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THE SUBLIME AND THE GOOD

Tolstoy complains as follows: "All the existing aesthetic standards are built on this plan. Instead of giving a definition of true art and then deciding what is and what is not good art by judging whether a work conforms or does not conform to this definition, a certain class of works which for some reason pleases a certain circle of people is accepted as being art, and a definition of art is then devised to cover all these productions."* I cannot altogether agree with this. Our direct apprehension of which works of art are good has just as much authority, engages our moral and intellectual being just as deeply, as our philosophical reflections upon art in general; and indeed if Tolstoy were right critics would have explicitly to formulate a morality and an aesthetic before they could be sure of their judgments. I cannot believe this to be necessary; and since my own concern here is with defining art in general, and not with judging particular works, I would rather say the opposite thing. Our aesthetic must stand to be judged by great works of art which we know to be such independently; and it is right that our faith in Kant and in Tolstoy should be shaken when we discover shocking eccentricities in their direct judgment of merit in art. So let us start by saying that Shakespeare is the greatest of all artists, and let our aesthetic grow to be the philosophical justification of this judgment. We may note that a similar method can, and in my view should, be used in moral philosophy. That is, if a moral philosophy does not give a satisfactory or sufficiently rich account of what we unphilosophically know to be goodness, then away with it.

Is it possible to offer a single definition of art at all? The same question may be asked concerning morals. Now clearly both art and morals can be defined in two different ways: either by means of a

* All quotations from Tolstoy are from *What is Art?*

sort of lower common denominator, asking such questions as “What distinguishes an art object, regardless of merit, from an object fashioned by nature or chance?” and “What distinguishes a moral judgment, regardless of the values it expresses, from a statement of fact or a judgment of taste?”; or alternatively art and morals may be defined through a study of their highest manifestations, in order to find what is the essence of “true” art or the best morality. Equally clear, it is not always easy to separate these two kinds of definition even if one is resolutely seeking one or the other. I am not concerned here with the first kind of definition, the lowest common denominator one. I think that such a definition is worth formulating, and that one can get something (though not as much as some modern philosophers, such as R. M. Hare believe) in answer to the question “What is in common to all moral judgments?”; and similarly with aesthetic judgments. This investigation is, however, much less important than the other one; and here, of course, in undertaking the other one, one will inevitably be displaying what one takes to be valuable, one will be making (shocking to some philosophers) judgments of value. Tolstoy rightly says, “The estimation of the value of art . . . depends on men’s perception of the meaning of life; depends on what they hold to be the good and the evil of life.” Whether we think art is an amusement, or an education, or a revelation of reality, or is for art’s sake (whatever that may mean) will reveal what we hold to be valuable and (the same thing) what we take the world to be fundamentally like.

One of the most interesting of recent attempts to define art, and indeed one of the few philosophical attempts which has any interest at all, is that made by Kant in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*; and I propose to work towards my own sketch of a definition through a consideration and criticism of Kant’s. I would summarize Kant’s view as follows: In speaking of aesthetic judgment Kant distinguishes between the beautiful and the sublime, and in speaking of the beautiful he distinguishes between free and dependent beauty. The true judgment of taste concerns free beauty. Here, according to Kant, the imagination and the understanding are in harmony in the apprehension of a sensuous object which is not brought under any particular concept and is verified in accordance with a rule we cannot formulate. Beauty is “coupled with the representation through which the object is given, not through which it is thought.” Beauty is a matter of form. What is truly beautiful is independent of any interest, it is not tainted either by the good, or by any pleasure ex-

traneous to the act of representing to ourselves the object itself. It has no concern with charm or with emotion. What is beautiful exhibits "proposiveness without a purpose"; it is composed as if with a purpose, and yet it has no purpose which we can name. It is also, to use Kant's language, universal though subjective, and necessary though not apodictic. That is, we assume, though we cannot prove, a "common sense." (*sensus communis*) when laying down a judgment of taste, and we are "suitors for agreement," holding that everyone ought to hold beautiful what we hold beautiful. But as *ex hypothesi* we cannot formulate the rule according to which the beautiful object is constructed we can never be proved right. Further, the aesthetic judgment is immediate and the pleasure taken in it is inseparable from, is in fact, the synthesis: the putting together of a conceptless representation. What Kant calls aesthetic judgments may be made in relation to either art or nature, and Kant says that art and nature please us by resembling each other; that is, we like nature when it seems to be purposefully constructed and we like art when it seems to be pointless. As examples of free beauty, i.e., true beauty, Kant gives flowers, birds, wallpaper patterns, lines aimlessly intertwining, and "all music that is not set to words." He also says that "a bird's song, which we can reduce to no musical role, seems to have more freedom in it, and thus to be richer for taste, than the human voice singing in accordance with all the rules that the art of music prescribes." "In the estimate of a free beauty (according to mere form) we have the pure judgment of taste." As examples of dependent beauty he gives "the beauty of man, the beauty of a horse, or of a building" which "presupposes a concept of the end that defines what the thing has to be, and consequently a concept of its perfection." Any attempt, for instance, to represent a certain kind of character mars the purity of beauty by the introduction of a concept; and of course any concern with goodness or with a moral content is equally fatal. Any combination of "intellectual delight with the aesthetic" results in something which is not a pure judgment of taste (though it may be excellent in other ways).

Concerning the sublime, as distinct from the beautiful, Kant has these things to say: Whereas beauty is not connected with emotion, the sense of the sublime is. Strictly, whereas objects may be beautiful, no object is ever sublime. It is rather that certain aspects of nature occasion feelings of sublimity in us. Whereas beauty results from a harmony between imagination and understanding, sublimity results from a conflict between imagination and reason. (Beauty is

an intermediate concept of the understanding, sublimity is an indeterminate concept of the reason). What is vast and formless in nature, or vast and powerful and terrifying, can occasion a sense of sublimity, provided we are not actually afraid. A mountain range, the starry sky, the stormy sea, a great waterfall—these things give us the sublime. Now the sublime is defined by Kant as follows: “It is an object (of nature) the representation of which determines the mind to regard the elevation of nature beyond our reach as equivalent to a presentation of ideas.” It is a feeling which “renders inevitable the supremacy of our cognitive faculties on the rational side over the greatest faculty of sensibility.” That is, reason imposes upon us as a law the comprehension of what is before us as a totality. Reason for Kant, and also for Hegel, is the faculty, which seeks for systematic wholeness and abhors incompleteness and juxtaposition. Confronted with the starry sky, the mountains, imagination strives to its utmost to satisfy this requirement of reason, and fails. So that on the one hand we experience distress at this failure of the imagination to compass what is before us, and on the other hand we feel exhilaration in our consciousness of the absolute nature of reason’s requirement and the way in which it goes beyond what mere sensible imagination can achieve. This mixed experience is, Kant, remarks, very like, *Achtung*, the experience of respect for the moral law. “The feeling of our incapacity to attain to an idea that is a law for us is Respect.” In *Achtung* we feel pain at the thwarting of our sensuous nature by a moral requirement, and elation in the consciousness of our rational nature; that is, our freedom to conform to the absolute requirements of reason.

The beautiful and the sublime are related to the good, that is also to the idea of freedom, in different ways. Although Kant insists that the beautiful must not be tainted with the good, that is conceptualised in any way which would bring it into the sphere of moral judgment, he yet says that the beautiful symbolises the good, it is an analogy of the good. The judgment of taste is a sort of sensuous counterpart of the moral judgment, in that it is independent, disinterested, free. But, as Kant puts it, the freedom of the judgment of taste is more like the freedom of *play*. The experience of sublimity has a much closer relation to morals, since here it is the reason, that is the moral will itself, which is active in the experience. And whereas the experience of beauty is like cognition and is contemplative and restful, the experience of the sublime sets the mind in motion and resembles the exercise of the will in moral judgment. The free-

dom of sublimity does not symbolise, but *is* moral freedom, only moral freedom not practically active but only, as it were, intuiting itself in an exultant manner.

Now to proceed to some commentary on this. I want first of all to make some minor and obvious comments, comments which if accepted will change Kant's view, in the spirit of many of his own intentions, into a familiar current view of art which would commend much greater agreement. I want then to make more radical criticisms and to evoke from them the sketch of what I take to be the true view of art. We note at once that pure art or true art, according to Kant, is a very small area of what we normally think of as art. The paradigm case of aesthetic appreciation for Kant is something like looking at a flower, or better still an abstract pattern of lines, where form can sport playfully to produce a quasi-object with no interference from any concept. Kant does in fact cautiously allow more dubious cases, such as pieces of poetry, into the realm of art, provided they are thought of as simply "a free play of the imagination," and not as anything like conceptual classification or statement. Poetry conducts "a free play of the imagination as if it were a serious business of the understanding." Poetry pleases us by resembling rhetoric while being in fact pure play.

I do not think that the position Kant is trying to hold here is altogether coherent. The extreme nature of what he has had to say about free and dependent beauty (e.g. that the representation of anything of which we can have an ideal or governing concept must result in dependent beauty) is difficult to square with allowing any poetry except the poetry of Mallarmé in the realm of free beauty at all. Kant is more consistent in allowing only *wordless* music to qualify. However that may be, I think very few of us would now accept the extremely narrow conception of art which is implicit here, however exactly we interpret it. We would wish I think to transform, if we are to accept it at all, the notion that the work of art is not governed by a concept. We would not want to share Kant's ideal of the work of art as being if possible, as somehow striving to be, non-significant. The idea that it is in some sense an end in itself need not entail *that*; and we can speak of the work of art as having its own unique self-containing form, being indeed a quasi-object, and having no educational purpose, while at the same time allowing it to *use* concepts, or ever *be* a thing with other purposes, such as a church. When I. A. Richards said that a poem does not say anything, he did not mean that it did not consist of intelligible sentences. There will

of course be variation of opinion as to how far we should go in letting art have truck with concepts. Some people may feel that in regarding a church as an art-object we should abstract from its usefulness, others would disagree; and equally we may go to varying lengths in allowing the profundity and importance of what is *said* in a poem to affect our judgment of it as a poem. And it may indeed be difficult in such cases to separate aesthetic judgment from other types of judgment. But I think the general and current theory, while still insisting in the spirit of Kantian aesthetics that the art object is independent and for itself, would take a more liberal view of the extent to which it might incarnate or express concepts. A related point is this. Kant treats the aesthetic judgment on the analogy of the perceptual judgment of cognition. That is, it must happen at once, as it were automatically, bringing us its pleasure in the very act of synthesis. This is equally a picture which will suit our apprehension of a rose, but not our apprehension of *King Lear*. But these are minor criticisms. We can keep, if we wish to, a great deal of what Kant has to say about form; absence of a rule we can formulate, disinterestedness, independence, while allowing conceptual content, and allowing too that aesthetic enjoyment is not a momentary quasi-perceptual state of mind. That is, the art object is not just "given," it is also *thought*. And with these corrections we have, I suggest, a view which would now be widely accepted, and which has been well expressed, for instance, by Stuart Hampshire in his article "Logic and Appreciation" in the book *Aesthetics and Language* edited by Elton. "[The artist] did not set himself to create beauty, but some particular thing. The canons of success and failure, of perfection and imperfection, are in this sense internal to the work itself . . . Anything whatever may be picked out as an object of aesthetic interest—anything which when attended to carefully and apart altogether from its uses provides, by the arrangement of its elements and their suggestion to the imagination, some peculiar satisfaction of its own. An aesthetic judgment has to point to the arrangement of elements and to show what constitutes the originality of the arrangement in this particular case."

I want to go on now to the more important criticisms of Kant's position; and to help us here, let us turn first to Shakespeare, in accordance with the principle I laid down at the start, and then to Tolstoy. Why will Kant's view simply not do at all? I suggest, and this is just the beginning of an answer, that it is at least clear that it will not do because it does not in any way account for the greatness

of tragedy. Nor does it account for that similar greatness in non-literary arts which may bear other names. Kant prefers bird-song to opera. Kant thinks that art is essentially play. Now Shakespeare is great art, and Shakespeare is not play, so Kant must be wrong. Tolstoy thought that our estimate of art showed our views on good and evil. Let us look at one or two other things which he had to say. Artistic activity, according to Tolstoy, is the communication of feeling. A boy tells of an encounter with a wolf. He is an artist if he can re-create and transmit his feelings. Art proper, however, art in the strict sense, is not the transmission of any feeling, but only of the highest feelings, i.e. feelings flowing from religious perception. "Art is a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings to which men have risen." It is "a means of union among men joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity." And "there is nothing fresher than the feelings springing from the religious consciousness of each age." These pronouncements are at once promising and serious after the view, in some ways so unnervingly frivolous, held by Kant. They are, however, more the pronouncements of a moralist than of a philosopher. Tolstoy holds in addition a further view which through profound and challenging is difficult to handle. He holds that great art is universal and simple in a way which makes it generally easy to understand. Note that here a sort of profound instinctive religious perception, shared by all, takes the place of Kant's *sensus communis*. "What distinguishes a work of art from all other mental activity is just the fact that its language is understood by all." "Great works of art are only great because they are accessible and comprehensible to every one." They are understood because every man's relation to God is the same. Examples of great art: the Iliad, the stories of the Old Testament, the parables, folk tales. Also, some novels by Dickens, George Eliot, Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo. Examples of bad obscure art condemned by Tolstoy: impressionist painting, poems by Mallarmé and Baudelaire, nearly all the music of Beethoven. At this point we may profitably return to the Shakespeare principle. Tolstoy must be wrong here at least. One feels immense sympathy with, one is impressed by, the seriousness of his view that great art must be universal in the sense of simple, non-particular and comprehensible to all—but we know in fact that there is great art which is difficult. So we cannot take Tolstoy's preference as a criterion. Can we however make something of his view that great art

expresses religious feeling, or religious *perception*, to put the essence of the matter in a less controversial form; and can we in any way connect this with some of the perhaps acceptable elements of Kant's view?

I return now to Kant and to the sublime. There is something suggestive, indeed intoxicating, in the connection of the sublime via the concept of *Achtung* with Kant's ethical theory, which is itself one of the most beautiful and exciting things in the whole of philosophy. However, when we look closely at this connection it turns out to be more difficult, than might appear at first sight, to extract from it a theory of art more acceptable to us than Kant's theory of the beautiful. The sublime has, of course, according to Kant, nothing to do with art. It is an uplifting emotion experienced in the Alps. This may indeed discourage us, especially since Kant's choice of examples suggests an eighteenth century cult of the more Gothic aspects of nature which it does not now occur to us to think of as particularly edifying; and, more seriously, if we consider what may be actual occasions of sublime feelings, these feelings are not at all easy to interpret, and we may suspect them to have to do, in their real complexity, not only with morals but also with sex. *Achtung* itself, I think we may say without disrespect to that great concept, also has its connections with sex. However, in spite of this discouragement I cannot help brooding upon the relation of sublimity to *Achtung* and feeling that it must be pregnant with something marvellous. Let us try again.

The theory of the sublime ought to be Kant's theory of tragedy. It nearly but not quite is Hegel's theory of tragedy. Let us see what is wrong with both of these theories. To put the contrast between Kant and Hegel here in a nutshell: Kant thinks of the sublime as the failure of imagination to compass an abstractly conceived non-historical, non-social, quasi-mathematical totality which is not *given* but only vaguely adumbrated by reason. The sublime is a segment of a circle, grasped by imagination, with the rest of the circle demanded and as it were dreamt of by reason, but not given. The sublime is only occasioned by natural objects (non-historical, non-social, non-human), and the imaginative understating the lack of which occasions the pain-and-pleasure of sublimity is a kind of vast systematic perception of nature which space and time and the nature of our sensibility forbids. Hegel here, as indeed everywhere else, makes social and historical and human and concrete what Kant has offered as abstract, non-historical, etc. The experience of tragedy, according

to Hegel, is the envisaging of a conflict between two incompatible goods. Not a conflict between good and evil but between two goods, which are seen to be such because they incarnate different real social forces with real claims in society. Antigone and Creon are both right, as we see if we understand the total situation which encloses them both. The unity of the ethical substance is given as total, and within it we see and comprehend a conflict of goods. Of modern drama Hegel complains that it is a mere conflict of individuals who do not represent any real concrete good, but merely their own private whims and passions. There is no complete ethical substance within which the play happens. The difference then between Kant and Hegel is that Kant connects sublimity with the dream of an empty non-historical totality which is not given. We have only a segment of the circle. Whereas Hegel connects tragedy with a human historical social totality which is given, within which we see a conflict the resolution and reconciliation of which is the totality itself. We have not just a segment, but the whole circle. Let us put this in terms of freedom. The sublime is an experience of freedom, but of an empty freedom which is the fruitless aspiring demand for some sort of impossible total perceptual comprehension of nature. Hegel humanises the demand of reason. Reason is now demanding a total understanding of a human social situation—but what is unnerving is that, according to him, reason's demand is satisfied. So that the freedom of the tragic characters is only relative to an externally comprehended social whole within which they move. Kant is concerned, though in a very narrow way, with the helplessness of human beings. But Hegel's tragedy does not seem to be tragedy at all, since the spectators are not in the helpless position of the dramatic characters, but comfortably seated at the point of view of the totality. Whatever Aristotle meant by catharsis it was not this. Let me in anticipation say that to my mind the true view of tragedy is a combination of Kantian and Hegelian elements. To use an awkward mixed metaphor, the circle must be humanised but it must not be given. I shall explain, I hope, more clearly what I mean by this.

The short-comings of Kant's aesthetics are the same as the short-comings of his ethics. Kant is afraid of the particular, he is afraid of history. He shares this fear with Plato, and also in a different way with Tolstoy. Plato's mistrust of art was a mistrust of something which was hopelessly concerned with the senses, with the particular. Plato says (Republic 604E) that "the fretful part of us presents many and varied occasions for imitation, while the intelligent and

temperate disposition, always remaining approximately the same, is neither easy to imitate nor to be understood when imitated." This might be a commentary on the failure of many novelists. Tolstoy also says, "Strip the best novels of our time of their details, and what will remain?" Kant's ideal *objets d'art* were flowers and meaningless lines interweaving: simple, clean things not tainted by any historical or human particularity. And this was what he meant by calling them *free*. If we turn from Kant's aesthetics to his ethics the ideal is the same. Kant resented the hold which history has upon ethics. He attempts to make of the act of moral judgment an instantiating of a timeless form of rational activity; and it is this, this empty demand for a total order, which we are required to respect in each other. Kant does not tell us to respect whole particular tangled-up historical individuals, but to respect the universal reason in their breasts. In so far as we are rational and moral we are all the same, and in some mysterious sense transcendent to history. We belong to a harmony of wills which although it is not given here below in some sense exists. Kant's view of ethics contains no place for the idea of tragedy, so it is not surprising that he is unable to give an account of it in his aesthetics. Freedom is our ability to rise out of history and grasp a universal idea of order which we then apply to the sensible world. What we see of Kant's own actual moral views accords with this. We are supposed to live by exceedingly simple and general rules: suppression of history, suspicion of eccentricity. Here we can see more clearly how it is that beauty symbolises the good, is its sensuous counterpart. The aesthetic judgment has the same simple self-contained character as the moral judgment, and it is ideally the response to something which is not complicated or highly individual. Kant's aesthetic tastes mirror his moral preferences. He would like, as it were, by morality to crystallise out of the historical process a simple society living strictly by extremely general rules ("Always tell the truth," etc.), with no place for the morally complicated or eccentric.

Let me now briefly and dogmatically state what I take to be, in opposition to Kant's view, the true view of the matter. Art and morals are, with certain provisos which I shall mention in a moment, one. Their essence is the same. The essence of both of them is love. Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality. What stuns us into a realisation of our supersensible destiny is not, as Kant imagined, the form-

lessness of nature, but rather its unutterable particularity; and most particular and individual of all natural things is the mind of man. That is incidentally why tragedy is the highest art, because it is most intensely concerned with the most individual thing. Here is the true sense of that exhilaration of freedom which attends art and which has its more rarely achieved counterpart in morals. It is the apprehension of something else, something particular, as existing outside us. The enemies of art and of morals, the enemies that is of love, are the same: social convention and neurosis. One may fail to see the individual because of Hegel's totality, because we are ourselves sunk in a social whole which we allow uncritically to determine our reactions, or because we see each other exclusively as so determined. Or we may fail to see the individual because we are completely enclosed in a fantasy world of our own into which we try to draw things from outside, not grasping their reality and independence, making them into dream objects of our own. Fantasy, the enemy of art, is the enemy of true imagination: Love, an exercise of the imagination. This was what Shelley meant when he said that egotism was the great enemy of poetry. This is so whether we are writing it or reading it. The exercise of overcoming one's self, of the expulsion of fantasy and convention, which attends for instance the reading of *King Lear* is indeed exhilarating. It is also, if we perform it properly which we hardly ever do, painful. It is very like *Achtung*. Kant was marvellously near the mark. But he thought of freedom as the aspiration to a universal order consisting of a pre-fabricated harmony. It was not a tragic freedom. The tragic freedom implied by love is this: that we all have an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of others. Tragic, because there is no prefabricated harmony, and others are, to an extent we never cease discovering, different from ourselves. Nor is there any social totality within which we can come to comprehend differences as placed and reconciled. We have only a segment of the circle. Freedom is exercised in the confrontation by each other, in the context of an infinitely extensible work of imaginative understanding, of two irreducibly dissimilar individuals. Love is the imaginative recognition of, that is respect for, this otherness.

From the point of view of this theory we can offer a pocket history of literature, establishing an order of merit. This pocket history works through the idea of freedom as this idea has been treated at different times. The history of the treatment of freedom falls into five phases. These phases can be taken as roughly chronological, and

can also be used independently of chronology. They are as follows. (1) *Tragic freedom*. This is the concept of freedom which I have related to the concept of love: freedom as an exercise of the imagination in an unreconciled conflict of dissimilar beings. It belongs especially to, was perhaps invented by, the Greeks. The literary form is tragic drama. (2) *Mediaeval freedom*. Here the individual is seen as a creature within a partly described hierarchy of theological reality. The literary forms are religious tales, allegories, morality plays. (3) *Kantian freedom*. This belongs to the Enlightenment. The individual is seen as a non-historical rational being moving towards complete agreement with other rational beings. The literary forms are rationalistic tales and allegories and novels of ideas. (4) *Hegelian freedom*. This belongs mainly to the nineteenth century. The individual is now thought of as a part of a total historical society and takes his importance from his role in that society. The literary form is the true novel (Balzac, George Eliot, Dickens). (5) *Romantic freedom*. This belongs mainly to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though it has its roots earlier. The individual is seen as solitary and as having importance in and by himself. Both Hegelian and Romantic freedom are of course developments of Kantian freedom. Hegel makes the Kingdom of Ends into a historical society; while the Romantic concludes from the unhistorical emptiness of Kant's other rational beings that in fact one may as well assume that one is alone. (This is one line of thought leading to existentialism. *Angst* is the modern version of *Achtung*; we now fear, not the law itself, but its absence). The literary form is the neurotic modern novel.

This pocket history is of course only a toy, but it does I think suggest some things which are true. It does not work altogether chronologically for obvious reasons, since Shakespeare was not a Greek. We may also note, and this perhaps is one of its perceptions, that this history seems to condemn the novel to fall below the level of tragedy. The novel fails to be tragic because, in almost every case, it succumbs to one of the two great enemies of Love, convention and neurosis. The nineteenth century novel succumbed to convention, the modern novel succumbs to neurosis. The nineteenth century novel is better than the twentieth century novel because convention is the less deadly of the two; and given a society which is in a dramatic phase of its being the mere exploration of that society will take you very far indeed. It will not however take you all the way. We can understand Tolstoy when he says, "strip the best novels of our time of their details and what will remain?" Yet Tol-

stoy himself also proves that the novel can be tragic, it can rise to that level. A recent novel which also proves it, though it is well below Tolstoy's achievement, is *Dr. Zhivago*. In the case of Tolstoy and Pasternak, it is, I think, not difficult to see that the quality of their greatness should be called compassion, love: the non-violent apprehension of difference. And with what exhilaration do we experience the absence of self in the work of Tolstoy, in the work of Shakespeare. That is the true sublime.

A final word about art and morals. To say that the essence of art is love is not to say, is nothing to do with saying, that art is didactic or educational. It is of course a fact that if art is love then art improves us morally, but this is, as it were, accidental. The level at which that love works which is art is deeper than the level at which we deliberate concerning improvement. And indeed it is of the nature of Love to be something deeper than our conscious and more simply social morality, and to be sometimes destructive of it. This is why all dictators, and would-be dictators, from Plato to Khrushchev have mistrusted art. It is a fallacy which has worked confusion in modern philosophy that the only alternative to a sort of Bloomsbury art-for-art's sake theory of art is a sinister theory of didactic art. This is not so. The work of the great artists' shows up "art-for-art's sake" as a flimsy frivolous doctrine. Art is for life's sake, in the sense in which I have tried to indicate, or else it is worthless.

I have gone as far as I can in the direction of identifying art and morals. It remains that they are different for reasons connected with sense and form. I should say at this point that I take my theory to apply to all the arts and not just the literary arts. The notion of a loving respect for a reality other than oneself is as relevant to making a vase as it is to writing a novel, nor does the theory only apply to arts which involve, in the obvious sense, imitation. The highest art is not music, as Schopenhauer, who was not very concerned with particular human beings, imagined, but as I said earlier, tragedy, because its subject-matter is the most important and most individual that we know. We are now in a position to reinterpret the idea of the independence, self-containedness, for itselfness of a work of art which is one of the attractive aspects of Kant's theory and of its Bloomsbury descendants. There are two aspects to this independence. One aspect is this: In the creation of a work of art the artist is going through the exercise of attending to something quite particular other than himself. The intensity of this exercise itself gives to the work of art its special independence. That is, it is an independ-

ence and uniqueness which is essentially the same as that conferred upon, or rather discovered in, another human being whom we love. There is however another aspect to the matter. The artist is creating a quasi-sensuous thing. He is more like God than the moral agent. When Catullus writes a poem to Licinius after a night of carousing, he begins by telling Licinius what happened yesterday, which Licinius, however severe his hangover, may be presumed to know. That is, the artist strives to make what he creates self-contained and as far as possible self-explanatory. What makes tragic art so disturbing is that self-contained form is combined with something, the individual being and destiny of human persons, which defies form. A great tragedy leaves us in eternal doubt. It is the form of art where the exercise of love is most like its exercise in morals. But in the end the sublime joy of art is not the same as *Achtung*, respect for the moral law. Art after all is consolation and delight, although really great art gives us a mixed and sombre delight which is akin to our recognition of morality. Perhaps we should give the last austere word to Kant after all. "It is in this manner . . . that we are to understand those passages of Scripture . . . in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy. . . . Love, as an affection, cannot be commanded, but beneficence for duty's sake may; even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination—nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. This is *practical* love and not *pathological*—a love which is seated in the will and not in the propensions of sense—in principles of action and not of tender sympathy" (*Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*). I do not agree that only practical love can be commanded, and I cannot think why Kant, who attributes such majesty to the human soul, should hold that any aversion was strictly "unconquerable." Pathological love can be commanded too, and indeed if love is a purification of the imagination, must be commanded. But the fact remains that the love which is not art inhabits the world of practice, the world which is haunted by that incompleteness and lack of form, which is abhorred by art, and where action cannot always be accompanied by radiant understanding, or by significant and consoling emotions. Tragedy in art is the attempt to overcome the defeat which human beings suffer in the practical world. It is, as Kant nearly said, as he ought to have said, the human spirit mourning and yet exulting in its strength. In the practical world there may be only mourning and the final acceptance of the incomplete. Form is the great consolation of love, but it is also its great temptation.