

301 the other. This last type seems to me much preferable to the other two, because it shows us the greatest misfortune not as an exception, not as something brought about by rare circumstances or monstrous characters, but rather as something that develops effortlessly and spontaneously out of people's deeds and characters, almost as if it were essential, thereby bringing it terrifyingly close to us. And if in both the other categories of tragedy we catch sight of an appalling fate and horrific evil as powers that are indeed terrible but that threaten us only from a great distance so that we ourselves will probably escape them without being driven to renunciation, – then this last genre shows us the sort of powers that destroy life and happiness and that can at any moment make their way towards us as well, where the greatest suffering is brought about by entanglements essentially the same as those assumed by our own fate, and through actions that we too might perhaps be capable of committing, so that we may not complain of injustice: then we shudder as we feel ourselves already in the middle of hell. But the execution of this final type of tragedy brings with it the greatest difficulties because it has to produce the greatest effect merely by positioning and distribution, with the least expenditure of means and the smallest number of causes of action:^a thus even some of the best tragedies evade this difficulty. A perfect specimen of this type of tragedy is nonetheless to be found in a work that in other respects is greatly surpassed by many others of the same great master: it is *Clavigo*.^b To a certain extent *Hamlet* belongs here, if you look only at his relation to Laertes and Ophelia; *Wallenstein*^c has this merit as well; *Faust* is entirely of this type, if you consider as the principal action only the events with Gretchen and her brother; likewise Corneille's *Cid*, except that this lacks a tragic end, which, by contrast, you find in the analogous relation of Max to Thecla.^{*,d,76}

§ 52

302 Now that we have considered all the fine arts with the universality proper to our point of view, beginning with fine architecture (whose goal as such is to make the objectivation of the will clear at the lowest level of its visibility, where it shows itself as the dull striving of mass, conforming to

* See chapter 37 of the second volume.

^a *Bewegungsursachen*

^b [by Goethe]

^c [by Schiller]

^d [characters in *Wallenstein*]

law but with no cognition, but nonetheless still revealing self-dichotomy and struggle, namely between gravity and rigidity) – and concluding our investigation with tragedy at the highest level of the objectivation of the will, and which puts that very schism before our eyes in fearful grandeur and clarity; – we find that one fine art still remained, and must remain excluded from our consideration since there was absolutely no suitable place for it in the systematic context of our presentation: and this is *music*. It stands completely apart from all the others. What we recognize in it is not an imitation^a or repetition of some Idea of the essence of the world: nonetheless, it is such a great and magisterial art, it exercises so powerful an effect within us, is understood so deeply and entirely by us as a wholly universal language whose clarity exceeds even that of the intuitive world itself; – that we can certainly look to it for more than an ‘unconscious exercise in arithmetic in which the mind does not know that it is counting’,^b which is what Leibniz took it to be,^{*} although he was entirely correct to the extent that he considered only its immediate and external significance, its outer shell. But if it were nothing more, then the satisfaction that it affords would be similar to the feeling we have when some mathematical problem comes out right, and would not be that heartfelt joy with which we see the deepest recesses of our being^c given voice. Thus,⁷⁷ from our perspective, focusing on the aesthetic effect, we must grant it a much more serious and profound significance, one that refers to the innermost essence of the world and our self, and in this respect the numerical relations into which it can be resolved are not the signified but, even in the first instance, the sign. By analogy with the rest of the arts, we can conclude that music must in some sense relate to the world as presentation to presented, as copy to original,^d since all of the other arts share this distinctive feature, and music has an effect on us that is, on the whole, similar to theirs, but stronger, quicker, more necessary and more unerring. Its imitative^e relation to the world must also be very intimate,^f infinitely true and strikingly apt, because it is instantaneously comprehensible to everyone and has a certain infallibility recognizable from the fact that its form can be reduced to completely determinate rules that can be expressed numerically, and

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* *Leibnitii epistolae, collectio Kortholti* [*Letters of Leibniz*, edited by Christian Kortholt], letter 154

^a *Nachbildung*

^b *exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi*

^c *Wesen*

^d *wie Nachbild zum Vorbilde*

^e *nachbildliche*

^f *innige*

from which it cannot deviate in the least without entirely ceasing to be music. – Nonetheless the point of comparison between music and the world, the respect in which the former acts as an imitation or repetition of the latter, is very deeply hidden. In every age, people have played music without being able to give an account of it: content with an immediate understanding of music, people did without an abstract conceptualization of this immediate understanding.

By devoting my mind entirely to the impression made by the art of music^a in its many different forms, and then returning to reflection and to the train of thought expounded in the present work, an explanation came to me of the inner essence of music and its mimetic relation to the world, a relation that must be necessarily presupposed by analogy. This explanation is entirely sufficient for me as well as satisfactory for my investigation, and will be equally insightful to those who have followed me thus far and agreed with my view of the world; nonetheless, I recognize that the explanation is fundamentally incapable of proof, since it assumes and lays down a relationship between music as a representation and something that can fundamentally never be a representation; it claims to regard music as the copy of an original that cannot itself ever be directly presented. Here, therefore, at the conclusion of this Third Book, devoted primarily to the arts, I cannot do more than to present the explanation that I find personally satisfying of the marvellous musical art,^b and I must leave the acceptance or rejection of my view to the overall effect on readers of, on the one hand, music itself, as well as, on the other, the whole of the single thought that I have communicated in this text. Beyond that, in order for readers to be genuinely convinced by my explanation of the significance of music, I consider it necessary that they listen to music frequently and with sustained reflection; and in order to do so it is again necessary that they should already be very familiar with the whole of the thought I am presenting here.

The (Platonic)⁷⁸ Ideas are the adequate objectivation of the will; the goal of all the other arts is to arouse cognition of these Ideas through the presentation of particular things (artworks themselves are always such things) – something that is possible only given a corresponding alteration in the subject of cognition. As a result, they all objectify the will only indirectly, namely by means of the Ideas: and since our world is nothing other than the appearance of the Ideas in multiplicity as a result of those

^a *Tonkunst*

^b *Kunst der Töne*

Ideas entering into the *principium individuationis* (the form of cognition possible for the individual as such); then, since it passes over the Ideas, music is also wholly independent of the appearing world, simply ignoring it, so that it could in a sense still exist even if there were no world at all, something that cannot be said of the other arts. In fact, music is an *unmediated*^a objectivation and copy^b of the entire *will*, just as the world itself is, just as in fact the Ideas themselves are, whose multiplied appearance constitutes the world of particular things. Therefore, unlike the other arts, music is in no way a copy of the Ideas; instead, it is a *copy of the will itself*, whose objecthood the Ideas are as well: this is precisely why the effect of music is so much more powerful and urgent than that of the other arts: the other arts speak only of shadows while music speaks of the essence.⁷⁹ But since it is the same will that objectifies itself in the Ideas as much as in music (albeit completely differently in each of them) then there must be a parallelism between them even if there is absolutely no direct similarity, there must still be an analogy between music and the Ideas whose multiplied, incomplete appearance makes up the visible world. Evidence for this analogy will clarify these points better, since understanding here is hindered by the obscurity of its object.

In the lowest notes of harmony, in the ground bass, I recognize the lowest levels of the objectivation of the will, inorganic nature, the mass of the planet. All the higher notes, which are brisk, sprightly and die away more quickly, are known to originate from the secondary vibrations^c of the deep tonic note^d (they always resonate softly with this tonic note) and it is the law of harmony that a bass note may be accompanied only by those high notes that actually already sound with it on their own (its *sons harmoniques*^e) through these secondary vibrations. Now this is analogous to the fact that all the natural bodies and organizations must be seen as arising from a stepwise development out of the planetary mass: this mass is both their support and their source: and this is the same relationship that the higher notes have to the ground bass. – There is a limit to the depth at which tones are still audible: this corresponds to the fact that matter is not perceptible in the absence of form and quality (i.e. without the expression of a force that cannot itself be further explained, precisely one in which an Idea expresses itself), and more generally to the fact that no matter can be

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^a *unmittelbar*

^b *Abbild*

^c *Nebenschwingungen*

^d *Grundton*

^e [harmonics]