan-maid once had flown to him; this air was her thrice-happy realm, through which she soared in blissful freedom, the while he breathed the smithy's stench and fume—all for the service of King Neiding's use! The shamed and self-bound man, should he never find his wife again!

Ha! since he was doomed to wretchedness for ever, since nevermore should joy or solace bloom for him,—if he yet might gain at least one only thing: Revenge, revenge upon this Neiding, who had brought him to this endless sorrow for his own base use! If it were only possible to sweep this wretch and all his brood from off the earth!—

Fearsome schemes of vengeance planned he; day by day increased his misery; and day by day grew ranker the desperate longing for revenge.—But how should he, the halting cripple, make ready for the battle that should lay his torturer low? One venturous forward step; and he must fall dishonoured to the ground, the plaything for his foeman's scorn!

“Thou dearest, distant wife! Had I thy wings! Had I thy wings, to wreak my vengeance, and swing myself aloft from out this shame!”—

Then *Want itself* bent down its mighty pinions above the tortured Wieland's breast, and fanned its inspiration about his thoughtful brow. From *Want*, from terrible, all-powerful *Want*, the fettered artist learnt to mould what no man's mind had yet conceived. *Wieland found it: found how to forge him WINGS.* *Wings* whereon to mount aloft to wreak revenge on his tormentor,—*Wings*, to soar through Heaven's distance to the blessed island of his Wife!—

He did it: he fulfilled *the task that utmost Want had set*

within him. Borne on *the work of his own Art*, he flew aloft; he rained his deadly shafts into King Neiding's heart;—he swung himself in blissful, daring flight athwart the winds, to where he found the loved one of his youth.—

O sole and glorious Folk! This is it, that thou thyself hast sung. Thou art thyself this Wieland! Weld thou thy wings, and soar on high!

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