

ECONOMIMESIS

JACQUES DERRIDA

Under the cover of a controlled indeterminacy, pure morality and empirical culturalism are allied in the Kantian critique of pure judgments of taste.¹ A politics, therefore, although it never occupies the center of the stage, acts upon this discourse. It ought to be possible to read it. Politics and political economy, to be sure, are implicated in every discourse on art and on the beautiful. But how does one discern the most pointed specificity of such an implication? Certain of its motifs belong to a long sequence, to a powerful traditional chain going back to Plato and to Aristotle. Very tightly interlaced with these, though at first indistinguishable, are other narrower sequences that would be inadmissible within an Aristotelian or Platonic politics of art. But sorting out and measuring lengths will not suffice. Folded into a new system, the long sequences are displaced; their sense and their function change. Once inserted into another network, the "same" philosopheme is no longer the same, and besides it never had an identity external to its functioning. Simultaneously, "unique and original" ["*inédits*"] philosophemes, if there are any, as soon as they enter into articulated composition with inherited philosophemes, are affected by that composition over the whole of their surface and under every angle. We are no where near disposing of rigorous criteria for judging philosophical specificity, the precise limits framing a corpus or what properly belongs [*le propre*] to a system. The very project of such a delimitation itself already belongs to a set of conditions [*un ensemble*] that remains to be thought. In turn, even the concept of belonging [to a set] is open to elaboration, that is dislocation, by the structure of the *parergon* [Cf. "Le parergon," *La vérité en peinture*, (Paris: Champs Flammarion, 1978)].

Production as mimesis

That is what prompts us once again to feign a point of departure in examples, in any case in very particular locations, following a procedure which for reasons already recognized can be neither empirical nor meta-empirical.

These locations, here and now, are two; their choice is motivated by the concept of *economimesis*. It would appear that *mimesis* and *oiko-*

¹"*Economimesis*," which first appeared in *Mimesis des articulations* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1975) is reprinted here in translation with the kind permission of the publisher.



nomia could have nothing to do with one another. The point is to demonstrate the contrary, to exhibit the systematic link between the two; but not between some particular political economy and *mimesis*, for the latter can accommodate itself to political systems that are different, even opposed to one another. And we are not yet defining economy as an economy of circulation (a restricted economy) or a general economy, for the whole difficulty is narrowed down here as soon as—that is the hypothesis—there is no possible *opposition* between these two economies. Their relation must be one neither of identity nor of contradiction but must be other.

The two particular locations are signaled by statements that are economic in the current sense. Each time it is a question of *salary*. Remarks of this kind are rare in the third *Critique*. That is not a reason, quite the contrary, to consider them insignificant. Is it merely an accident of construction, a chance of composition that the whole Kantian theory of *mimesis* is set forth between these two remarks on salary?

One of these remarks is found in section 43 (*On art in general*): it is the definition of free (or liberal: *freie*) art by opposition to mercenary art [*Lohnkunst*]. The other one is in paragraph 51, in a parenthesis, where it is declared that in the Fine-Arts the mind must occupy itself, excite and satisfy itself without having any end [*but*] in view and independently of any salary.

The first remark intervenes in the course of a definition of art in general—a definition that comes rather late in the book. Up to this point, the subject has been beauty and pure judgments of taste, and if examples have been drawn from art, natural beauty might just as well have furnished them for a theory of judgments of taste. In the preceding paragraph, the superiority of natural beauty had been justified from a moral point of view and by recourse to an analogy between judgments of taste and moral judgments. On the basis of this analogy one can read the “ciphered language” [*Chiffreschrift*] that nature “speaks to us figurally [*figürlich*] through its beautiful forms,” its real signatures which make us consider it, nature, as art production. Nature lets itself be admired as art, not by accident but according to well-ordered laws. If on this point Hegel seems to say the contrary—that there is nothing beautiful but what is art—the analogy between art and nature here as always provides a principle of reconciliation.

What is art? Kant seems to begin by replying: art is not nature, thus subscribing to the inherited, ossified, simplified opposition between *tekhnè* and *physis*. On the side of nature is mechanical necessity; on the side of art, the play of freedom. In between them is a whole series of secondary determinations. But analogy annuls this opposition. It places under Nature’s dictate what is most wildly free in the production of art. Genius is the locus of such a dictation—the means by which art receives its rules from nature. All propositions of an anti-mimetic cast, all condemnations leveled against imitation are undermined at this point. One must not imitate nature; but nature, assigning its rules to genius, folds itself, returns to itself, reflects itself through art. This specular flexion provides both the principle of reflexive judgments—nature guaranteeing legality in a movement that proceeds from the particular—and the secret resource of *mimesis*—understood not, in the first place, as an imitation of nature by art, but as a flexion of the *physis*, nature’s relation to itself. There is no longer here any opposition between *physis* and *mimesis*, nor consequently between *physis* and *tekhnè*; or that, at least, is what now needs to be verified.

Section 43 begins: “Art is distinguished from nature as doing (*Thun*) (*facere*) is distinguished from acting (*Handeln*) or working (*Wirken*) generally (*agere*), and as the product (*Produkt*) or result of the former is distinguished as work (*Werk*) (*opus*) from the working (*Wirkung*) (*effectus*) of the latter.” [*Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1974)]

These proportional analogies are constructed on a certain number of apparently irreducible oppositions. How are they finally, as they always do, going to dissolve? And to the advantage of what political economy?

In order to dissolve, as they always do, the oppositions must be produced, must be propagated and multiplied. The process is one that has to be followed.

Within art in general (one of the two terms of the preceding opposition) another split engenders a series of distinctions. Their logical structure is not insignificant: there is no symmetry between the terms, but rather a regular hierarchy such that any attempt to distinguish between the two is also to classify one as being more and the other less. The attempt is to define two distinct sorts of art, but in order to display two phenomena of which one is more properly “art” than the other.

Immediately after having distinguished art from nature, Kant specifies that the only thing one ought to call “art” is the production of freedom by means of freedom [*Hervorbringung durch Freiheit*]. Art properly speaking puts free-will (*Wilkür*) to work and places reason at the root of its acts. There is therefore no art, in a strict sense, except that of a being who is free and *logon ekon* [has speech]: the product of bees [“cells of wax regularly constructed”] is not a work of art. What can be glimpsed in this inexhaustible reiteration of the humanist theme, of the ontology bound up with it as well, in this obscurantist buzzing that always treats animality *in general*, under the purview of one or two scholastic examples, as if there were only a single “animal” structure that could be opposed to the human (inalienably endowed with reason, freedom, sociality, laughter, language, law, the symbolic, with consciousness, or an unconscious, etc.), is that the concept of art is also constructed with just such a guarantee in view. It is there to raise man up [*ériger l’homme*], that is, always, to erect a man-god, to avoid contamination from “below,” and to mark an incontrovertible limit of anthropological domesticity. The whole of economimesis (Aristotle: only man is capable of *mimesis*) is represented in this gesture. Its ruse and its naiveté—the logic of man—lie in the necessity, in order to save the absolute privilege of emergence (art, freedom, language, etc.), of grounding it in an absolute naturalism and in an absolute indifferentialism; somewhere human production has to be renaturalized, and differentiation must get effaced into opposition.

Thus bees have no art. And if one were to name their production a “work of art,” it would be “only by analogy” [*nur wegen der Analogie*]. The work of art is always that of man [*ein Werk der Menschen*].

A power, aptitude, property, destiny of man [*Geschicklichkeit des Menschen*], art is distinguished in its turn from science. Scientific knowledge is a power [*un pouvoir*]; art is what it does not suffice to know, in order to know how to do it [*savoir faire*], in order to be able to do it [*pouvoir faire*]. In the region that Kant comes from, the common man is rarely wrong. Solving the problem of the egg of Columbus, that is science: it suffices to know in order to know how. The same may be said of prestidigitation. As for high-wire dancing, that is something else: you have to do it [*faut le faire*] and it does not suffice to know about it (there is a very brief passage of a tight-rope walker in a confidential note, “*In meinen Gegenden . . .*” For anyone who would like to take the plunge and put in something of himself: Kant, Nietzsche, Genet).

Distinct from science, art in general (the question of the Fine-Arts has not yet arisen) cannot be reduced to craft [*Handwerk*]. The latter exchanges the value of its work against a salary; it is a mercenary art [*Lohnkunst*]. Art, strictly speaking, is liberal or free [*freie*], its production must not enter into the economic circle of commerce, of offer and demand; it must not be exchanged. Liberal art and mercenary art therefore do not form a couple of opposite terms. One is higher than the other, more “art” than the other; it has more value for not having any economic value. If art, in the literal sense, is “production of freedom,” liberal art better conforms to its essence. Mercenary art belongs to art only by analogy. And if one follows this play of analogy, mercenary productivity also resembles that of bees: lack of freedom, a determined purpose or finality, utility, finitude of the code, fixity of the program without reason and without the play of the imagination. The craftsman, the worker, like the bee, does not play. And indeed, the hierarchical opposition of liberal art and mercenary art is that of play and work. “We regard the first as if it could only prove purposive as play, i.e. as occupation that is pleasant in itself. But the second is regarded as work, i.e. as occupation which is unpleasant (a trouble) in itself and which is only attractive on account of its effect (for example salary) and which can consequently only be imposed on us by constraint (*zwangmässig*).” |§ 43].

Let us follow the law of analogy:

1. If art is the distinguishing property of man as freedom, free art is more human than remunerated work, just as it is more human than the so-called instinctual activity of bees. The free man, the artist in this sense, is not *homo oeconomicus*.

2. Just as everything in nature prescribes the utilization of animal organization by man [§ 63], in the same way free man should be able to utilize, were it by constraint, the work of man insofar as it is not free. Liberal art ought thus to be able to use mercenary art (without touching it, that is without implicating itself); an economy must be able to utilize (render useful) the economy of work.

3. The value of play defines pure productivity. With the beautiful and art both proceeding from the imagination, it was still necessary to distinguish between the reproductive imagination and the productive imagination that is spontaneous, free, and playful: "If we seek the result of the preceding analysis, we find that everything runs up into this concept of taste—that it is a faculty for judging an object in reference to the imagination's *free conformity to law*. Now, if in the judgment of taste the imagination must be considered in its freedom, it is in the first place not regarded as reproductive [*reproductiv*], as subject to the laws of association, but as productive [*productiv*] and spontaneous [*selbstthätig*] (as the author of arbitrary forms of possible intuitions); and although in the apprehension of a given object of sense it is tied [*gebunden*] to a definite form of this object and so far has no free play [*freies Spiel*] (such as that of poetry), yet it may be readily conceived that the object can furnish it with such a form containing a collection of the manifold as the imagination itself, if it were let free, would project [*entwerfen*], in accordance with the *conformity to law of the understanding in general*." [General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic].

Poetry, the summit of fine art considered as a species of art, carries the freedom of play announced in the productive imagination to its extreme, to the top of the hierarchy, *Mimesis* intervenes, however, not only as one would expect in reproductive operations, but in the free and pure productivity of the imagination as well. The latter deploys the brute power of its invention only by *listening* to nature, to its dictation, its edict. And the concept of nature here itself functions in the service of that ontological humanism, of that obscurantism of the economy one could call liberal in its era of *Aufklärung*. Genius, as an instance of the Fine-Arts ("Fine-Arts must necessarily be considered arts of *genius*", § 46) carries freedom of play and the pure productivity of the imagination to its highest point. It gives rules or at least examples but it has its own rules dictated to it by nature: so that the whole distinction between liberal and mercenary art, with the whole machinery of hierarchical subordination that it commands, reproduces nature in its production, breaks with *mimesis*, understood as imitation of what is, only to identify itself with the free unfolding-refolding of the *physis*.

One ought to analyze closely the paragraph that exploits the false opposition between liberal art and craft. Liberal art is an occupation that is agreeable in itself. The liberal artist—the one who does not work for a salary—enjoys and gives enjoyment. Immediately. The mercenary, insofar as he is practicing his art, does not enjoy. But since we are dealing here with a hierarchy inside of a general organization governed by the universal law of nature, the non-enjoyment of the mercenary artist (his work) serves the cause of liberal enjoyment. And what imposes mercenary art by force, in the last analysis, is nature, which commands genius and which, through all sorts of mediations, commands everything. Speaking immediately after of a "hierarchy" [*Rangliste*] in the grade of the professions, Kant asks whether we ought to consider an occupation such as watchmaking a (free) art or a (mercenary) handicraft. A difficult question that is immediately put aside: it would require "another point of view", that of the "proportion of talents." The rigorous criterion is lacking. Similarly, Kant "does not want to discuss here" the question whether, among the seven liberal arts, some could be classed as sciences and others as handicrafts. The liberal arts taught in the arts faculties of the Middle Ages (*trivium*: grammar, dialectic, rhetoric; *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) are the disciplines that depend the most on the mind's work—by contrast with the mechanical arts, which above all require

manual labor. And yet in the exercise of a liberal art (of the free spirit) a certain constraint must be at work. Something compulsory (“*zwangmässiges*” is also the word used to designate the constraint imposed on handicraft) must intervene as a “mechanism” [*Mechanismus*]. Without this coercive constriction, this tight corset [*corsage*], the spirit which must be free in art “would have no body and would evaporate altogether.” The body, constraint, or mechanism, for example, of poetry, the highest of the liberal arts, would be lexical accuracy or richness [*Sprachrichtigkeit, Sprachreichtum*], prosody or metrics. The freedom of a liberal art relates to the system of coercions or constraints, to its own mechanism, as the spirit does to the body or the living body to its corset, which as always, as its name indicates, gives body to things. Attention is required here to seize the organic linchpin of the system: the two arts (liberal and mercenary) are not two totalities independent of or indifferent to one another. Liberal art relates to mercenary art as the mind does to the body, and it cannot produce itself, in its freedom, without the very thing that it subordinates to itself, without the force of mechanical structure which in every sense of the word it *supposes*—the mechanical agency, mercenary, laborious, deprived of pleasure. Hence we hear already the well-known reaction against any non-directive pedagogy: “many modern educators believe that the best way to produce a free art is to remove it from all constraint [*Zwang*] and thus to change it from work into mere play.” [Ibid]

It was just said that the free play of liberal art, unlike mercenary art, offers enjoyment [*donne à jour*]. This is still vague. One needs to distinguish pleasure [*plaisir*] from enjoyment [*jouissance*]. In this context and in a slightly conventional fashion, in order to mark two different concepts, Kant opposes *Lust* and *Genuss*. And that precisely at the moment when he defines the Fine-Arts [*Beaux-Arts*], fine art [*schöne Kunst*]. Once again, this definition does not proceed by symmetrical opposition, by classification of gender and species. Fine-Arts are free arts certainly, but they do not all belong to the liberal arts. Certain among these belong to the Fine-Arts, others to the Sciences.

What then characterizes the “Fine-Arts”²

This locution, despite being so familiar, is not self-evident. Is there a reason for terming “fine” or “beautiful” an art that produces the beautiful? The beautiful is the object, the *opus*, the form produced. Why then would art be fine or beautiful? Kant never asks this question. It seems called for by his critique. If one transfers to art a predicate which, in all rigor, seems to belong to its product, it is because the relation to the product cannot, structurally, be cut off from the relation to a productive subjectivity, however indeterminate, even anonymous it may be: we have here the implication of signature which should not be confused with the extrinsic demands of some empiricism (whether psychological, sociological, historical, etc.) The beautiful would always be the work [*l'oeuvre*] (as much the act as the object), the art whose signature remains marked at the limit of the work, neither in nor out, out and in, in the parergonal thickness of the frame. If the beautiful is never ascribed simply to the product or to the producing act, but to a certain passage to the limit between them, then it depends, provided with another elaboration, on some parergonal effect: the Fine-Arts are always of the frame and the signature. Kant doubtless would not endorse these propositions which nevertheless do not appear to be entirely incompatible with his problematic of aesthetic subjectivity.

When one says that an art is fine or beautiful, one is not referring to a singularity, to some productive act or to some unique production. The generality (music is a fine art, the art of some composer) implies, within the totality of the operation’s subjective powers, a repetition, a possibility of beginning again. This iterability belongs to the very concept of the “Fine-Arts.”

The repetition is of a pleasure. Whence the answer to the question: can a science be beautiful? No, says Kant. “A beautiful science” would be an absurdity, a non-sense, a nonentity [*Unding*]: nothing. One can certainly find beautiful things around scientific activity; an artist can also put scientific knowledge to work. But as such, an act or an object of science, for example a scientific statement, could not be called beautiful—any more than one could speak of the scientific value of an art. That would just

²Fine-Arts has been used throughout to translate *Beaux-Arts*, which translates *Schöne Kunst*.

be idle talk [*bavardage*]. The beauty of a scientific statement would be of the order of the *Bonmot*: “tasteful witticisms” [*geschmacksvolle Aussprache (Bonmots)*].

If *Witz* as such can have no scientific value, science must do without it in order to be what it is. It must therefore do without art, without beauty, and indissolubly, without pleasure. It must not proceed from (in view of) pleasure, must neither take nor give any.

A remark in passing, in the *Introduction*, nevertheless recognizes pleasure at the distant origin of knowledge: “but this pleasure has certainly been present at one time, and it is only because the commonest experience would be impossible without it that it is gradually confounded with mere cognition and no longer arrests particular attention.”

If in an immemorial time, which cannot be a time of consciousness, pleasure does not allow itself to be separated from knowledge, one can no longer exclude science from all relation to beauty, to *Witz*, as well as to the whole economy of pleasure (return to the self-same, reduction of the heterogeneous, recognition of the law, etc.) [Cf. “Le parergon” (II) (*Le sans de la coupure pure*), p. 27.] Moreover, one has to admit that in the *bon mot*, the force of *Witz* leads back into the buried or repressed origin of science, that is to the science of science, to the point where all the distinctions, oppositions, limits remarked by the Kantian critique lose their pertinence. It is important to take note of the sweeping consequences [*enjeu*] of this problem in the place where the Kantian text itself allows the effacement of that pertinence to be announced.

Let us return to the point where the limits are firmly inscribed, even if this inscription remains derived. The Fine-Arts are not at all scientific, sciences are not at all beautiful or artistic. The Fine-Arts proceed from and give pleasure, not enjoyment [*jouissance*], science, neither pleasure or enjoyment; fine art, pleasure without enjoyment. Nevertheless, not every art procures pleasure. A new series of distinctions intervenes.

An art that conforms to the knowledge of a possible object, which executes the operations necessary to bring it into being, which knows in advance that it must produce and consequently does produce it, such a *mechanical art* neither seeks nor gives pleasure. One knows how to print a book, build a machine, one avails oneself of a model and a purpose. To mechanical art Kant opposes aesthetic art. The latter has its immediate end in pleasure.

But aesthetic art in turn splits into two hierarchic species. Not every aesthetic art is a fine or beautiful art. There is thus aesthetic art that has no relation to the beautiful. Among aesthetic arts, certain of them, the agreeable arts, have enjoyment [*jouissance, Genuss*] as their aim. The Fine Arts seek pleasure [*Lust*] without enjoyment. Kant defines them first in two stringent lines without parentheses after having leisurely described the art of enjoyment (fourteen lines including a long parenthesis), the art of conversation, jest, laughter, gaiety, simple-minded entertainment, irresponsible gossip around the table, the art of serving, the management of music during the meal, party games, etc. All these are directed to enjoyment. “On the other hand, fine or beautiful art is a mode of representation which is purposive for itself and which, although devoid of purposes [*ohne Zweck*], yet furthers the culture of the mental powers in reference to social communication.” [§ 44]

Sociality, universal communicability: that can only be pleasure, not enjoyment. The latter involves an empirical sensibility, includes a kernel of incommunicable sensation. Pure pleasure, without empirical enjoyment, therefore belongs to judgment and reflection. But the pleasure of judgment and reflection must be *without* concept, for the reasons already recognized.

This pleasure dispenses with [*faire son deuil de*] both concept and enjoyment. It can only be given in reflective judgment. And according to the order of a certain *socius*, of a certain reflective intersubjectivity.

So what is the relation with *economimesis*? To be able to take pleasure in a reflective pronouncement [*prédication*] without enjoying and without conceiving, belongs, of course, to the essence [*le propre*] of man, of free man—capable of pure,

that is non-exchangeable productivity. Non-exchangeable in terms of sensible objects or signs of sensible objects (money for example), non-exchangeable in terms of enjoyment—neither as a use value nor as exchange value.

And nevertheless this pure productivity of the inexchangeable liberates a sort of immaculate commerce. Being a reflective exchange, universal communicability between free subjects opens up space for the play of the Fine-Arts. There is in this a sort of pure economy in which the *oikos*, what belongs essentially to the definition [*le propre*] of man, is reflected in his pure freedom and his pure productivity.

Why then *mimesis* here? The productions of the Fine Arts are not productions of nature, that, as Kant repeatedly recalls, goes without saying. *Facere* and not *agere*. But a certain *quasi*, a certain *als ob* re-establishes analogical *mimesis* at the point where it appears detached. The works of the Fine-Arts must have the appearance of nature and precisely in so far as they are productions (fashionings) of freedom. They must resemble *effects* of natural *action* at the very moment when they, most purely, are works [*opera*] of artistic confection. “In a product of the Fine-Arts, we must become conscious that it is art and not nature; but yet the purposiveness in its form must seem [*scheinen*] to be as free from all constraint [*Zwang*] of arbitrary rules as if [*als ob*] it were a product of pure nature. On this feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive faculties, which must at the same time be purposive, rests that pleasure [*Lust*] which alone is universally communicable, without being based on concepts.” [§ 45].

What is the scope of the *as if*?

Pure and free productivity must resemble that of nature. And it does so precisely because, free and pure, it does not depend on natural laws. The less it depends on nature, the more it resembles nature. *Mimesis* here is not the representation of one thing by another, the relation of resemblance or of identification between two beings, the reproduction of a product of nature by a product of art. It is not the relation of two products but of two productions. And of two freedoms. The artist does not imitate things in nature, or, if you will, in *natura naturata*, but the acts of *natura naturans*, the operations of the *physis*. But since an analogy has already made *natura naturans* the art of an author-subject, and, one could even say, of an artist-god, *mimesis* displays the identification of human action with divine action—of one freedom with another. The communicability of pure judgments of taste, the (universal, infinite, limitless) exchange between subjects who have free hands in the exercise or the appreciation of fine art, all that presupposes a commerce between the divine artist and the human one. And indeed this commerce is a *mimesis*, in the strict sense, a play, a mask, an identification with the other on stage, and not the imitation of an object by its copy. “True” *mimesis* is between two producing subjects and not between two produced things. Implied by the whole third *Critique*, even though the explicit theme, even less the word itself, never appears, this kind of *mimesis* inevitably entails the condemnation of imitation, which is always characterized as being servile.

As the first effect of this anthropo-theological *mimesis*, a divine teleology secures the political economy of the Fine-Arts, the hierarchical opposition of free art and mercenary art. *Economimesis* puts everything in its place, starting with the instinctual work of animals without language and ending with God, passing by way of the mechanical arts, mercenary art, liberal arts, aesthetic arts and the Fine-Arts.

We are now at the point where the structure of *mimesis* effaces the opposition between nature and art, *agere* and *facere*. And perhaps we rediscover here the root of that pleasure which, before having been reserved for art and for the beautiful, used to belong to knowledge. As for Aristotle, *mimesis* is that which belongs to the essential definition [*le propre*] of man. Kant speaks of imitation as “aping” (*singerie*) [§ 49]; the ape knows how to imitate, but he does not know how to mime in the sense in which only the freedom of a subject mimes itself. The ape is not a subject and has no relation—not even that of subjection—to the other as such. And the *Poetics* places *mimesis* at the conjoined origin of knowledge and pleasure: “Poetry does seem to owe its origin to two causes, and two natural causes [*physikai*]. To imitate [*mimēsthai*] is natural [*symphyton*: innate, congenital] for men and shows itself from infancy—man differs from other animals in that he is very apt at imitation [*mimetikôtaton*] and it is

by means of this that he acquires his first knowledge [*mathesis protas*], and secondly in that all men take pleasure in imitations [*khairein tois mimemasi pantas*]” [1448 b].

It must still be explained, in order to carry the analysis of a traditional link as far as possible, why the *Poetics* associates pleasure and knowledge while, in the same space of *mimesis*, the third *Critique* appears to disassociate them. In the first place it is because here, as we have seen, the unity of pleasure and knowledge was not excluded but merely re-assigned to the unconsciousness of some immemorial time. And in the second, because nature, the object of knowledge, will turn out to have been an art, an object of pleasure; and natural beauty will have been the production of a natural art. A strange imperfect tense signals it, referring either to an “above-in-the-text” or to some ordinary production. Following an *als ob*: “On this feeling of freedom in the play of our faculties of knowledge, which must at the same time be purposive, rests that pleasure which alone is universally communicable, without however being based on concepts. Nature was beautiful when it simultaneously was seen as art [*Die Natur war schön, wenn sie zugleich als Kunst aussah*] and art cannot be called beautiful unless we are conscious that it is art while yet it is seen, by us, as nature.” [§ 45]

The only beauty therefore remains that of productive nature. Art is beautiful to the degree that it is productive *like* productive nature, that it reproduces the production and not the product of nature, to the degree that nature may once have been (was), before the critical disassociation and before a still to be determined forgetfulness, beautiful. The analogy leads back to this precritical time, anterior to all the disassociations, oppositions, and delimitations of critical discourse, “older” even than the time of the transcendental aesthetic.

The beautiful brings productive nature back to itself, it qualifies a spectacle that artist-nature has given itself. God has given himself to be seen in a spectacle, just as if he had masked—had shown—himself: a theomime, a physiomime, for the pleasure of God—an immense liberality which however can only give itself to itself to be consumed.

If *economimēsis* institutes a specular relation between two liberties, readable in reflective judgment and in *gustus reflectans*, how can man’s freedom be said to resemble the freedom of God? Do we know what freedom is, what *freedom* means before having conceived of *physis* as *mimesis*? Before the fold God gives himself in a *miroir*? How can man’s freedom (in a liberal economy) resemble God’s freedom which resembles itself and reassembles itself in it. It resembles it precisely by not imitating it, the only way one freedom can resemble another.

The passage of *mimesis* cannot proceed by concepts but only—between freedoms—by exemplars with reflective value, quasi-natural productions which will institute the non-conceptual rules of art.

The original agency here is the figure of genius. It capitalizes freedom but in the same gesture naturalizes the whole of *economimēsis*. “Fine art is the art of genius” [§ 46]. *Ingenium* is natural, it is a natural talent, a gift of Nature [*Naturgabe*]. A productive and donative instance, genius is itself produced and given by nature. Without this gift of nature, without this present of a productive freedom, there would not be any fine art. Nature produces what produces, it produces freedom [for] itself [*elle se produit la liberté*] and gives it to itself. In giving non-conceptual rules to art (rules “abstracted from the act, that is from the product”), in producing “exemplars,” genius does nothing more than reflect nature, represent it: both as its legacy or its delegate and as its faithful image. “Genius is the innate disposition of the spirit [*ingenium*], by which nature gives rules to art.” [§ 46.]

The non-conceptual role, readable in the act and off the exemplar, does not derive from imitation (genius is incompatible with “the spirit of imitation”). Genius is not learned. “To learn is nothing other than to imitate.” Beyond the fact that with this last proposition (§ 47), one returns to the language of the *Poetics*, the affinity is confirmed by the fact that the originality of genius and the exemplarity of its products must incite a certain imitation. A good imitation: one which is not a servile repetition, which does not reproduce, which avoids counterfeiting and plagiarism. This

free imitation of a freedom (that of genius) which freely imitates divine freedom is a point that is “difficult to explain.” The ideas “awaken,” stir up, excite “similar ideas,” neighboring, related, analogical [*ähnliche*] ones. The difficult nuance which relates good to bad imitation, good to bad repetition, is fixed briefly in the opposition between *imitation* and *copy* [*contrefaçon*], between *Nachahmung* and *Nachtmachung*. The indiscernibility of that distinction, which nevertheless pervades everything, is repeated, imitated, counterfeited in the signifier: a perfect anagrammatical inversion, except for a single letter.

Once nature has detached genius in order to represent it and to give its rules to art, everything turns out to be naturalized, immediately or not, everything is interpreted as a structure of naturality: the content of empirical culturalism, the political economy of art, its very particular propositions, going from the verse of Frederick the Great to assertions about salary scales.

The second remark on salary belongs to the chapter “On the Divisions of the Fine-Arts” [§ 51]: “Everything which is studied and painful must therefore be avoided [in the Fine-Arts]; for fine art must be free art in a double sense: it is not, of course, in the form of some salaried activity [*Lohngeschäft*], work whose quantity can be evaluated according to a determined measure, which can be imposed [*erzwingen*] or paid for [*bezahlen*]; but at the same time the mind must feel itself occupied, although appeased and excited without looking to any other purpose (independent, that is, of any salary).

“The orator therefore gives something that he does not promise, namely an attractive play of the imagination; but he also cheats a little on what he promises and on what he announces as being properly his business, namely the purposive occupation of the understanding. The poet conversely promises little and announces a mere play with ideas, but he supplies something which has the value of a serious occupation, because he provides in this play food for the understanding and gives life to his concepts by the aid of the imagination: on the whole, the poet thus gives more, and the orator less than he promises.”

At the summit is the poet, analogous (and that precisely by a return of *logos*) to God: he gives more than he promises, he submits to no exchange contract, his overabundance generously breaks the circular economy. The hierarchy of the Fine-Arts therefore signifies that some power supercedes the (circular) economy, governs and places itself above (restricted) political economy. The naturalisation of political economy subordinates the production and the commerce of art to a transeconomy.

Economimesis is not impaired by it, on the contrary. It unfolds itself there to infinity. It suffers that transeconomy in order to pass to infinity as “Kantism” passes into “Hegelianism.” An infinite circle plays [with] itself and uses human play to reappropriate the gift for itself. The poet or genius receives from nature what he gives, of course, but first he receives from nature (from God), besides the given, the giving, the power to produce and to give more than he promises to men. The poetic gift, content and power, wealth and action, is an add-on [*un en-plus*] given as a [power] to give [*un donner*] by God to the poet, who transmits it in order to permit this supplementary surplus value to make its return to the infinite source—this source which can never be lost (by definition, if one can say that of the infinite). All that must pass through the voice. The genius poet is the voice of God who gives him voice, who gives himself and by giving gives to himself, gives himself what he gives, gives himself the [power] to give (*Gabe* and *es gibt*), plays freely with himself, only breaks the finite circle or contractual exchange in order to strike an infinite accord with himself. As soon as the infinite gives itself (to be thought), the *opposition* tends to be effaced between restricted and general economy, circulation and expendiary productivity. That is even, if we can still use such terms, the *function* of the passage to the infinite: the passage of the infinity between gift and debt.

Being what he is, the poet gives more than he promises. More than anyone asks of him. And this more belongs to the understanding: it announces a game and it gives something conceptual. Doubtless it is a plus-law [a more/no-more law] [*un plus-de-loi*], but one produced by a faculty whose essential character is *spontaneity*. Giving

more than he promises or than is asked of him, the genius poet is paid for this more by no one, at least within the political economy of man. But God supports him. He supports him with speech and in return for gratitude He furnishes him his capital, produces and reproduces his labor force, gives him surplus value and the means of giving surplus-value.

This is a poetic commerce, because God is a poet. There is a relation of hierarchical analogy between the poetic action of the speaking art, at the summit, and the action of God who dictates *Dichtung* to the poet.

This structure of *economimesis* necessarily has its *analogon* in the city. The poet, when he is neither writing nor singing, is just a man among men, must also eat. He must sustain the (mechanical) labor force which poetry, Kant shows, *cannot* forego. So that he may not forget that his essential wealth comes to him from on high, and that his true commerce links him to the loftiness of free, not mercenary art, he receives subsidies from the sun-king or from the enlightened-and-enlightening monarch, from the king-poet, the analogue of the poet-god: from Frederick the Great, a sort of national fund for letters which serves to lessen the rigors of supply and demand in a liberal economy. But this powerful scheme does not necessarily carry over into another organization of the restricted economy. *Economimesis* itself can still find a way to make a profit [*peut s'y retrouver dans ses comptes*].

Frederick the Great, the "great king", is almost the only poet quoted by the third *Critique*—a sign of the servile precaution and bad taste on the part of the philosopher, it is often ironically noted. But these poetic lines, like the commentary that surrounds them, very rigorously describe the generous overabundance of a solar source. God, King, Sun, Poet, Genius, etc. give of themselves without counting. And if the relation of alterity between a restricted economy and a general economy is above all not a relation of opposition, then the various helio-poetics—Platonic, Kantian, Hegelian, Nietzschean (up to and including Bataille's)—form an apparently *analogical* chain. No oppositional logic seems fitted to disassociate its *themes*.

"When the great king in one of his poems expresses himself as follows:

*Oui, finissons sans trouble et mourons sans regret,
En laissant l'univers comblé de nos bienfaits.
Ainsi l'astre du jour au bout de sa carrière,
Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière,
Et les derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs
Sont les derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'univers,*

*("Yes, let us finish without disquiet and die without regret
Leaving the universe overflowing with our benefactions.
Thus the star of day at the end of its career,
Spreads over the horizon a soft light,
And the last rays that it shoots in the air
Are the last sighs that it gives to the universe.")*

he quickens his rational idea of a cosmopolitan disposition at the end of life by an attribute of the imagination." [§ 49]. Inversely, Kant specifies, an intellectual concept can serve as an attribute for a sensible representation and thus animate it ("the sun arose/as calm from virtue springs", "*Die Sonne quoll hervor, wie Ruh aus Tugend quillt*") on the condition that there be recourse to the perceptible awareness of the suprasensible. [ibid.] And in a note: "Perhaps nothing more sublime was ever said and no sublimer thought ever expressed than the famous inscription on the Temple of Isis (Mother Nature): 'I am all that is and that was and that shall be, and no mortal hath lifted my veil.'" Between the quotation about the springing sun and the note on the veil of Mother Nature comes the analysis of Kant: "The consciousness of virtue, if we substitute it in our thoughts for a virtuous man, diffuses in the mind a multitude of sublime and restful feelings, and a boundless prospect of a joyful future, to which no expression that is measured by a definite concept completely attains."

Perhaps we are approaching the embouchure [the mouth or outlet], if not the sea.

What is it in an embouchure that could open onto *economimesis*?

We have recognized the fold of *mimesis* at the origin of pure productivity, a sort of gift for itself [*pour soi*] of God who makes a present of himself to himself, even prior to the re-productive or imitative structure (that is foreign and inferior to the Fine-Arts): genius imitates nothing, it identifies itself with the productive freedom of God who identifies himself in himself, at the origin of the origin, with the production of production. Is the very concept of production marked by it everywhere and *in general*? Does it belong, by an irreducible semantic invariant, to this logic of *economimesis*? Let us allow the question to ferment.

The analogy between the free productivity of nature and the free productivity of genius, between God and the Poet, is not only a relation of proportionality or a relation between two—two subjects, two origins, two productions. The analogical process is also a reflux towards the *logos*. The origin is the *logos*. The origin of analogy, that from which analogy proceeds and towards which it returns, is the *logos*, reason and word, the source as a mouth and as an outlet [*embouchure*].

Now it must be demonstrated.

Nature furnishes rules to the art of genius. Not concepts, not descriptive laws, but rules precisely, singular norms which are also orders, imperative statements. When Hegel reproaches the third *Critique* for staying at the level of the “you must,” he very well evinces the moral order which sustains the aesthetic order. That order proceeds from one freedom to another, it gives itself from one to the other: and as discourse, it does so through a signifying element. Every time we encounter in this text something that resembles a discursive metaphor (nature says, dictates, prescribes, etc.), these are not just any metaphors but analogies of analogy, whose message is that the literal meaning is analogical: nature is properly [*proprement*] *logos* towards which one must always return [*remonter*]. Analogy is always language.

For example, one reads (at the end of § 46) that “nature, by the medium of genius, does not prescribe [*vorschreibe*] rules to science but to art . . .” Genius transcribes the prescription and its *Vorschreiben* is written under the dictation of nature whose secretary it freely agrees to be. At the moment it writes, it allows itself literally to be inspired by nature which dictates to it, which tells it in the form of poetic commands what it must write and in turn prescribe; and without genius really understanding what it writes. It does not understand the prescriptions that it transmits; in any case it has neither concept nor knowledge of them. “The author of a product for which he is indebted to his genius does not know himself how he has come by his ideas; and he has not the power to devise the like at pleasure or in accordance with a plan, and to communicate it to others in precepts [*Vorschriften*] that will enable them to produce [*hervorbringen*] similar products [*Producte*].” Genius prescribes, but in the form of non-conceptual rules which forbid repetition, imitative reproduction.

At the moment it freely gives orders to man through the voice of genius, nature is already, itself, a product, the production of the divine genius. At the moment it dictates, it is already in a situation analogous to that of human genius which, furthermore, itself produces a second nature. Productive imagination has the power to create “as it were” [*gleichsam*] “another nature” [*Schaffung einer andern Natur*] [§ 49]. There is an analogy therefore between genius which creates a second nature (for example by prescribing rules to other artists), the first nature which dictates its precepts to genius, and God who creates the first nature and produces the archetype which will serve as example and rule. Such hierarchical analogy forms a society of the *logos*, a sociology of genius, a logoarchy. In any case, at each step of the analogy, it (*id*) speaks [*ça parle*]: God commands, nature speaks in order to transmit to genius; the highest genius is the speaking one, the poet.

Analogy is the rule. What does that mean [*veut dire*]? It means that it means and that it says that it means that it wants [*ça veut*] and that it wants what it wants, for

example. [Ca veut dire que ça veut dire et que ça dit que ca veut dire que ca veut et que ça veut ce que ça veut par exemple.]

For example. It is by example that it means that it means and that it says that it means that it wants and that it wants what it wants by example. [C'est par exemple que ça veut dire que ça veut dire et que ça dit que ça veut dire que ça veut et que ça veut ce que ça veut par exemple.]

For example, analogy is the rule, that means that the analogy between the rule of art (of fine art) and the moral rule, between the aesthetic order and the moral order, that analogy is the rule. It consists in a rule. There is an "analogy" [Analogie] between the pure judgment of taste which, independent of any interest, provokes a *Wohlgefallen* suitable *a priori* to humanity, and the moral judgment that does the same thing by means of concepts [§ 42, *Of the intellectual interest in the beautiful*]. This analogy confers an equal and immediate interest upon the two judgements. The articulated play of this analogy (*Wohl/Gut*) is itself subject to a law of supplementarity: we admire nature "which displays itself in its beautiful products as art" and "as it were designedly" (*ibid.*), but in aesthetic experience the purpose or end of this purposiveness does not appear to us.

It is the purpose-lessness [*le sans-fin*] which leads us back inside ourselves. Because the outside appears purposeless, we seek purpose within. There is something like a movement of interiorizing suppliance [*suppléance interiorisante*], a sort of slurping [*suçotement*] by which, cut off from what we seek outside, from a purpose suspended outside, we seek and give within, in an autonomous fashion, not by licking our chops, or smacking our lips or whetting our palate, but rather (what is not entirely something else) by giving ourselves orders, categorical imperatives, by chatting with ourselves through universal schemas once they no longer come from the outside.

Kant describes this movement of idealizing interiorisation: "To this is to be added our admiration for nature, which displays itself in its beautiful products as art, not merely by chance, but as it were designedly, in accordance with a regular arrangement and as purposiveness without purpose. This latter, as we never meet with it outside ourselves, we naturally seek in ourselves and, in fact, in that which constitutes the ultimate purpose of our being [*Dasein*], viz. our moral destination [*moralischen Bestimmung*]. (Of this question as to the ground of possibility of such natural purposiveness we shall first speak in the teleology.)" [§ 42.]

Not finding in aesthetic experience, which here is primary, the determined purpose or end from which we are cut off and which is found too far away, invisible or inaccessible, over there, we fold ourselves back towards the purpose of our *Da-sein*. This interior purpose is at our disposal, it is ours, ourselves, it calls us and determines us from within, we are *there* [*da*] so as to respond to a *Bestimmung*, to a vocation of autonomy. The *Da* of our *Dasein* is first determined by this purpose which is present to us, and which we present to ourselves as our own and by which we are present to ourselves as what we are: a free existence or presence [*Dasein*], autonomous, that is to say moral.

That is what our *Da* is called and it passes through the mouth. The *Da* of the *Sein* gives itself what it cannot consume outside, while not-to-consume forms the condition of possibility of taste understood as what relates us to purpose-lessness.

Moreover it is in this chapter that "analogies" multiply concerning the language of nature. It is a matter of explaining why we ought to take a moral interest in the beautiful in nature, a moral interest in this disinterested experience. It must be that nature harbors in itself a principle of harmony [*Übereinstimmung*] between its productions [*Producte*] and our disinterested pleasure. Although the latter is purely subjective and remains cut off from all determined purpose or end, a certain agreement must nevertheless reign between the purposiveness of nature and our *Wohlgefallen*. The *Wohl* would not be explicable but for this harmony. As this agreement cannot be shown nor demonstrated by concepts, it must be announced otherwise.

How is it announced? How does one announce, in other words, the adherence between adherence and non-adherence?

By means of signs. Here we recognize the proper site, the primary place of *signification* in the third *Critique*. All subsequent signification will depend on it. Nature, then, announces to us by signs and traces (not to be distinguished for the moment) that there must be a harmonious agreement [*un accord*], a correspondence, concert, reciprocal understanding [*Übereinstimmung*], between the purposiveness of its own productions and our disinterested *Wohlgefallen* precisely as it appears cut off from any purpose. "But it also interests reason that the ideas (for which in moral feeling it arouses an immediate interest) should have objective reality, i.e. that nature should at least show a trace [*Spur*] or give an indication [*Wink*: a sign that one rather makes silently, a signal or wink, a brief and discreet hint instead of a discourse] that it contains in itself a ground for assuming a regular agreement [*Übereinstimmung*] of its products with our entirely disinterested satisfaction (which we recognize *a priori* as a law for everyone, without being able to found it on proofs). Hence reason must take an interest in every expression [*Ausserung*] on the part of nature of an agreement of this kind. Consequently the mind cannot ponder upon the beauty of nature without finding itself at the same time interested therein. But this interest is akin to a moral interest [*der Verwandtschaft nach moralisch*]."

Meditation on a disinterested pleasure therefore provokes a moral interest in the beautiful. It is a strange motivation, this interest taken in disinterestedness, the interest of the interestlessness [*le sans-intérêt*], a moral revenue drawn from a natural production that is without interest for us, from which one takes wealth without interest, the singular moral surplus value of the *without* [*le sans*] of pure detachment—all that maintains a necessary relation with the trace. [*Spur*] and the sign [*Wink*] of nature. The latter leaves us signs so that we might still feel assured, in the *without* of pure detachment, of banking on our own account, of satisfying our purpose, of seeing our stocks and our values on the moral rise.

And in order to respond to those who might find this argument subtle, specious, and studied [*studiert*], Kant specifies the nature of the analogy between judgment of taste and moral judgment: "It will be said that this account [*Deutung*] of aesthetical judgments, as akin to the moral feeling, seems far too studied to be regarded as the true interpretation [*Auslegung*] of that cipher [*Chiffreschrift*] through which nature speaks to us [*uns spricht*] figuratively [*figürlich*] in her beautiful forms. However . . ." [§ 42.]

Beautiful forms, which signify nothing and have no determined purpose are therefore *also, and by that very fact*, encrypted signs, a figural writing set down in nature's production. The *without* of pure detachment is in truth a language that nature speaks to us—she who loves to encrypt herself and record her signature on things. Try to improvise an epistemic framework for this proposition which is common to Heraclites, to the field of the *signatura rerum* and to the configuration of the third *Critique*, and you will observe that it does not fit all by itself and that it causes the *paregon* to strain.

Thus the in-significant non-language of forms which have no purpose or end and make no sense, this silence is a language between nature and man.

It is not only beautiful forms, purely formal beauties which seem to converse, it is also the adornments and charms that too often, mistakenly, says Kant, we confuse with beautiful forms. He is referring, for example, to colors and sounds. It all seems as if these charms had some "higher sense" [*ein höhern Sinn*], as if these changes in meaning [*Modificationen der Sinne*] had a more elevated sense and possessed "as it were a language" [*gleichsam eine Sprache*]. The white color of lilies seems to "dispose" [*stimmen*] the mind to ideas of innocence; the seven colors, in order from red to violet, seem respectively to suggest the ideas of sublimity (red then), intrepidity, candor, friendliness, modesty, constancy, tenderness.

These meanings are not posited as objective truths. The moral interest that we take in beauty, moreover, presupposes that the trace and the wink of nature do not have to be objectively regulated by conceptual science. We interpret colors like a natural language and it is this hermeneutic *interest* that matters: it is not a matter of

knowing whether nature speaks to us and means to tell us this or that, but rather of our interest in its doing so, in involving it necessarily, and of the intervention of this *moral* interest in aesthetic disinterestedness. It belongs to the structure of this interest that we believe in the sincerity, the loyalty, the authenticity of the ciphered language, even if it remains impossible to control objectively. And Kant will say the same thing later about poetry: it is not what it is in the absence of loyalty and sincerity. That which speaks through the mouth of the poet as through the mouth of nature, that which, having been dictated by their voice, is written in their hand, must be veridical and authentic. For example, when the voice of the poet celebrates and glorifies the song of the nightingale, in a lonely copse, on a still summer evening by the soft light of the moon, the mouth to mouth or beak to beak of the two songs must be authentic. If a trickster simulated the song of the nightingale, “by means of a reed or tube in his mouth,” no one would find it tolerable as soon as we realized that it was a cheat. If the contrary were the case, if you should happen to like that sort of thing, it must be that your feelings are coarse and ignoble. In order to characterize those who are deprived of any “*feeling* for beautiful nature,” Kant again has recourse to an oral example. — And it is a certain exemplorality that is being treated here. — We judge to be coarse and ignoble the “*mental attitude*” of those who have no feeling for beautiful nature and who “*confine themselves to eating and drinking—to the mere enjoyments of sense.*” In the first exemplorality, in the exemplary orality, it is a question of singing and hearing, of unconsummated voice or ideal consummation, of a heightened or interiorized sensibility; in the second case that of a consuming orality which as such, as an interested taste or as actual tasting, can have nothing to do with pure taste. What is already announced here is a certain allergy in the mouth, between pure taste and actual tasting [*dégustation*]. We still have before us the question of where to inscribe disgust. Would not disgust, by turning itself back against actual tasting, also be the origin of pure taste, in the wake of a sort of catastrophe?

The mouth in any case no longer merely occupies one place among others. It can no longer be situated *in* a typology of the body but seeks to organize all the sites and to localize all the organs. Is the *os* of the system, the place of tasting or of consumption but also the emitting production of the *logos*, still a term in an analogy? Could one, by a figure, compare the mouth to this or that, to some other orifice, lower or higher? Is it not itself the analogy, towards which everything returns as towards the *logos* itself? The *os* for example is no longer a term that can be substituted for the *anus*, but is determined, hierarchically, as the absolute of every analogon. And the split between all the values that at one moment or another are opposed will pass through the mouth: what it finds good or what it finds bad, according to what is sensible or ideal, as between two means of entering and two means of leaving the mouth, where one would be expressive and emissive (of the poem in the best case), the other vomitive or emetic.

To show this we need to make a detour, through the division of the Fine-Arts [§ 51]. Before this chapter, by an effect of framing that we keep on following, Kant had situated taste as a fourth term which serves to unify the three faculties, imagination, understanding, spirit, that are required by the Fine-Arts: “The first three faculties only arrive at their *unification* by means of the fourth.”

The chapter on the division of the Fine-Arts will interest us for three of its major motifs. 1. It puts into operation the category of *expression*. 2. It allows itself to be guided by the expressive organization of the human body. 3. For these two reasons it organizes the description of the arts as a hierarchy. These three motifs are inseparable.

Forceful interventions are required, a violent framing activity of which Kant’s rhetoric bears the marks. Take the first sentence: “We may describe beauty in general (whether natural or artificial) as the *expression* of aesthetical ideas.” In the Fine-Arts the concept of the object pre-exists expression; that is not necessary in nature but the absence of the concept does not prevent us from considering natural beauty as the expression of an idea.

Then why *expression*? Why “we may describe” that as expression? Who, we? By what right? And why as an expression of ideas?

Kant does not say. It goes without saying. He says only what he says, namely that it expresses, and, as it will shortly be confirmed, that the highest form of expression is the spoken, that it says what it expresses and that it passes through the mouth, a mouth that is self-affecting, since it takes nothing from the outside and takes pleasure in what it puts out.

From this dictate which posits as an axiom that the beautiful is expression (even if it signifies nothing), there naturally follows a division of the Fine-Arts with reference to the so-called expressive organs of expression in man. It has been recognized in effect that the Fine-Arts could only be arts of man. In explaining that he is going to classify the arts as a function of the organs of expression in man, Kant clearly senses that the forcing is a little obvious. The signs of his embarrassment multiply: "If, then, we wish to make a division of the Fine-Arts, we cannot choose a more convenient principle, at least tentatively, than the analogy of art with the mode of expression of which men avail themselves in speech, [*Sprechen*] in order to communicate to one another as perfectly as possible not merely their concepts but also their sensations." This calls for a note which marks the embarrassment: "The reader is not to judge this scheme for a possible division of the Fine-Arts as a deliberate theory. It is only one of various attempts which we may and ought to devise." Another note is added, on the following page, saying exactly the same thing.

The principle therefore is analogy and a very particular analogy: the analogy with *Sprechen*, with language and with its modes. Everything moves back to language; analogy is produced by language which therefore puts everything in relation to itself, as both the reason for the relation and the ultimate term of the relation.

Language having been decomposed, we find *word*, *gesture*, and *tone*. There will therefore only be three kinds of Fine Arts: *speech* [*redende*], the *formative* [*figuratif, bildende*] and the *art of the "play of sensations"* [*Spiel der Empfindungen*] as external sensible impressions.

Discursive arts in turn are reduced to rhetoric [*éloquence, Beredsamkeit*] and poetry [*Dichtkunst*], a concept whose very great generality explains why there is no question of any other literary art. But also a very pure concept: through complex combinations we will obtain poetic genres like *tragedy, didactic poem, oratorio*, etc. (§ 52). The orator and the poet meet one another and exchange their masks, masks of an *as if*. Both pretend, but the *as if* of one is more and better than the *as if* of the other. In the service of truth, of loyalty, of sincerity, of productive freedom is the *as if* of the poet, who therefore expresses more and better. The orator's *as if* deceives and machinates. It is precisely a machine or rather a "deceitful art" which manipulates men "like machines" (§ 53). The orator announces serious business and treats it as if it were a simple play of ideas. The poet merely proposes an entertaining play of the imagination and proceeds as if he were handling the business of the understanding. The orator certainly gives what he had not promised, the play of the imagination, but he also withholds what he had promised to give or to do: namely, to occupy the understanding in a fitting manner. The poet does just the contrary; he announces a play and does serious work [*eines Geschäftes würdig*]. The orator promises understanding and gives imagination; the poet promises to play with the imagination while he nurtures the understanding and gives life to concepts. These nursing metaphors are not imposed on Kant by me. It is food [*Nahrung*] that the poet brings by playing at understanding, and what he does thereby is give life [*Leben zu geben*] to concepts: conception occurs through the imagination and the ear, while nutrition passes from mouth to mouth and from mouth to ear, overflowing the finite contract by giving more than it promises.

At the summit of the highest of the speaking arts is poetry. It is at the summit [*den obersten Rang*] because it emanates almost entirely from genius. It stands therefore in the greatest proximity, by virtue of its "origin," to that free productivity which rivals that of nature. It is the art which *imitates* the least, and which therefore *resembles* most closely divine productivity. It produces more by liberating the imagination; it is more playful because the forms of external sensible nature no longer serve to limit it. Unleashing the productive imagination, poetry blows up the finite limits of

the other arts. "It expands the mind by setting the imagination at liberty and by offering, [*darbietet*], within the limits of a given concept, amid the unbounded variety of possible forms accordant therewith, that which unites [*verknüpft*] the presentation [*Darstellung*] of this concept with a wealth of thought [*Gedankenfülle*] to which no verbal expression [*Sprachausdruck*] is fully adequate [*völlig adäquat*] and so rising [*sich erhabt*] aesthetically to ideas. It strengthens the mind by making it feel its faculty—free, spontaneous, and independent of natural determination." [§ 53.]

The criteria here are those of *presentation* (*darbieten, darstellen*). Poetry, more and better, presents—the plenitude of thought [*Gedankenfülle*]. It binds presentation (on the side of expression) to a fullness of thought. It better "binds" the presenting to the presented in its plenitude. Poetry, more and better, presents the fullness, the fullness of conceptual thought or the fullness of the idea, in so far as it frees us from the limits of external sensible nature. By remaining an art, a fine art, it certainly still belongs to the imagination. And like all language, it is still inadequate to the absolute plenitude of the supra-sensible. And Kant immediately speaks of the "schema" of the supra-sensible. Imagination of course is the locus of schematism and the name of that art which is concealed in the depths of the soul, but here we can better understand why this art should be "speech" and why it is "poetic" *par excellence*.

Why does the poetic have this privilege? Beyond what poetry shares with the speaking arts in general and which has to do with the structure (mouth to ear) of hearing oneself speak, what is it that raises it above eloquence?

The answer is its relation to truth, more precisely its authenticity, its sincerity and its loyalty, its faithful adquation to *itself*, to its interior content if not *ad rem*—to what it is that assures in presentation the fullness of meaning, full of presented thought. These values are not narrowly or immediately moral. The moral agency itself derives from or depends on the value of full presence or full speech. When the poet give more than he promises, he does of course give a present, an authentic gift: a gift of truth and the truth of the gift. He does not deceive since he presents a fullness of thought [*Gedankenfülle*] but also because he declares his exercise to be merely playing with imagination and with inadequate schemes: "Poetry plays with illusion, which it produces [*bewirkt*] at pleasure, but without deceiving by it; for it declares its exercise to be mere play, which however can be purposively used by the understanding." [§ 53.] Poetry manages not to deceive by saying that it plays, and what is more its play, auto-affection elaborating appearances without external limitation, "at pleasure" [*à volonté*], maintains itself seriously in the service of truth. The value of full presence guarantees both the truth and the morality of the poetic. The plenitude can only be achieved within the interiority of hearing oneself-speak [*du s'entendre-parler*] and poetic formalisation favors the process of interiorization by doing without the aid of any external sensible content.

Rhetoric on the contrary defines an art of deceiving, of frustrating with beautiful appearances, with artifices of sensible presentation [*sinnliche Darstellung*], with machines of persuasion [*Maschinen der Überredung*]. The classical condemnation of the machine signifies exactly that discourse produces effects on others in the absence of intention, that no intentions intervene to animate and fill up the speech. Hence, the false life and the empty symbolism of these sophistical *tekhnai*.

If art is expressive, if speech expresses more than other modes of expression, poetic speech in turn is the most telling [*la plus parlante*]; interiority is produced there and is better preserved there in its plenitude. And it produces not only the most moral and the truest disinterested pleasure, which is therefore the most present and the highest, but also the most positive pleasure. A priceless pleasure. By breaking with the exchange of values, by giving more than is asked and more than it promises, poetic speech is both out of circulation, at least outside any finite commerce, without any determinate value, and yet of infinite value. It is the origin of value. Everything is measured on a scale on which poetry occupies the absolutely highest level. It is the universal analogical equivalent, and the value of values. It is in poetry that the work of mourning, transforming hetero-affection into auto-affection, produces the maximum of disinterested pleasure.

What relation does this exemplorality maintain with the structure of *gustus* (relation between the palate, lip, tongue, teeth, throat, opposition between *gustus reflectus* and *gustus reflectens*, etc.) on the one hand, and with the structure of hearing-oneself-speak on the other? And what is the place of the negative, singularly of “negative pleasure” in this process?

Hearing holds a certain privilege among the five senses. The classification of the *Anthropology* places it among the *objective* senses (touch, sight, and hearing) which gives a *mediate* perception of the object (sight and hearing). Objective senses put us in relation to an outside—which is not what taste and smell do. Here the sensible gets mixed in, with saliva for example, and penetrates the organ without preserving its objective subsistence. Mediate objective perception is reserved for sight and hearing which require the mediation of light or air. As for touch, it is objective and immediate.

There are thus two mediate objective senses, hearing and sight. In what respect does hearing prevail over sight? By virtue of its relation to air, that is to vocal production which can cause it to vibrate. A look is incapable of that. “It is precisely by this element, moved by the organ of voice, the mouth, that men, more easily and more completely, enter with others in a community of thought and sensations, especially if the sounds that each gives the other to hear are articulated and if, linked together by understanding according to laws, they constitute a language. The form of an object is not given by hearing, and linguistic sounds [*Sprachlaute*] do not immediately lead to the representation of the object, but by that very fact and because they signify nothing in themselves, at least no object, only, at most, interior feelings, they are the most appropriate means for characterizing concepts, and those who are born deaf, who consequently must also remain mute (without language) can never accede to anything more than an *analogon* of reason” [*Anthropology*, § 18].

“More easily and more completely”: no exterior means is necessary, nothing exterior poses an obstacle. Communication here is closer to freedom and spontaneity. It is also more complete, since interiority expresses itself here directly. It is more universal for all these reasons. Speaking now of tone and modulation, the third *Critique* discovers in hearing a sort of “universal tongue.” And once sounds no longer have any relation of natural representation with external sensible things, they are more easily linked to the spontaneity of the understanding. Articulated, they furnish a language in agreement with its laws. Here indeed we have the arbitrary nature of the vocal signifier. It belongs to the element of freedom and can only have interior or ideal signifieds, that is, conceptual ones. Between the concept and the system of hearing-oneself-speak, between the intelligible and speech, the link is privileged. One must use the term hearing-oneself-speak [*le s’entendre-parler*] because this structure is auto-affective; in it the mouth and the ear cannot be disassociated. And the proof of it, at the juncture of the empirical and the metempirical, is that the deaf are dumb. They have no access to the *logos itself*. With other senses and other organs they can *imitate* the *logos*, establish with it a sort of empty or purely external relation. They can only become *analogons* of that which regulates all analogy and which itself is not analogical, since it forms the ground of analogy, the *logos* of analogy towards which everything flows back but which itself remains without system, outside of the system that it orients as its end and its origin, its embouchure and its source. That is why the mouth may have analogues in the body at each of the orifices, higher or lower than itself, but is not simply exchangeable with them. If there is a vicariousness of all the senses it is *less true* of the sense of hearing; that is, of hearing-oneself-speak. The latter has a unique place in the system of the senses. It is not the “noblest” of senses. The greatest nobility accrues to sight which achieves the greatest remove from touch, allows itself to be less affected by the object. In this sense, the beautiful has an essential relation with vision in so far as it consumes less. Mourning presupposes sight. *Pulchritudo vaga* gives itself above all to be seen: and, by suspending consumption on behalf of the *theorein*, it forms an object of pure taste in nature. Poetry, as a fine art, presupposes a preliminary concept and occasions a more adherent beauty on a more immediately present horizon of morality.

But if hearing is not the most noble of the senses, it takes its absolute privilege from its status as the least replaceable. It tolerates substitution badly and almost succeeds in resisting all vicariousness.

Is there anything vicarious in the senses [Vicariat der Sinne], that is, can one sense be used as a substitute for another? There may be. One can evoke by gesture the usual speech from a deaf person, granted that he has once been able to hear. In this, the eyes serve/ in place of ears/. The same thing may happen through observing the movements of his teacher's lips, indeed by his own speech muscles. But he will never attain real concepts [wirklichen Begriffen], since the signs necessary to him are not capable of universality, seeing the movements of another's organs of speech must convert the sounds, which his teacher has coaxed from him, into a feeling of the movement of his own speech muscles. But he will never attain real concepts [wirklichen Begriffen], since the signs necessary to him are not capable of universality. (. . .) Which deficiency [Mangel] or loss of sense is more serious, that of hearing or sight? When it is inborn, deficiency of hearing is the least reparable [ersetzlich]. [Ibid, § 22.]

Hence hearing, by its unique position, by its allergy to prosthesis, by the auto-affective structure that distinguishes it from sight, by its proximity to the inside and to the concept, by the constitutive process of hearing-oneself-speak is not merely one of the senses among others. It is not even, in spite of the conventional classifications, an external sense. It has a relation of evident affinity with what Kant calls internal sense. Now the latter is unique and its element, its "form" is time. Like hearing-oneself-speak. It does not properly belong, as the other senses do, to anthropology but to psychology. Thus hearing-oneself-speak, in its singular relation to the unique internal sense and by the eminent place it occupies in the third *Critique*, tears the problematic away from its anthropological space in order to make it pass, with all the consequences that can entail, into a psychological space.

§ 24. *The inner sense is not pure apperception, a consciousness of what man does (for the latter belongs to the power of thought) but of what man feels, to the extent he is affected by his own play of thought. Inner intuition, and consequently the relation between representations in time (whether simultaneous or successive), is at the basis of this consciousness. Its perceptions, and the (true or apparent) inner experience resulting from the combination of the perceptions does not simply belong to anthropology, in which one neglects the question of knowing whether or not man has a soul (as a special incorporal substance), but to psychology in which we believe that we perceive such a sense within ourselves, and in which the mind, represented in its quality as a pure faculty of feeling and thinking, is considered as a substance especially inhabiting man. —As a result there is but one inner sense, for there are not various organs by which man receives an inner sensation of himself . . . [Ibid. § 24].*

If hearing-oneself-speak, in so far as it also passes through a certain mouth, transforms everything into auto-affectation, assimilates everything to itself by idealizing it within interiority, masters everything by mourning its passing, refusing to touch it, to digest it naturally, but digests it ideally, consumes what it does not consume and vice versa, produces disinterestedness in the possibility of pronouncing judgments, if that mouth governs a space of analogy into which it does not let itself be drawn, if it is from the irreplaceable place of this enormous "phantasm" (but one does not know what a phantasm is prior to the system of these effects) that it orders pleasure, what is the border or the absolute overboard [*le bord ou le débord absolu*] of this problematic? What is the (internal and external) border which traces its limit and the frame of its *parergon*? In other words, what is it that does not enter into this theory thus framed,

hierarchised, regulated? What is excluded from it and what, proceeding from this exclusion, gives it form, limit, and contour? And what about this over-board with respect to what one calls the mouth? Since the mouth orders a pleasure dependant on assimilation, to ideal auto-affection, what is it that does not allow itself to be transformed into oral auto-affection, taking the *os* for a *telos*? What is it that does not let itself be regulated by exemplorality?

There is no answer to such a question. One cannot say, it is this or that, this or that thing. We will see why. And the impossibility of finding examples in this case, Kant's inability to furnish any at a certain moment will be very noticeable. In the same way that we have often had to treat examples preceding the law in a reflective manner, we are now about to discover a sort of law without example; and first of all we shall state our answer in a tautological form, as the inverted duplication of the question.

What this logo-phonocentric system excludes is not even a negative. The negative is its business and its work. What it excludes, what this very work excludes, is what does not allow itself to be digested, or represented, or stated—does not allow itself to be transformed into auto-affection by exemplorality. It is an irreducible heterogeneity which cannot be eaten either sensibly or ideally and which—this is the tautology—by never letting itself be swallowed must therefore *cause itself to be vomited*.

Vomit lends its form to this whole system, beginning with its specific parergonal overflow. It must therefore be shown that the scheme of vomiting, as the experience of disgust, is not merely one excluded term among others.

What then is the relation between disgust and vomit? It is indeed vomit that interests us rather than the act or process of vomiting, which are less disgusting than vomit in so far as they imply an activity, some initiative whereby the subject can at least still mimic mastery or dream it in auto-affection, believing that he *makes himself vomit*. Here, hetero-affection no longer even allows itself to be pre-digested in an act of making-oneself-vomit.

Why vomit then, as a parergon of the third *Critique* considered as a general synthesis of transcendental idealism?

I start from the place of the negative. Kant admits the possibility and the concept of *negative pleasure*. For example the feeling of the sublime. While “the beautiful directly brings with it a feeling of the furtherance of life, and thus is compatible with charms and with the play of the imagination, the other [the feeling of the sublime] is a pleasure that arises [*entspringt*] only indirectly; viz. it is produced by the feeling of a momentary checking [*inhibition*] (*Hemmung*: an arrest, a retention) of the vital powers and a consequent stronger outflow [*Ergiessung*: pouring out] of them [the corporal scheme here, since there is *Wohlgefallen* and pleasure, is rather that of ejaculation than vomiting which this outflow might at first resemble] so that it seems to be regarded,” continues Kant, “as emotion—not play, but earnest in the exercise of the imagination. Hence it is not incompatible with charm; and as the mind is not merely attracted by the object but is ever being alternately repelled, the *Wohlgefallen* in the sublime does not so much involve a positive pleasure as admiration or respect, which rather deserves to be called negative pleasure.” (§ 23)

Although repulsive on one of its faces, the sublime is not the absolute other of the beautiful. It still provokes a certain pleasure. Its negativity does indeed provoke a disagreement between the faculties and disorder in the unity of the subject. But it is still productive of pleasure and the system of reason can account for it. A still internal negativity does not reduce to silence; it lets itself be spoken. The sublime itself can dawn in art. The silence it imposes by taking the breath away and by preventing speech is less than ever heterogeneous to spirit and freedom. The movement of reappropriation on the contrary is even more active. That which in this silence works against our senses or in opposition to the interest of sense (*hindrance* and *sacrifice*, says Kant) keeps the extension of a domain and of power in view. *Sacrifice* [*Aufopferung*] and *spoliation* [*Beraubung*], through the experience of a negative *Wohlgefallen*, thus allows for the acquisition of an extension and a power [*Macht*] greater than what is sacrificed to them. (*General Remark upon the Exposition of the Aesthetical*

Reflective Judgment) Economic calculation allows the sublime to be swallowed. The same is the case for all sorts of “negative pleasures,” of pleasures that displease whoever feels them in the present: for example the needy but well-meaning man at becoming the heir of an affectionate but avaricious father; or the widow at the death of her husband (in this latter case her grief is satisfying while the pleasure of the orphan, in the former example, causes him grief.) [§ 54] In all these cases, whether or not they amount to the same thing, there is negative pleasure or a negative of pleasure but still pleasure, and the work of mourning is consequently not absolutely blocked, impossible, excluded.

In the same way, the Fine-Arts can give beauty to ugly or displeasing things and therein lies their superiority. [§ 48.] The ugly, the evil, the false, the monstrous, the negative in general can be assimilated by art. An old *topos*: furies, diseases, the ravages of war, etc. can all furnish beautiful descriptions and “even be represented in paintings.” The ugly, the evil, the horrible, the negative in general are therefore not unassimilable to the system.

A single “thing” is unassimilable. It will therefore form the transcendental of the transcendental, the non-transcendentalisable, the non-idealizable, and that is the *disgusting*. It presents itself, in the Kantian discourse, as a “species” (*Art*) of the hideous or of the hateful, but one quickly observes that it is not a species that would peacefully belong to its genus. “There is only one kind of ugliness [*Hässlichkeit*] which cannot be represented in accordance with nature without destroying [send to ground: *zu Grunde zu richten*] all aesthetical satisfaction, and consequently artificial beauty, viz. that which excites *disgust* (*Eckel*).” [§ 48.]

Thus it is no longer a question here of one of those negative values, one of those ugly or harmful things that art can represent and thereby idealize. The absolute excluded [*l'exclu absolu*] does not allow itself even to be granted the status of an object of negative pleasure or of ugliness redeemed by representation. It is unrepresentable. And at the same time it is unnameable in its singularity. If one could name it or represent it, it would begin to enter into the auto-affective circle of mastery or reappropriation. An economy would be possible. The disgusting *X* cannot even announce itself as a *sensible* object without immediately being caught up in a teleological hierarchy. It is therefore in-sensible and un-intelligible, irrepresentable and unnameable, the absolute other of the system.

Nevertheless Kant does speak of a certain representation regarding it: “For in this singular [*sonderbaren*] sensation, which rests on mere imagination, [therefore there is none], the object is represented as it were [*der Gegenstand gleichsam . . . vorgestellt wird*] obtruding itself for our enjoyment [*als ob er sich zum Genuss aufdränge*: the disgusting, vomit is represented in advance as forcing pleasure, and that is why it disgusts] while we strive against it with all our might [*wider den wir doch mit Gewalt streben*]. And the artistic representation of the object is no longer distinguished from the nature of the object itself in our sensation, and thus it is impossible that it can be regarded as beautiful.”

Vomit is related to enjoyment [*jouissance*], if not to pleasure. It even *represents* the very thing that forces us to enjoy—in spite of ourselves [*notre corps défendant*]. But this representation annuls itself, and that is why vomit remains unrepresentable. [A representation of the irrepresentable, a presentation of the unrepresentable, is also the structure of the *colossal*, as it is described, or circumvented, in § 26. Cf. “Le colossal,” in *La vérité en peinture*, p. 136.] By limitlessly violating our enjoyment, without granting it any determining limit, it abolishes representative distance—beauty too—and prevents mourning. It irresistibly forces one to consume; but without allowing any chance for idealisation. If it remains unrepresentable or unspeakable—absolutely heterogeneous—it is not because it is this or that. Quite the contrary. By forcing enjoyment, it suspends the suspense of non-consummation, which accompanies pleasure that is bound up with representation [*Vorstellung*], pleasure bound to discourse, to the poetic in its highest form. It can be neither beautiful, nor ugly, nor sublime, give rise neither to positive nor negative, neither to interested nor disinterested pleasure. It gives too much enjoyment [*trop à jouir*] for that and it burns up all work as mourning work.

Let it be understood in all senses that what the word *disgusting* de-nominates is what one cannot resign oneself to mourn [*faire son deuil*].

And if the work of mourning always consists in biting off the bit,³ the disgusting can only be vomited.

It will be objected that all that is tautological. It is quite normal that the other of the system of taste [*goût*] should be distaste. And if taste metaphorizes exemplorality, then disgust should have the same form, but inverted; nothing has been learned. Certainly. Unless we learn to question this tautological necessity in another way; and to wonder whether the tautological structure is not itself the very form of what the exclusion [of *dis-gust*] serves to construct.

If it can be confirmed that everything can be said (assimilated, represented, interiorized, idealized) by this logocentric system except vomit, it is only because the oral relation taste/disgust constitutes, other than as a metaphor, this whole discourse on discourse, this whole tautology of the *logos* as self-same-identity [*le même*]. And to confirm it, it must be ascertained that the word disgust [*Eckel*] does not designate the repugnant or the negative in general. It refers precisely to what makes one desire to vomit. But how can anyone desire to vomit? [That is a question (the question precisely of *Eckel*) on which Zarathoustra (in the third passage) endlessly ruminates.]

Moreover, once fixed in its "literal sense" by the *Anthropology*, the word *disgust* can be seen to be caught up in an analogical derivation. There is worse than the literally disgusting. And if there is worse, it is because the literally disgusting is maintained, as security, in place of the worse. If not of something worse, at least in place of an "in place," in place of the replacement that has no proper place, no proper trajectory, no circular and economical return. In place of prosthesis.

All that can no longer take place between "objective" senses (hearing, sight, touch) but only between subjective "senses"; and that no longer depends on mechanics but on chemistry:

§ 20 *The senses of taste and smell are both more subjective than objective. The sense of taste is activated when the organ of the tongue, the gullet, and the palate come into touch with an external object. The sense of smell is activated by drawing in air which is mixed with alien vapors; the body itself from which the vapors emanate may be distant from the sensory organ. Both senses are closely related, and he who is deficient in the sense of smell is likewise weak in taste. Neither of the two senses can lead by itself to the cognition of the object without the help of one of the other senses; for example, one can say that both are affected by salts (stable and volatile) of which one must be broken up by liquefaction in the mouth, the other by air which has to penetrate the organ, in order to allow its specific sensation to reach it.*

§ 21 *We may divide the sensations of the external senses into those of mechanical and those of chemical operation. To the mechanical belong the three higher senses, to the chemical the two lower senses. The first three senses are those of perception (of the surface), while the other two are senses of pleasure (Genusses) (of innermost sensation. Therefore it happens that nausea, (Eckel) a stimulus to rid oneself [entledigen] [by vomiting: sich zu erbrechen] of food [that which has been enjoyed: genossenen] by the quickest way through the gullet, is given to man as such a strong vital sensation, since such an internal feeling can be dangerous to the animal.*

However, there is also a pleasure of the intellect [Geistesgenuss] consisting in the communication of thought. But when it is forced upon us [uns aufgedrungen], the mind finds it repugnant and it ceases to be nutritive as food for the intellect. (A good example of this is the constant repetition of amusing

³le mors: the bit of a bridle, what is bitten or bitten off (un mor-ceau), a remainder, a corpse (un mort). In Freud, mourning reconciles one to the loss of a beloved object by cannibalizing – incorporating, internalizing, hence idealizing – the dead. [RK]



or witty [witzig] quips, which can become indigestible through sameness.) Thus the natural instinct to be free of it is by analogy called nausea, although it belongs to the inner sense.

Smell is, so to speak, taste at a distance, and other people are forced to share in the pleasure [mit zu geniessen] whether they want to or not. Hence, by interfering with individual freedom, smell is less sociable than taste; when confronted with many dishes and bottles, one can choose that which suits his pleasure without forcing others to participate in that pleasure. Filth seems to awaken nausea less through what is repulsive to eye and tongue than through the stench associated with it. Internal penetration (into the lungs) through smell is even more intimate than through the absorptive vessels of mouth or gullet.

There is then something more disgusting than the disgusting, than what disgusts taste. The chemistry of smell exceeds the tautology taste/disgust. Disgust is not the symmetrical inverse of taste, the negative key to the system, except in so far as some interest sustains its excellence, like that of the mouth itself—the chemistry of the word—, and prohibits the substitution of any non-oral analogue. The system therefore is interested in determining the other as *its* other, that is, as literally disgusting.

What is absolutely foreclosed is not vomit, but the possibility of a vicariousness of vomit, of its replacement by anything else—by some other unrepresentable, unnameable, unintelligible, insensible, unassimilable, obscene other which forces enjoyment and whose irrepressible violence would undo the hierarchizing authority of logocentric analogy—its power of *identification*.

Vicariousness would in turn be reassuring only if it substituted an identifiable term for an unrepresentable one, if it allowed one to step aside from the abyss in the direction of another place, if it were interested in some other go-around [*intéressé à quelque manège*]. But for that it would have to be *itself* and represent itself as such. Whereas it is starting from that impossibility that economimesis is constrained in its processes.

This impossibility cannot be said to be some thing, something sensible or intelligible, that could fall under one or the other senses or under some concept. One cannot name it within the logocentric system—within the name—which in turn can only vomit it and vomit itself in it. One cannot even say: what is it? That would be to begin to eat it, or—what is no longer absolutely different—to vomit it. The question *what is?* already parleys [*arraisonne*] like a *paregon*, it constructs a framework which captures the energy of what is completely inassimilable and absolutely repressed. Any philosophical question already determines, concerning this other, a paregoric *paregon*. A paregoric remedy softens with speech; it consoles, it exhorts with the word. As its name indicates.

The word *vomit* arrests the vicariousness of disgust; it puts the thing in the mouth; it substitutes, but only for example, oral for anal. It is determined by the system of the beautiful, “the symbol of morality,” as *its* other; it is then for philosophy, still, an elixir, even in the very quintessence of its bad taste.

— translated by R. Klein