

§ 1 Art and Philosophy

This link has always been affected by a symptom—that of an oscillation or a pulse.

At its origins there lies the judgment of ostracism that Plato directed against poetry, theater, and music. We must face the fact that in the *Republic*, the founder of philosophy, clearly a refined connoisseur of all the arts of his time, spares only military music and patriotic song.

At the other extreme, we find a pious devotion to art, a contrite prostration of the concept—regarded as a manifestation of technical nihilism—before the poetic word, which is alone in offering the world up to the latent Openness of its own distress.¹

But, after all, it is already with the sophist Protagoras that we encounter the designation of artistic apprenticeship as the key to education. An alliance existed between Protagoras and Simonides the poet—a subterfuge that Plato's Socrates tried to thwart, so as to submit its thinkable intensity to his own ends.

An image comes to mind, an analogical matrix of meaning: Historically, philosophy and art are paired up like Lacan's Master and Hysteric. We know that the hysteric comes to the master and says: "Truth speaks through my mouth, I am *here*. You have knowledge, tell me who I am." Whatever the knowing subtlety of the master's reply, we can also anticipate that the hysteric will let him know that it's not yet *it*, that her *here* escapes the master's grasp, that it must all be taken up again and worked through at length in order to please her. In so doing, the hysteric takes charge of the master, "barring" him from mastery and becoming his mistress.² Likewise, art is always already there, addressing the thinker with the

mute and scintillating question of its identity while through constant invention and metamorphosis it declares its disappointment about everything that the philosopher may have to say about it.

If he balks at amorous servitude and at the idolatry that represents the price of this exhausting and ever deceptive production of knowledge, the hysteric's master hardly has another choice than to give her a good beating.³ Likewise, the philosopher-master remains divided, when it comes to art, between idolatry and censure. Either he will say to the young (his disciples) that at the heart of every virile education of reason lies the imperative of holding oneself at a remove from the Creature, or he will end up conceding that she alone—this opaque brilliance that cannot but hold us captive—instructs us about the angle from which truth commands the production of knowledge.

And since what we are required to elucidate is the link between art and philosophy, it seems that, formally speaking, this link is thought in accordance with two schemata.

The first is what I will call the *didactic* schema. Its thesis is that art is incapable of truth, or that all truth is external to art. This thesis will certainly acknowledge that art presents itself (like the hysteric) in the guise of effective, immediate, or naked truth. Moreover, it will suggest that this nakedness exposes art as the pure *charm* of truth. More precisely, it will say that art is the appearance of an unfounded or nondiscursive truth, of a truth that is exhausted in its being-there. But—and this is the whole point of the Platonic trial—this pretence or seduction will be rejected. The heart of the Platonic polemic about mimesis designates art not so much as an imitation of things, but as the imitation of the effect of truth. This is an imitation that draws its power from its *immediate* character. Plato will therefore argue that to be the prisoners of an immediate image of truth *diverts us from the detour*. If truth can exist as charm, then we are fated to lose the force of dialectical labor, of the slow argumentation that prepares the way for the ascent to the Principle. We must therefore denounce the supposedly immediate truth of art as a false truth, as the semblance that belongs to the effect of truth. The definition of art, and of art alone, is thus the following: To be the charm of a semblance of truth.

It follows that art must be either condemned or treated in a purely instrumental fashion. Placed under strict surveillance, art lends the transitory force of semblance or of charm to a truth that is prescribed *from outside*. Acceptable art must be subjected to the philosophical surveillance of

truths. This position upholds a didactics of the senses whose aim cannot be abandoned to immanence. The norm of art must be education; the norm of education is philosophy. This is the first knot that ties our three terms (art, philosophy, and education) together.

In this perspective, the essential thing is the control of art. This control is possible. Why? Because if the truth of which art is capable comes to it from outside—if art is a didactics of the senses—it follows, and this point is crucial, that the “good” essence of art is conveyed in its public effect, and not in the artwork itself. As Rousseau writes in the *Letter to D’Alembert*: “The spectacle is made for the people, and it is only by its effects upon the people that its absolute qualities can be determined.”

In the didactic schema, the absolute of art is thus controlled by the public effects of semblance, effects that are in turn regulated by an extrinsic truth.

This educational injunction is itself absolutely opposed by what I will call the *romantic* schema. Its thesis is that art *alone* is capable of truth. What’s more, it is in this sense that art accomplishes what philosophy itself can only point toward. In the romantic schema, art is the real body of truth, or what Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy have named “the literary absolute.” It is patent that this real body is a glorious body. Philosophy might very well be the withdrawn and impenetrable Father—art is the suffering Son who saves and redeems. Genius is crucifixion and resurrection. In this respect, it is art itself that educates, because it teaches of the power of infinity held within the tormented cohesion of a form. Art delivers us from the subjective barrenness of the concept. Art is the absolute as subject—it is *incarnation*.

Nevertheless, between didactic banishment and romantic glorification (a “between” that is not essentially temporal) there is—it seems—an age of relative peace between art and philosophy. The question of art does not torment Descartes, Leibniz, or Spinoza. It appears that these great classical thinkers do not have to choose between the severity of control and the ecstasy of allegiance.

Was it not Aristotle himself who had already signed, between art and philosophy, a peace treaty of sorts? All the evidence points to the existence of a third schema, the *classical* schema, of which one will say from the start that it *dehysterichizes art*.

The classical *dispositif*, as constructed by Aristotle, is contained in two theses:

a) Art—as the didactic schema argues—is incapable of truth. Its essence is mimetic, and its regime is that of semblance.

b) This incapacity does not pose a serious problem (contrary to what Plato believed). This is because the *purpose* [*destination*] of art is not in the least truth. Of course, art is not truth, but it also does not claim to be truth and is therefore innocent. Aristotle's prescription places art under the sign of something entirely other than knowledge and thereby frees it from the Platonic suspicion. This other thing, which he sometimes names "catharsis," involves the deposition of the passions in a transference onto semblance. Art has a therapeutic function, and not at all a cognitive or revelatory one. Art does not pertain to the theoretical, but to the ethical (in the widest possible sense of the term). It follows that the norm of art is to be found in its utility for the treatment of the affections of the soul.

The great rules concerning art can be immediately inferred from the two theses of the classical schema.

The criterion of art is first of all that of liking. In no respect is "liking" a rule of opinion, a rule of the greatest number. Art must be liked because "liking" signals the effectiveness of catharsis, the real grip exerted by the artistic therapy of the passions.

Second, the name of what "liking" relates to is not truth. "Liking" is bound only to what extracts from a truth the arrangement of an identification. The "resemblance" to the true is required only to the degree that it engages the spectator of art in "liking," that is, in an identification that organizes a transference and thus in a deposition of the passions. This scrap of truth is therefore not truth *per se*, but rather what *a truth constrains within the imaginary*. This "imaginarization" of truth, which is relieved of any instance of the Real, is what the classical thinkers called "verisimilitude" or "likelihood."

In the end, the peace between philosophy and art rests entirely on the demarcation of truth from verisimilitude. This is why the classical maxim *par excellence* is: "The true is sometimes not the likely." This maxim states the demarcation and maintains—*beside* art—the rights of philosophy. Philosophy, which clearly grants itself the possibility of being without verisimilitude. We encounter here a classical definition of philosophy: The unlikely truth.

What is the cost of this peace between philosophy and art? Without doubt, art is innocent, but this is because it is innocent of all truth. In other words, it is inscribed in the imaginary. Strictly speaking, within the classi-

cal schema, art is not a form of thought. It is entirely exhausted by its act or by its public operation. "Liking" turns art into a service. To summarize, we could say that in the classical view, art is a public service. After all, this is how it is understood by the state in the "vassalization" of art and artists by absolutism, as well as in the modern vicissitudes of funding. In terms of the link that preoccupies us here, the state is essentially classical (perhaps with the exception of the socialist state, which was rather didactic).

Let us briefly recapitulate our argument.

Didacticism, romanticism, and classicism are the possible schemata of the link between art and philosophy—the third term of this link being the education of subjects, the youth in particular. In didacticism, philosophy is tied to art in the modality of an educational surveillance of art's purpose, which views it as extrinsic to truth. In romanticism, art realizes within finitude all the subjective education of which the philosophical infinity of the idea is capable. In classicism, art captures desire and shapes [*éduque*] its transference by proposing a semblance of its object. Philosophy is summoned here only qua aesthetics: It has its say about the rules of "liking."

In my view, the century that is coming to a close was characterized by the fact that it did not introduce, on a massive scale, any new schema. Though it is considered to be the century of endings, breaks, and catastrophes, when it comes to the link that concerns us here, I see it instead as a century that was simultaneously conservative and eclectic.

What are the massive tendencies of thought in the twentieth century? Its massively identifiable *singularities*? I can see only three: Marxism, psychoanalysis, and German hermeneutics.

It is clear that as regards the thinking of art, Marxism is didactic, psychoanalysis classical, and Heideggerian hermeneutics romantic.

The proof that Marxism is didactic need not be located immediately in the evidence of the ukases and persecutions that were perpetrated in the socialist states. The surest proof lies in Brecht's unbridled creative thought. For Brecht, there exists a general and extrinsic truth, a truth the character of which is scientific. This truth is dialectical materialism, whose status as the solid base of the new rationality Brecht never cast into doubt. This truth is essentially philosophical, and the "philosopher" is the leading character in Brecht's didactic dialogues. It is the philosopher who is in charge of the surveillance of art through the latent supposition of a di-

alectical truth. It is in this respect that Brecht remained a Stalinist, if by Stalinism we understand—as indeed we should—the fusion of politics and of dialectical materialist philosophy under the jurisdiction of the latter. We could also say that Brecht practiced a Stalinized Platonism. Brecht's supreme goal was to create a "society of the friends of dialectics," and the theater was, in more than one respect, the instrument of such a society. The alienation effect is a protocol of philosophical surveillance *in actu* with regard to the educational ends of theater. Semblance must be alienated [*mis à distance*] from itself so as to *show*, in the gap thus formed, the extrinsic objectivity of the true.

Fundamentally, Brecht's greatness lay in having obstinately searched for the immanent rules of a Platonic (didactic) art, instead of remaining content, like Plato, with classifying the existing arts as either good or bad. His "non-Aristotelian" (meaning nonclassical and ultimately Platonic) theater is an artistic invention of the first caliber within the reflexive element of a subordination of art. Brecht theatrically reactivated Plato's antitheatrical measures. He did so by turning the possible forms of the subjectivation of an external truth into the focal point of art.

The importance of the epic dimension also originates in this program. The epic is what exhibits—in the interval of the performance—the *courage* of truth. For Brecht, art produces no truth, but is instead an elucidation—based on the supposition that the true exists—of the conditions for a courage of truth. Art, under surveillance, is a therapy against cowardice. Not against cowardice in general, but against cowardice *in the face of truth*. This is obviously why the figure of Galileo is central, and also why this play is Brecht's tormented masterpiece, the one in which the paradox of an epic that would be internal to the exteriority of truth turns upon itself.

It is evident, I think, that Heideggerian hermeneutics remains romantic. By all appearances, it exposes an indiscernible entanglement between the saying of the poet and the thought of the thinker. Nevertheless, the advantage is still with the poet, because the thinker is nothing but the announcement of a reversal, the promise of the advent of the gods at the height of our distress, and the retroactive elucidation of the historicity of being. While the poet, in the flesh of language, maintains the effaced guarding of the Open.

We could say that Heidegger unfolds the figure of the poet-thinker as the obverse of Nietzsche's philosopher-artist. But what interests us here

and characterizes the romantic schema is that between philosophy and art it is *the same truth that circulates*. The retreat of being comes to thought in the conjoining of the poem and its interpretation. Interpretation is in the end nothing but the *delivery* of the poem over to the trembling of finitude in which thought strives to endure the retreat of being as clearing. Poet and thinker, relying on one another, embody within the word the opening out of its closure [*le déclos de sa cloture*]. In this respect, the poem, strictly speaking, cannot be equaled.

Psychoanalysis is Aristotelian, absolutely classical. In order to be persuaded of this, it suffices to read Freud's writings on painting and Lacan's pronouncements on the theater or poetry. In Freud and Lacan, art is conceived as what makes it so that the object of desire, which is beyond symbolization, can subtractively emerge at the very peak of an act of symbolization. In its formal bearing, the work leads to the dissipation of the unspeakable scintillation of the lost object. In so doing, it ineluctably captivates the gaze or the hearing of the one who is exposed to it. The work of art links up to a transference because it exhibits, in a singular and contorted configuration, the blockage of the symbolic by the Real, the "extimacy"⁴ of the *objet petit a* (the cause of desire) to the Other (the treasure of the symbolic). This is why the ultimate effect of art remains imaginary.

I can therefore conclude as follows: This century, which essentially has not modified the doctrines concerning the link between art and philosophy, has nevertheless experienced the *saturation* of these doctrines. Didacticism is saturated by the state-bound and historical exercise of art in the service of the people. Romanticism is saturated by the element of pure promise—always brought back to the supposition of a return of the gods—in Heidegger's rhetorical equipment. Classicism, finally, is saturated by the self-consciousness conferred upon it by the complete deployment of a theory of desire. Whence, if one has not already fallen prey to the lures of an "applied psychoanalysis," the ruinous conviction that the relationship between psychoanalysis and art is never anything but a service rendered to psychoanalysis itself: Art as free service.

That today the three schemata are saturated tends to produce a kind of disentanglement of the terms, a desperate "disrelation" between art and philosophy, together with the pure and simple collapse of what had circulated between them: the pedagogical theme.

From Dadaism to Situationism, the century's avant-gardes have been nothing but escort experiments for contemporary art, and not the ade-

quate designation of the real operations of this art. The role of the avant-gardes was to represent, rather than to link. This is because they were nothing but the desperate and unstable search for a mediating schema, for a didactico-romantic schema. The avant-gardes were didactic in their desire to put an end to art, in their condemnation of its alienated and inauthentic character. But they were also romantic in their conviction that art must be reborn immediately as absolute—as the undivided awareness of its operations or as its own immediately legible truth. Considered as the harbingers of a didactico-romantic schema or as the partisans of the absoluteness of creative destruction, the avant-gardes were above all anticlassical.

Their limit lay in their incapacity to place a lasting seal on their alliances, with respect either to the contemporary forms of the didactic schema or to those of the romantic one. In empirical terms: Just like the fascism of Marinetti and the Futurists, the communism of Breton and the Surrealists remained merely allegorical. The avant-gardes did not achieve their conscious objective: to lead a united front against classicism. Revolutionary didactics condemned them on the grounds of their romantic traits: the leftism of total destruction and of a self-consciousness fashioned *ex nihilo*, an incapacity for action on a grand scale, a fragmentation into small groups. Hermeneutic romanticism condemned them on the grounds of their didactic traits: an affinity for revolution, intellectualism, contempt for the state. Above all, it condemned them because the didacticism of the avant-gardes was marked by a brand of aesthetic voluntarism. And we know that, for Heidegger, the will constitutes the last subjective figure of contemporary nihilism.

Today, the avant-gardes have disappeared. The global situation is basically marked by two developments: on the one hand, the saturation of the three inherited schemata, on the other, the closure of every effect produced by the only schema that the century applied, which was in fact a synthetic schema: didacto-romanticism.

The thesis of which this book is but a series of variations can therefore be stated as follows: In this situation of saturation and closure, it is necessary to propose a new schema, a fourth modality of the link between philosophy and art.

The method of our inquiry will at first be negative: What do the three inherited schemata—didactic, romantic, classical—have in common, that today we would need to rid ourselves of? I believe that the “common” of these three schemata concerns the relation between art and truth.

The categories of this relation are immanence and singularity. “Immanence” refers to the following question: Is truth really internal to the artistic effect of works of art? Or is the artwork instead nothing but the instrument of an external truth? “Singularity” points us to another question: Does the truth testified by art belong to it absolutely? Or can this truth circulate among other registers of work-producing thought [*la pensée ouvrante*]?

What can we immediately observe? First, that in the romantic schema, the relation of truth to art is indeed immanent (art exposes the finite descent of the Idea), but not singular (because we are dealing with *the* truth and the thinker’s thought is not attuned to something different from what is unveiled in the saying of the poet). Second, that in didacticism, the relation is certainly singular (only art can exhibit a truth *in the form of semblance*), but not at all immanent, because the position of truth is ultimately extrinsic. And third, that in classicism, we are dealing only with the constraint that a truth exercises within the domain of the imaginary in the guise of verisimilitude, of the “likely.”

In these inherited schemata, the relation between artworks and truth never succeeds in being at once singular and immanent.

We will therefore affirm this simultaneity. In other words: Art *itself* is a truth procedure. Or again: The philosophical identification of art falls under the category of truth. Art is a thought in which artworks are the Real (and not the effect). And this thought, or rather the truths that it activates, are irreducible to other truths—be they scientific, political, or amorous. This also means that art, as a singular regime of thought, is irreducible to philosophy.

Immanence: Art is rigorously coextensive with the truths that it generates.

Singularity: These truths are given nowhere else than in art.

According to this vision of things, what becomes of the third term of the link, the pedagogical function of art? Art is pedagogical for the simple reason that it produces truths and because “education” (save in its oppressive or perverted expressions) has never meant anything but this: to arrange the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them.

What art educates us for is therefore nothing apart from its own existence. The only question is that of *encountering* this existence, that is, of thinking through a form of thought [*penser une pensée*].

Philosophy’s relation to art, like its relation to every other truth proce-

ture, comes down to *showing* it as it is. Philosophy is the go-between in our encounters with truths, the procuress of truth. And just as beauty is to be found in the woman encountered, but is in no way required of the procuress, so it is that truths are artistic, scientific, amorous, or political, and not philosophical.

The problem is therefore concentrated upon the *singularity* of the artistic procedure, upon what authorizes its irreducible differentiation—vis-à-vis science or politics, for example.

It is imperative to recognize that beneath its manifest simplicity—its naiveté, even—the thesis according to which art would be a truth procedure sui generis, both immanent and singular, is in fact an absolutely novel philosophical proposition. Most of the consequences of this thesis remain veiled, and it demands from us a considerable labor of reformulation. The symptom of this novelty can be registered when we consider that Deleuze, for example, continues to place art on the side of sensation as such (percept and affect), in paradoxical continuity with the Hegelian motif of art as the “sensible form of the Idea.” Deleuze thereby disjoins art from philosophy (which is devoted to the invention of concepts alone), in line with a modality of demarcation that still leaves the destination of art as a form of thought entirely unapparent. This is because if one fails to summon the category of truth in this affair, one cannot hope to succeed in establishing the plane of immanence from which the differentiation between art, science, and philosophy can proceed.

I think that the principal difficulty in this respect derives from the following point: When one undertakes the thinking of art as an immanent production of truths, *what is the pertinent unity of what is called “art”*? Is it the artwork itself, the singularity of a work? Is it the author, the creator? Or is it something else?

In actual fact, the essence of the question has to do with the problem of the relation between the infinite and the finite. A truth is an infinite multiplicity. I cannot establish this point here by way of formal demonstration, as I have done elsewhere.⁵ Let us say that this was the insight proper to the partisans of the romantic schema, before they obliterated their discovery in the aesthetic diagram of finitude, of the artist as the Christ of the Idea. Or, to be more conceptual: The infinity of a truth is the property whereby it subtracts itself from its pure and simple identity with the established forms of knowledge.

A work of art is essentially finite. It is trebly finite. First of all, it exposes

itself as finite objectivity in space and/or in time. Second, it is always regulated by a Greek principle of completion: It moves within the fulfillment of its own limit. It signals its display of all the perfection of which it is capable. Finally, and most importantly, it sets itself up as an inquiry into the question of its own finality. It is the persuasive procedure of its own finitude. This is, after all, why the artwork is irreplaceable in all of its points (another trait that distinguishes it from the generic infinite of the true): Once “left” to its own immanent ends, it is as it will forever be, and every touch-up or modification is either inessential or destructive.

I would even happily argue that the work of art is in fact the only finite thing that exists—that art creates finitude. Put otherwise, art is the creation of an intrinsically finite multiple, a multiple that exposes its own organization in and by the finite framing of its presentation and that turns this border into the stakes of its existence.

Thus, if one wishes to argue that the work is a truth, by the same token, one will also have to maintain that it is the descent of the infinite-true into finitude. But this figure of the descent of the infinite into the finite is precisely the kernel of the romantic schema that thinks art as incarnation. It is striking to see that this schema is still at work in Deleuze, for whom art entertains with the chaotic infinite the most faithful of relationships precisely because it configures the chaotic within the finite.

It does not appear that the desire to propose a schema of the art/philosophy link that would be neither classical, didactic, nor romantic is compatible with the retention of the work as the pertinent unit of inquiry—at least not if we wish to examine art under the sign of the truths of which it is capable.

All the more so given a supplementary difficulty: Every truth originates in an event. Once again, I leave this assertion in its axiomatic state. Let us say that it is vain to imagine that one could *invent* anything at all (and every truth is an invention) were nothing to happen, were “nothing to have taken place but the place.” One would then be back at an “ingenious” or idealistic conception of invention. The problem that we need to deal with is that it is impossible to say of the work *at one and the same time* that it is a truth and that it is the event whence this truth originates. It is very often argued that the work of art must be thought of as an evental singularity, rather than as a structure. But every fusion of the event and truth returns us to a “Christly” vision of truth, because a truth is then nothing but its own evental self-revelation.

I think the path to be followed is encapsulated in a small number of propositions.

—As a general rule, a work is not an event. A work is a fact of art. It is the fabric from which the artistic procedure is woven.

—Nor is a work of art a truth. A truth is an artistic procedure initiated by an event. This procedure is *composed* of nothing but works. But it does not manifest itself (as infinity) in any of them. The work is thus the local instance or the differential point of a truth.

—We will call this differential point of the artistic procedure its *subject*. A work is the subject of the artistic procedure in question, that is, the procedure to which this work belongs. In other words: An artwork is a subject point of an artistic truth.

—The sole being of a truth is that of works. An artistic truth is a (infinite) generic multiple of works. But these works weave together the being of an artistic truth only by the chance of their successive occurrences.

—We can also say this: A work is a situated *inquiry* about the truth that it locally actualizes or of which it is a finite fragment.

—The work is thus submitted to a principle of novelty. This is because an inquiry is retroactively validated as a real work of art only inasmuch as it is an inquiry *that had not taken place*, an unprecedented subject-point within the trajectory of a truth.

—Works compose a truth within the post-evental dimension that institutes *the constraint of an artistic configuration*. In the end, a truth is an artistic configuration initiated by an event (in general, an event is a group of works, a singular multiple of works) and unfolded through chance in the form of the works that serve as its subject points.

In the final analysis, the pertinent unit for a thinking of art as an immanent and singular truth is thus neither the work nor the author, but rather the artistic configuration initiated by an evental rupture (which in general renders a prior configuration obsolete). This configuration, which is a generic multiple, possesses neither a proper name nor a proper contour, not even a possible totalization in terms of a single predicate. It cannot be exhausted, only imperfectly described. It is an artistic truth, and everybody knows that there is no truth of truth. Finally, an artistic configuration is generally designated by means of abstract concepts (the figural, the tonal, the tragic...).

What are we to understand, more precisely, by “artistic configuration”?

A configuration is not an art form, a genre, or an “objective” period in the history of art, nor is it a “technical” *dispositif*. Rather, it is an identifiable sequence, initiated by an event, comprising a virtually infinite complex of works, when speaking of which it makes sense to say that it produces—in a rigorous immanence to the art in question—a truth *of this art*, an art-truth. Philosophy will bear the trace of this configuration inasmuch as it will have to show in what sense this configuration lets itself be grasped by the category of truth. The philosophical montage of the category of truth will in turn be singularized by the artistic configurations of its time. In this sense, it is true to say that, more often than not, a configuration is thinkable at the juncture of an effective process within art and of the philosophies that seize this process.

One will point to Greek tragedy, for example, which has been grasped as a configuration time and again, from Plato or Aristotle to Nietzsche. The initiating event of tragedy bears the name “Aeschylus,” but this name, like every other name of an event, is really the index of a central void in the previous situation of choral poetry. We know that with Euripides, the configuration reaches its point of saturation. In music, rather than referring to the tonal system, which is far too structural a *dispositif*, one will refer to the “classical style” in the sense that Charles Rosen speaks of it, that is, as an identifiable sequence stretching out between Haydn and Beethoven. Likewise, one will doubtless say that—from Cervantes to Joyce—the novel is the name of a configuration for prose.

It will be noted that the saturation of a configuration (the narrative novel around the time of Joyce, the classical style around that of Beethoven, etc.) in no way signifies that said configuration is a finite multiplicity. Nothing from within the configuration itself either delimits it or exposes the principle of its end. The rarity of proper names and the brevity of the sequence are inconsequential empirical data. Besides, beyond the proper names retained as significant illustrations of the configuration or as the “dazzling” subject points of its generic trajectory, there is always a virtually infinite quantity of subject points—minor, ignored, redundant, and so on—that are no less a part of the immanent truth whose being is provided by the artistic configuration. Of course, it can happen that the configuration no longer gives rise to distinctly perceivable works or to decisive inquiries into its own constitution. It can also happen that an incalculable event comes to reveal in retrospect a configuration to be obsolete with respect to the constraints introduced by a new configuration. But in any

case, unlike the works that constitute its material, a truth configuration is intrinsically infinite. This clearly means that the configuration ignores every internal maximum, every apex, and every peroration. After all, a configuration may always be seized upon again in epochs of uncertainty or rearticulated in the naming of a new event.

From the fact that the thinkable extraction of a configuration often takes place on the edges of philosophy—because philosophy is conditioned by art *as singular truth* and therefore by art as arranged into infinite configurations—we must above all not conclude that it is philosophy's task to think art. Instead, *a configuration thinks itself in the works that compose it*. Let's not forget that a work is an inventive inquiry into the configuration, which therefore thinks the thought that the configuration *will have been* (under the presumption of its infinite completion). To put it more precisely: The configuration thinks itself through the test posed by an inquiry that, at one and the same time, reconstructs it locally, sketches its "to come," and retroactively reflects its temporal arc. From this point of view, it is necessary to maintain that art—as the configuration "in truth" of works—is in each and every one of its points the thinking of the thought that it itself is [*pensée de la pensée qu'il est*].

We can therefore declare that we've inherited a threefold problem:

- What are the contemporary configurations of art?
- What becomes of philosophy as conditioned by art?
- What happens to the theme of education?

We will leave the first point alone. The whole of contemporary thinking about art is full of inquiries—often enthralling ones—about the artistic configurations that have marked the century: dodecaphonic music, novelistic prose, the age of poets, the rupture of the figurative, and so on.

On the second point, I cannot but reiterate my own convictions: Philosophy, or rather *a* philosophy, is always the elaboration of a category of truth. Philosophy does not itself produce any effective truth. It seizes truths, shows them, exposes them, announces that they exist. In so doing, it turns time toward eternity—since every truth, as a generic infinity, is eternal. Finally, philosophy makes disparate truths compossible and, on this basis, it states the being of the time in which it operates as the time of the truths that arise within it.

Concerning the third point, let us recall that the only education is an education *by* truths. The entire, insistent problem is that there be truths,

without which the philosophical category of truth is entirely empty and the philosophical act nothing but an academic quibble.

This question of the existence of truths (that “there be” truths) points to a coresponsibility of art, which produces truths, and philosophy, which, under the condition that there are truths, is duty-bound to make them manifest (a very difficult task indeed). Basically, to make truths manifest means the following: to distinguish truths from opinion. So that the question today is this and no other: Is there something besides opinion? In other words (one will, or will not, forgive the provocation), is there something besides our “democracies”?

Many will answer, myself among them: “Yes.” Yes, there are artistic configurations, there are works that constitute the thinking subjects of these configurations, and there is philosophy to separate conceptually all of this from opinion. Our times are worth more than the label on which they pride themselves: “democracy.”

In order to nourish this conviction in the reader, we will therefore begin with some philosophical *identifications* of the arts. Poetry, theater, cinema, and dance will be our pretexts.