

Walter Benjamin

The Origin of
German Tragic Drama

NLB

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secret of his person is contained within the playful, but for that very reason firmly circumscribed, passage through all the stages in this complex of intentions, just as the secret of his fate is contained in an action which, according to this, his way of looking at things, is perfectly homogeneous. For the *Trauerspiel* Hamlet alone is a spectator by the grace of God; but he cannot find satisfaction in what he sees enacted, only in his own fate. His life, the exemplary object of his mourning, points, before its extinction, to the Christian providence in whose bosom his mournful images are transformed into a blessed existence. Only in a princely life such as this is melancholy redeemed, by being confronted with itself. The rest is silence. For everything that has not been lived sinks beyond recall in this space where the word of wisdom leads but a deceptive, ghostly existence. Only Shakespeare was capable of striking Christian sparks from the baroque rigidity of the melancholic, un-stoic as it is un-Christian, pseudo-antique as it is pseudo-pietistic. If the profound insight with which Rochus von Liliencron recognized the ascendancy of Saturn and marks of *acedia* in Hamlet,⁵¹ is not to be deprived of its finest object, then this drama will also be recognized as the unique spectacle in which these things are overcome in the spirit of Christianity. It is only in this prince that melancholy self-absorption attains to Christianity. The German *Trauerspiel* was never able to inspire itself to new life; it was never able to awaken within itself the clear light of self-awareness. It remained a melancholic mirror to itself, and was able to portray the melancholic only in the crude and washed-out colours of the mediaeval complexion-books. What then is the purpose of this excursus? The images and figures presented in the German *Trauerspiel* are dedicated to Dürer's genius of winged melancholy. The intense life of its crude theatre begins in the presence of this genius.

Allegory and Trauerspiel

Wer diese gebrechliche Hütten / wo das Elend alle
Ecken zieret / mit einem vernünftigen Wortschlusse
wolte beglänzen / der würde keinen unförmlichen
Ausspruch machen / noch das Zielmass der gegründeten
Wahrheit überschreiten / wann er die Welt nannte
einen allgemeinen Kauffladen / eine Zollbude des
Todes / wo der Mensch die gangbahre Wahre / der Tod
der wunderbahre Handels-Mann / Gott der gewisseste
Buchhalter / das Grab aber das versiegelte Gewand und
Kauff-Hauss ist.

Christoph Männling: *Schaubühne des Todes / oder
Leich-Reden**

For over a hundred years the philosophy of art has been subject to the
tyranny of a usurper who came to power in the chaos which followed in
the wake of romanticism. The striving on the part of the romantic
aestheticians after a resplendent but ultimately non-committal knowledge
of an absolute has secured a place in the most elementary theoretical
debates about art for a notion of the symbol which has nothing more than
the name in common with the genuine notion. This latter, which is the

* Whosoever would grace this frail cottage, in which poverty adorns every corner, with a rational epitome, would be making no inapt statement nor overstepping the mark of well-founded truth if he called the world a general store, a customs-house of death, in which man is the merchandise, death the wondrous merchant, God the most conscientious book-keeper, but the grave the bonded drapers' hall and ware house.

Christoph Männling: *Theatre of death, or funeral orations*

one used in the field of theology, could never have shed that sentimental twilight over the philosophy of beauty which has become more and more impenetrable since the end of early romanticism. But it is precisely this illegitimate talk of the symbolic which permits the examination of every artistic form 'in depth', and has an immeasurably comforting effect on the practice of investigation into the arts. The most remarkable thing about the popular use of the term is that a concept which, as it were categorically, insists on the indivisible unity of form and content, should nevertheless serve the philosophical extenuation of that impotence which, because of the absence of dialectical rigour, fails to do justice to content in formal analysis and to form in the aesthetics of content. For this abuse occurs wherever in the work of art the 'manifestation' of an 'idea' is declared a symbol. The unity of the material and the transcendental object, which constitutes the paradox of the theological symbol, is distorted into a relationship between appearance and essence. The introduction of this distorted conception of the symbol into aesthetics was a romantic and destructive extravagance which preceded the desolation of modern art criticism. As a symbolic construct, the beautiful is supposed to merge with the divine in an unbroken whole. The idea of the unlimited immanence of the moral world in the world of beauty is derived from the theosophical aesthetics of the romantics. But the foundations of this idea were laid long before. In classicism the tendency to the apotheosis of existence in the individual who is perfect, in more than an ethical sense, is clear enough. What is typically romantic is the placing of this perfect individual within a progression of events which is, it is true, infinite but is nevertheless redemptive, even sacred.¹ But once the ethical subject has become absorbed in the individual, then no rigorism – not even Kantian rigorism – can save it and preserve its masculine profile. Its heart is lost in the beautiful soul. And the radius of action – no, only the radius of the culture – of the thus perfected beautiful individual is what describes the circle of the 'symbolic'. In contrast the baroque apotheosis is a dialectical one. It is accomplished in the movement between extremes. In this eccentric and dialectic process the harmonious inwardness of classicism plays no role, for the reason that the immediate problems of the baroque, being politico-religious problems, did not so much affect the individual

and his ethics as his religious community. Simultaneously with its profane concept of the symbol, classicism develops its speculative counterpart, that of the [allegorical]. A genuine theory of the allegory did not, it is true, arise at that time, nor had there been one previously. It is nevertheless legitimate to describe the new concept of the allegorical as speculative because it was in fact adapted so as to provide the dark background against which the bright world of the symbol might stand out. Allegory, like many other old forms of expression, has not simply lost its meaning by 'becoming antiquated'. What takes place here, as so often, is a conflict between the earlier and the later form which was all the more inclined to a silent settlement in that it was non-conceptual, profound, and bitter. The symbolizing mode of thought of around 1800 was so foreign to allegorical expression in its original form that the extremely isolated attempts at a theoretical discussion are of no value as far as the investigation of allegory is concerned – although they are all the more symptomatic of the depth of the antagonism. Taken out of its context, the following statement by Goethe may be described as a negative, *a posteriori* construction of allegory: 'There is a great difference between a poet's seeking the particular from the general and his seeing the general in the particular. The former gives rise to allegory, where the particular serves only as an instance or example of the general; the latter, however, is the true nature of poetry: the expression of the particular without any thought of, or reference to, the general. Whoever grasps the particular in all its vitality also grasps the general, without being aware of it, or only becoming aware of it at a late stage.'² Thus did Goethe, in response to Schiller, declare his position with regard to allegory. He cannot have regarded it as an object worthy of great attention. More expansive is a later remark by Schopenhauer on the same lines. 'Now, if the purpose of all art is the communication of the apprehended Idea . . . ; further, if starting from the concept is objectionable in art, then we shall not be able to approve, when a work of art is intentionally and avowedly chosen to express a concept; this is the case in *allegory* . . . When, therefore, an allegorical picture has also artistic value, this is quite separate from and independent of what it achieves as allegory. Such a work of art serves two purposes simultaneously, namely the expression of a concept and the expression of an Idea. Only the latter

can be an aim of art; the other is a foreign aim, namely the trifling amusement of carving a picture to serve at the same time as an inscription, as a hieroglyphic . . . It is true that an allegorical picture can in just this quality produce a vivid impression on the mind and feelings; but under the same circumstances even an inscription would have the same effect. For instance, if the desire for fame is firmly and permanently rooted in a man's mind . . . and if he now stands before the *Genius of Fame* [by Annibale Carracci] with its laurel crowns, then his whole mind is thus excited, and his powers are called into activity. But the same thing would also happen if he suddenly saw the word "fame" in large clear letters on the wall.³ For all that this last comment comes close to touching on the essence of allegory, these observations are nevertheless prevented from standing out in any way from among the perfunctory dismissals of the allegorical form by their excessively logical character, which, in accepting the distinction between 'the expression of a concept and the expression of an idea', accepts precisely that untenable modern view of allegory and symbol – despite the fact that Schopenhauer uses the concept of the symbol differently. Such arguments have continued to be the standard ones until very recently. Even great artists and exceptional theoreticians, such as Yeats,⁴ still assume that allegory is a conventional relationship between an illustrative image and its abstract meaning. Generally authors have only a vague knowledge of the authentic documents of the modern allegorical way of looking at things, the literary and visual emblem-books of the baroque. The spirit of these works speaks so feebly in the late and more well-known epigones of the late eighteenth century that only the reader of the more original works experiences the allegorical intention in all its strength. These works were, however, excluded from consideration by neo-classical prejudice. That is, to put it briefly, the denunciation of a form of expression, such as allegory, as a mere mode of designation. Allegory – as the following pages will serve to show – is not a playful illustrative technique, but a form of expression, just as speech is expression, and, indeed, just as writing is. This was the *experimentum crucis*. Writing seemed to be a conventional system of signs, *par excellence*. Schopenhauer is not alone in dismissing allegory with the statement that it is not essentially different from writing. This objection is of funda-

mental importance for our attitude to every major object of baroque philology. And however difficult, however remote it may seem, the establishment of the philosophical basis of the latter is absolutely indispensable. And the discussion of allegory demands a central place in it; the beginnings are unmistakably evident in *Deutsche Barockdichtung* by Herbert Cysarz. But either because the declaration of the primacy of classicism as the entelechy of baroque literature frustrates any insight into the essence of this literature – and most especially the understanding of allegory – or because the persistent anti-baroque prejudice pushes classicism into the foreground as its own forefather, the new discovery that allegory 'is the dominant stylistic law, particularly in the high baroque',⁵ comes to nothing because of the attempt to exploit the formulation of this new insight, quite incidentally, as a slogan. It is 'not so much the art of the symbol as the technique of allegory' which is characteristic of the baroque in contrast to classicism. The character of the sign is thus attributed to allegory even with this new development. The old prejudice, which Creuzer gave its own linguistic coinage in the term *Zeichenallegorie*⁷ [sign-allegory], remains in force.

Otherwise, however, the great theoretical discussions of symbolism in the first volume of Creuzer's *Mythologie* are, indirectly, of immense value for the understanding of the allegorical. Alongside the banal older doctrine which survives in them, they contain observations whose epistemological elaboration could have led Creuzer far beyond the point he actually reached. Thus he defines the essence of symbols, whose status, that is to say whose distance from the allegorical, he is anxious to preserve, in terms of the following four factors: 'The momentary, the total, the inscrutability of its origin, the necessary';⁸ and elsewhere he makes the following excellent observation about the first of these factors: 'That stirring and occasionally startling quality is connected to another, that of brevity. It is like the sudden appearance of a ghost, or a flash of lightning which suddenly illuminates the dark night. It is a force which seizes hold of our entire being . . . Because of its fruitful brevity they [the ancients]

compare it in particular with laconism . . . In important situations in life, when every moment conceals a future rich in consequences, which holds the soul in suspense, in fateful moments, the ancients also were prepared for the divine signals which they . . . called *symbola*.⁹ On the other hand 'the requirements of the symbol' are 'clarity . . . brevity . . . grace and beauty';¹⁰ The first and the last two of these reveal distinctly an outlook which Creuzer has in common with the classicistic theories of the symbol. This is the doctrine of the artistic symbol, which, in its supremacy, is to be distinguished from the restricted religious or even mystical symbol. There can be no question but that Winckelmann's veneration of Greek sculpture, whose divine images serve as examples in this context, exerted a decisive influence on Creuzer here. The artistic symbol is plastic. The spirit of Winckelmann speaks in Creuzer's antithesis of the plastic and the mystic symbol. 'What is dominant here is the inexpressible which, in seeking expression, will ultimately burst the too fragile vessel of earthly form by the infinite power of its being. But herewith the clarity of vision is itself immediately destroyed, and all that remains is speechless wonder.' In the plastic symbol 'the essence does not strive for the extravagant but, obedient to nature, adapts itself to natural forms, penetrates and animates them. That conflict between the infinite and the finite is therefore resolved by the former becoming limited and so human. Out of this purification of the pictorial on the one hand, and the voluntary renunciation of the infinite on the other, grows the finest fruit of all that is symbolic. This is the symbol of the gods, which miraculously unites the beauty of form with the highest fullness of being and which, because it receives its most perfect execution in Greek sculpture, may be called the plastic symbol.'¹¹ Classicism looked to 'the human' as the highest 'fullness of being', and, since it could not but scorn allegory, it grasped in this yearning only an appearance of the symbolic. Accordingly there is also to be found in Creuzer a comparison of the symbol 'with the allegory, which in everyday speech is so often confused with the symbol',¹² which is quite close to the theories then prevalent. The 'difference between symbolic and allegorical representation' is explained as follows: 'The latter signifies merely a general concept, or an idea which is different from itself; the former is the very incarnation and embodiment of the idea. In the former a process of

substitution takes place . . . In the latter the concept itself has descended into our physical world, and we see it itself directly in the image.' But here Creuzer reverts to his original idea. 'The distinction between the two modes is therefore to be sought in the momentariness which allegory lacks . . . There [in the symbol] we have momentary totality; here we have progression in a series of moments. And for this reason it is allegory, and not the symbol, which embraces myth . . ., the essence of which is most adequately expressed in the progression of the epic poem.'¹³ But far from this insight leading to a new evaluation of the allegorical mode, there is another passage in which, on the basis of these propositions, the following is said about the Ionian philosophers: 'They restore the symbol, supplanted by the more effusive legend, to its old rights: the symbol, which was originally a child of sculpture and is still incorporated in discourse, and which, because of its significant concision, because of the totality and the contained exuberance of its essence, is far better able than legend to point to the one and inexpressible truth of religion.'¹⁴ Görres makes the following acute observation on these and similar arguments in a letter: 'I have no use for the view that the symbol is being, and allegory is sign . . . We can be perfectly satisfied with the explanation that takes the one as a sign for ideas, which is self-contained, concentrated, and which steadfastly remains itself, while recognizing the other as a successively progressing, dramatically mobile, dynamic representation of ideas which has acquired the very fluidity of time. They stand in relation to each other as does the silent, great and mighty natural world of mountains and plants to the living progression of human history.'¹⁵ This puts many things right. For the conflict between a theory of the symbol, which emphasizes the organic, mountain and plant-like quality in the make-up of the symbol on the one hand, and Creuzer's emphasis of its momentary quality, points very clearly to the real state of affairs. The measure of time for the experience of the symbol is the mystical instant in which the symbol assumes the meaning into its hidden and, if one might say so, wooded interior. On the other hand, allegory is not free from a corresponding dialectic, and the contemplative calm with which it immerses itself into the depths which separate visual being from meaning, has none of the disinterested self-sufficiency which is present in the apparently related inten-

tion of the sign. The violence of the dialectic movement within these allegorical depths must become clearer in the study of the form of the *Trauerspiel* than anywhere else. That worldly, historical breadth which Görres and Creuzer ascribe to allegorical intention is, as natural history, as the earliest history of signifying or intention, dialectical in character. Within the decisive category of time, the introduction of which into this field of semiotics was the great romantic achievement of these thinkers, permits the incisive, formal definition of the relationship between symbol and allegory. Whereas in the symbol destruction is idealized and the transfigured face of nature is fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption, in allegory the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as a petrified, primordial landscape. Everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face – or rather in a death's head. And although such a thing lacks all 'symbolic' freedom of expression, all classical proportion, all humanity – nevertheless, this is the form in which man's subjection to nature is most obvious and it significantly gives rise not only to the enigmatic question of the nature of human existence as such, but also of the biographical historicity of the individual. This is the heart of the allegorical way of seeing, of the baroque, secular explanation of history as the Passion of the world; its importance resides solely in the stations of its decline. The greater the significance, the greater the subjection to death, because death digs most deeply the jagged line of demarcation between physical nature and significance. But if nature has always been subject to the power of death, it is also true that it has always been allegorical. Significance and death both come to fruition in historical development, just as they are closely linked as seeds in the creature's graceless state of sin. The perspective of allegory as a development of myth, which plays a role in Creuzer's work, ultimately appears, from the same baroque standpoint, as a moderate and more modern perspective. Significantly Voss opposes it: 'Like all sensible people Aristarchus took Homer's legends of universe and divinity as the naive beliefs of the Nestorian heroic age. Krates, however, regarded them as primordial symbols of mysterious orphic doctrines, principally from Egypt, and in this he was followed by the geographer, Strabo and the later grammarians. Such use

of symbols, which arbitrarily transposed the experiences and articles of belief of the post-Homeric age back into the distant past, remained dominant throughout the monkish centuries and was generally called allegory.'¹⁶ The writer disapproves of this association of myth and allegory; but he allows that it is conceivable, and it rests on a theory of legend such as was developed by Creuzer. The epic poem is in fact a history of signifying nature in its classical form, just as allegory is its baroque form. Given its relationship to both of these intellectual currents, romanticism was bound to bring epic and allegory closer together. And thus Schelling formulated the programme for the allegorical exegesis of epic poetry in the famous dictum: *The Odyssey* is the history of the human spirit, *The Iliad* is the history of nature.

It is by virtue of a strange combination of nature and history that the allegorical mode of expression is born. Karl Giehlow devoted his life to shedding light on this origin. Only since his monumental study, *Die Hieroglyphenkunde des Humanismus in der Allegorie der Renaissance, besonders der Ehrenpforte Kaisers Maximilian I*, has it been possible to establish historically both the fact and the nature of the difference between the modern allegory which arose in the sixteenth century and that of the middle ages. It is true – and the great significance of this will emerge in the course of this study – the two are precisely and essentially connected. Yet only where this connection stands out as a constant against the historical variable can it be recognized in its substance; and this distinction has only become possible since the discoveries of Giehlow. Among earlier investigators Creuzer, Görres, and – especially – Herder seem to have been the only ones to have had an eye for the riddles of this form of expression. With reference to the very epochs in question, this last-named concedes: 'The history of this age and its taste is still very obscure.'¹⁷ His own supposition is wrong on historical grounds: 'Painters imitated the old works of monks; but with great understanding and close observation of objects, so that I might almost call this age the emblematic age';¹⁸ but he speaks from an intuitive understanding of the substance

of this literature which sets him above the romantic mythologists. Creuzer refers to him in discussions of the modern emblem. 'Later, too, this love of the allegorical persisted, indeed it seemed to gain a new lease of life at the beginning of the sixteenth century . . . In the same period allegory among the Germans, because of the seriousness of their national character, took a more ethical direction. With the advances of the Reformation the symbolic inevitably lost its importance as an expression of religious mysteries . . . The ancient love of the visual expressed itself . . . in symbolic representations of a moral and political kind. Indeed allegory now had even to make manifest the newly discovered truth. One of our nation's great writers who, in keeping with his intellectual breadth, does not find this expression of German strength either childish or immature but dignified and worthy of consideration, finds cause in the prevalence of this mode of representation at that time, to call the age of the Reformation the emblematic age, and makes observations about it which are well worth taking to heart.'¹⁹ Given the uncertainties that were then prevalent, even Creuzer could correct only the evaluation, not the understanding of allegory. Not until the appearance of Giehlow's work, a work of historical character, does it become possible to achieve an analysis of this form in historical-philosophical terms. He discovered the impulse for its development in the efforts of the humanist scholars to decipher hieroglyphs. In their attempts they adopted the method of a pseudo-epigraphical *corpus* written at the end of the second, or possibly even the fourth century A.D., the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon. Their subject – and this both establishes their character and was the basic determining factor in their influence on the humanists – consists entirely of the so-called symbolic or enigmatic hieroglyphs, mere pictorial signs, such as were presented to the hierogrammatist, aside from the ordinary phonetic signs, in the context of religious instruction, as the ultimate stage in a mystical philosophy of nature. The obelisks were approached with memories of this reading in mind, and a misunderstanding thus became the basis of the rich and infinitely widespread form of expression. For the scholars proceeded from the allegorical exegesis of Egyptian hieroglyphs, in which historical and cultic data were replaced by natural-philosophical, moral, and mystical commonplaces, to the extension of this new kind of

writing. The books of iconology were produced, which not only developed the phrases of this writing, and translated whole sentences 'word for word by special pictorial signs',²⁰ but frequently took the form of lexica.²¹ 'Under the leadership of the artist-scholar, Albertus, the humanists thus began to write with concrete images (*rebus*) instead of letters; the word "rebus" thus originated on the basis of the enigmatic hieroglyphs, and medallions, columns, triumphal arches, and all the conceivable artistic objects produced by the Renaissance, were covered with such enigmatic devices.'²² Along with the Greek doctrine of the freedom of artistic vision, the Renaissance also took over from antiquity the Egyptian dogma of artistic constraint. These two views could not but stand in conflict; and if, at first, this conflict was suppressed by artists of genius, as soon as the world became dominated by a hieratic spirit, the latter inevitably triumphed.²³ In the works of the mature baroque the distance from the beginnings of emblematics in the previous century becomes progressively more apparent, the similarity to the symbol becomes more fleeting, and the hieratic ostentation more assertive. Something approaching a natural theology of writing already plays a role in the *Libri de re aedificatoria decem* by Leon Battista Alberti. 'In the context of an investigation into the titles, signs and sculptures which are suitable for sepulchral monuments he takes the opportunity to draw a parallel between alphabetic script and the Egyptian signs. He sees it as a failing of the former that it is only known to its own age and therefore must inevitably fall into oblivion . . . and in contrast he extols the Egyptian system because it represents god, for instance, by an eye, nature by a vulture, time by a circle, peace by an ox.'²⁴ But at the same time speculation became applied to a less rational apologia for emblematics, which much more clearly acknowledges the hieratic quality of the form. In his commentary on *The Enneads* of Plotinus, Marsilius Ficinus observes that in hieroglyphics the Egyptian priests 'must have wanted to create something corresponding to divine thought, since divinity surely possesses knowledge of all things, not as a changing idea, but as the simple and fixed form of the thing itself, so to speak. Hieroglyphs, then, are an image of divine ideas! As an example he takes the hieroglyph of the winged snake biting its own tail, used to signify the concept of time. For the diversity and mobility of the human

idea of time, how in its swift circle it links beginning and end, how it teaches wisdom, brings things and removes them, this entire sequence of thoughts is contained in the specific and fixed image of the circle formed by the snake.²⁵ Nothing less than the theological conviction that the hieroglyphs of the Egyptians contain a hereditary wisdom, which illuminates every obscurity of nature, is expressed in the following sentence of Pierio Valeriano: 'Quippe cum hieroglyphice loqui nihil aliud sit, quam diuinarum humanarumque rerum naturam aperire.'²⁶ The 'Epistola nuncupatoria' to these same *Hieroglyphica* contain the following remarks: 'Nec deerit occasio recte sentientibus, qui accommodate ad religionem nostram haec retulerint et exposuerint. Nec etiam arborum et herbarum consideratio nobis ociosa est, cum B. Paulus et ante eum Daudid ex rerum creaturarum cognitione, Dei magnitudinem et dignitatem intellegi tradant. Quae cum ita sint, quis nostrum tam torpescenti, ac terrenis faecibusque immerso erit animo, qui se non innumeris obstrictum a Deo beneficiis fateatur, cum se hominem creatum uideat, et omnia quae coelo, aëre, aqua, terraque continent, hominis causa generata esse.'²⁷ 'Hominis causa' should not be considered in terms of the teleology of the Enlightenment, for which human happiness was the supreme purpose of nature, but in terms of a quite different, baroque, teleology. Devoted neither to the earthly nor to the moral happiness of creatures, its exclusive aim is their mysterious instruction. From the point of view of the baroque, nature serves the purpose of expressing its meaning, it is the emblematic representation of its sense, and as an allegorical representation it remains irremediably different from its historical realization. In moral examples and in catastrophes history served only as an aspect of the subject matter

*Since speaking in hieroglyphic mode means unveiling the nature of things human and divine.

†Nor shall there be lacking any opportunity for men of proper sensibility to expound and explore these matters in a way which fits our religion. Not even a consideration of trees or of vegetation is gratuitous in our purposes, since Blessed Paul and David before him record that the majesty and awesomeness of God is understood by means of a knowledge of the created universe. Since this is how matters stand, who among us is possessed of a mind so slothful, a mind so immersed in things which perish and decay, that he is unable to confess that God surrounds him with benefits without number, when he recognizes, moreover, as a man, his own creatureliness, and that everything contained in heaven, the air, in water and on the earth has been produced for the sake of man.

of emblematics. The transfixed face of signifying nature is victorious, and history must, once and for all, remain contained in the subordinate role of stage-property. Mediaeval allegory is Christian and didactic – in the mystic and natural-historical respect the baroque is descended from antiquity: Egyptian antiquity, but subsequently Greek antiquity as well. The discovery of its secret storehouse of invention is attributed to Ludovico da Feltre, 'called "il Morto" because of his "grotesque" underground activities as a discoverer. And thanks to the mediation of an anchorite of the same name (in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder*), the antique painter who was picked out from Pliny's much discussed passage on decorative painting as the classic of the grotesque, the "balcony-painter" Serapion, has also been used in literature as the personification of the subterranean-fantastic, the occult-spectral. For even at that time the enigmatically mysterious character of the effect of the grotesque seems to have been associated with its subterraneanly mysterious origin in buried ruins and catacombs. The word is not derived from *grotta* in the literal sense, but from the "burial" – in the sense of concealment – which the cave or grotto expresses... For this the eighteenth century still had the expression *das Verkrochene* [that which has crept away]. The enigmatic was therefore part of its effect from the very beginning.'²⁸ Winckelmann's position is not so very far removed from this. However severely he criticizes the stylistic principles of baroque allegory, his theory is still closely related to those of earlier authors in a number of ways. Borinski sees this very clearly in the *Versuch einer Allegorie*. 'Here, above all, Winckelmann still adheres to the general renaissance belief in *sapientia veterum* [the wisdom of the ancients], the spiritual bond between primordial truth and art, between intellectual science and archaeology... In the authentic "allegory of the ancients", "breathed in" from the fullness of Homeric inspiration, he seeks the "psychic" panacea for the "sterility" of the endless repetition of scenes of martyrdom and mythology in the art of the moderns... This kind of allegory alone teaches the artist "invention": and it is this which raises him to the same level as the poet.'²⁹ Thus allegory loses its simple didactic aspect even more radically than in the baroque.

As, in the course of their development, emblematics acquired further ramifications, so this form of expression became more obscure. Egyptian, Greek, Christian pictorial languages became intertwined. A typical example of the ready response of theology to this is provided by a work such as the *Polyhistor symbolicus*,³⁰ written by that very same Jesuit, Caussin, whose Latin *Felicitas* had been translated by Gryphius. Nor could any kind of writing seem better designed to safeguard the high political maxims of true worldly wisdom than an esoteric script such as this, which was comprehensible only to scholars. In his essay on Johann Valentin Andreae, Herder even speculated that it provided a refuge for many ideas which people were reluctant to voice openly before princes. The view of Opitz sounds more paradoxical. For while on the one hand he sees in the theological esotericism of this form of expression a substantiation of the noble origins of poetry, he does, on the other hand, nevertheless believe that it was introduced in the interest of general comprehensibility. The proposition from the *Art poétique* of Delbène: 'La poésie n'était au premier âge qu'une théologie allégorique',* served as a model for a well-known formulation in the second chapter of Opitz's *Deutsche Poeterey*. 'Die Poeterey ist anfangs nichts anderes gewesen als eine verborgene Theologie.'† But on the other hand, he also writes: 'Weil die erste und rawe welt gröber und ungeschlachter war / als das sie hetten die lehren von weissheit und himmlischen dingen recht fassen und verstehen können / so haben weise Männer / was sie zu erbawung der gottesfurcht / guter sitten und wandels erfunden / in Reime und Fabeln / welche sonderlich der gemeine Pöfel zu hören geneiget ist / verstecken und verbergen müssen.'³¹‡ This remained the standard view, and for Harsdörffer, perhaps the most consistent allegorist, it provided the basis for the theory of this form of expression. Just as it established itself in

* Originally poetry was simply allegorical theology.

† Poetry was initially nothing other than concealed theology

‡ Because the earliest rude world was too crude and uncivilised and people could not therefore correctly grasp and understand the teachings of wisdom and heavenly things, wise men had to conceal and bury what they had discovered for the cultivation of the fear of God, morality, and good conduct, in rhymes and fables, to which the common people are disposed to listen.

every field of spiritual activity, from the broadest to the narrowest, from theology, the study of nature, and morality, down to heraldry, occasional poetry, and the language of love, so is the stock of its visual requisites unlimited. With every idea the moment of expression coincides with a veritable eruption of images, which gives rise to a chaotic mass of metaphors. This is how the sublime is presented in this style. 'Universa rerum natura materiam praebet huic philosophiae (sc. imaginum) nec quicquam ista protulit, quod non in emblema abire possit, ex cujus contemplatione utilem virtutum doctrinam in vita civili capere liceat: adeo ut quomadammodum Historiae ex Numismatibus, ita Morali philosophiae ex Emblematis lux inferatur.'³²* This is a particularly telling comparison. For where nature bears the imprint of history, that is to say where it is a setting, does it not have a numismatic quality? The same author – a reviewer in the *Acta eruditorum* – writes elsewhere: 'Quamvis rem symbolis et emblematicis praebere materiam, nec quicquam in hoc universo existere, quod non idoneum iis argumentum suppeditet, supra in Actis . . . fuit monitum; cum primum philosophiae imaginum tomum superiori anno editum enarraremus. Cujus assertionis alter hic tomus,³³ qui hoc anno prodiit, egregia praebet documenta; a naturalibus et artificialibus rebus, elementis, igne, montibus ignivomis, tormentis pulverariis et aliis machinis bellicis, chymicis item instrumentis, subterraneis cuniculis, fumo luminaribus, igne sacro, aere et variis avium generibus deprompta symbola et apposita lemmata exhibens.'³⁴† A single illustration will suffice

*The universal nature of things adds weight to this line of philosophical enquiry (sc. into the question of images), nor has anything disclosed this information which could not be transmitted upon a piece of engraved work (*emblema*), in the beholding of which the individual might be enabled to derive useful information about virtue in civil life: so that, as in the case of history, illumination can come from coins, so, in the case of moral philosophy, it may come from engraved work.

†It was pointed out above, however, in the *Acta* that a thing shows its natural character through symbols and ornamentation, and that no single thing exists in this entire universe which cannot supply just such an appropriate representation as we explain in the first volume of the philosophy of images, which came out in the previous year. In support of this assertion the second volume of this book, which appeared this year, contributes excellent proofs, producing symbols and aptly related themes drawn from both natural and artificial material, from the elements, from fire, from mountains which belch fire, from dusty siege engines and other machines of war, from alchemical instruments too, from underground tunnels, from smoke, from lamps, from sacred fire, from bronze coinage, and from the many species of birds.

to show how far people went in this direction. The following passages occur in Böckler's *Ars heraldica*: 'Von Blättern. Man findet selten Blätter in den Wappen / wo sie aber gefunden werden / so führen sie die Deutung der Wahrheit / weilen sie etlicher Massen der Zungen und dem Hertzen gleichen.'³⁵ 'Von Wolcken. Gleichwie die Wolcken sich übersich (!) in die Höhe schwingen / hernach fruchtbaren Regen herab giessen / davon das Feld / Frücht und Menschen erfrischt und erquicket werden / also soll auch ein Adeliches Gemüth / in Tugend-Sachen gleichsam in die Höhe aufsteigen / alsdenn mit seinen Gaben / dem Vatterland zu dienen / beflissen seyn.'³⁶ 'Die weise (!) Pferde bedeuten den obsiegenden Frieden / nach geendigtem Krieg / und zugleich auch die Geschwindigkeit.'³⁷ * The most astonishing thing is a complete system of chromatic hieroglyphs, in the form of combinations of two different colours, towards which this book points. 'Roth zu Silber / verlangen sich zu rächen',³⁸ 'Blau . . . zu Roth / Unhöflichkeit',³⁹ 'Schwartz . . . zu Purpur / beständige Andacht',⁴⁰ † to mention but a few. 'The many obscurities in the connection between meaning and sign . . . did not deter, they rather encouraged the exploitation of ever remoter characteristics of the representative object as symbols, so as to surpass even the Egyptians with new subtleties. In addition to this there was the dogmatic power of the meanings handed down from the ancients, so that one and the same object can just as easily signify a virtue as a vice, and therefore more or less anything.'⁴¹

This brings us to the antinomies of the allegorical, the dialectical discussion of which is essential if the image of the *Trauerspiel* is to be evoked.

* On leaves. Leaves are rarely found in coats of arms, but where they are found, they signify truth because in many respects they resemble the tongue and the heart. . . . On clouds. Just as clouds pile up on each other into the heights, and thereafter fruitful rain falls from them, so that field, fruit, and men are refreshed and invigorated, so should a noble disposition rise to the heights, as it were, in matters of virtue, and then apply itself to serving the fatherland with its gifts. . . . White horses signify victorious peace after the conclusion of war, and also speed.

† Red and silver, the lust for vengeance, . . . blue . . . and red, discourtesy, . . . black . . . and purple, constant piety.

Any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else. With this possibility a destructive, but just verdict is passed on the profane world: it is characterized as a world in which the detail is of no great importance. But it will be unmistakably apparent, especially to anyone who is familiar with allegorical textual exegesis, that all of the things which are used to signify derive, from the very fact of their pointing to something else, a power which makes them appear no longer commensurable with profane things, which raises them onto a higher plane, and which can, indeed, sanctify them. Considered in allegorical terms, then, the profane world is both elevated and devalued. This religious dialectic of content has its formal correlative in the dialectic of convention and expression. For allegory is both: convention *and* expression; and both are inherently contradictory. However, just as baroque teaching conceives of history as created events, allegory in particular, although a convention like every kind of writing, is regarded as created, like holy scripture. The allegory of the seventeenth century is not convention of expression, but expression of convention. At the same time expression of authority, which is secret in accordance with the dignity of its origin, but public in accordance with the extent of its validity. And the very same antinomies take plastic form in the conflict between the cold, facile technique and the eruptive expression of allegorical interpretation. Here too the solution is a dialectical one. It lies in the essence of writing itself. It is possible, without contradiction, to conceive of a more vital, freer use of the revealed spoken language, in which it would lose none of its dignity. This is not true of its written form, which allegory laid claim to being. The sanctity of what is written is inextricably bound up with the idea of its strict codification. For [sacred script] always takes the form of certain complexes of words which ultimately constitute, or aspire to become, one single and inalterable complex. So it is that alphabetical script, as a combination of atoms of writing, is the farthest removed from the script of sacred complexes. These latter take the form of hieroglyphics. The desire to guarantee the sacred character of any script – there will always be a conflict between sacred standing and profane comprehensibility – leads to complexes, to hieroglyphics. This is what happens in the baroque. Both externally and stylistically – in the extreme character of the typographical

arrangement and in the use of highly charged metaphors – the written word tends towards the visual. It is not possible to conceive of a starker opposite to the artistic symbol, the plastic symbol, the image of organic totality; than this amorphous fragment which is seen in the form of allegorical script. In it the baroque reveals itself to be the sovereign opposite of classicism, as which hitherto, only romanticism has been acknowledged. And we should not resist the temptation of finding out those features which are common to both of them. Both, romanticism as much as baroque, are concerned not so much with providing a corrective to classicism, as to art itself. And it cannot be denied that the baroque, that contrasting prelude to classicism, offers a more concrete, more authoritative, and more permanent version of this correction. Whereas romanticism inspired by its belief in the infinite, intensified the perfected creation of form and idea in critical terms,⁴² at one stroke the profound vision of allegory transforms things and works into stirring writing. Winckelmann still has this penetration of vision in the *Beschreibung des Torso des Hercules in Belvedere zu Rom*:⁴³ it is evident in the un-classical way he goes over it, part by part and limb by limb. It is no accident that the subject is a torso. In the field of allegorical intuition the image is a fragment, a rune. Its beauty as a symbol evaporates when the light of divine learning falls upon it. The false appearance of totality is extinguished. For the *eidos* disappears, the simile ceases to exist, and the cosmos it contained shrivels up. The dry rebuses which remain contain an insight, which is still available to the confused investigator. By its very essence classicism was not permitted to behold the lack of freedom, the imperfection, the collapse of the physical, beautiful, nature. But beneath its extravagant pomp, this is precisely what baroque allegory proclaims, with unprecedented emphasis. A deep-rooted intuition of the problematic character of art – it was by no means only the coyness of a particular social class, it was also a religious scruple which assigned artistic activity to the 'leisure hours' – emerges as a reaction to its self-confidence at the time of the Renaissance. Although the artists and thinkers of classicism did not concern themselves with what they regarded as grotesque, certain statements in neo-Kantian aesthetics give an idea of the ferocity of the controversy. The dialectic quality of this form of expression is mis-

understood, and mistrusted as ambiguity. 'The basic characteristic of allegory, however, is ambiguity, multiplicity of meaning; allegory, and the baroque, glory in richness of meaning. But the richness of this ambiguity is the richness of extravagance; nature, however, according to the old rules of metaphysics, and indeed also of mechanics, is bound by the law of economy. Ambiguity is therefore always the opposite of clarity and unity of meaning.'⁴⁴ No less doctrinaire are the arguments of a pupil of Hermann Cohen, Carl Horst, who was restricted by his title, *Barockprobleme*, to a more concrete approach. Notwithstanding, allegory is said 'always to reveal a "crossing of the borders of a different mode", an advance of the plastic arts into the territory of the "rhetorical" arts. And,' the author continues, 'such violation of frontiers is nowhere more remorselessly punished than in the pure culture of sentiment, which is more the business of the pure "plastic arts" than the "rhetorical arts", and brings the former closer to music . . . In the unemotional permeation of the most varied human forms of expression with autocratic ideas . . . artistic feeling and understanding is diverted and violated. This is what allegory achieves in the field of the "plastic" arts. Its intrusion could therefore be described as a harsh disturbance of the peace and a disruption of law and order in the arts. And yet allegory has never been absent from this field, and the greatest artists have dedicated great works to it.'⁴⁵ This fact alone should have been enough to produce a different attitude to allegory. The undialectic neo-Kantian mode of thought is not able to grasp the synthesis which is reached in allegorical writing as a result of the conflict between theological and artistic intentions, a synthesis not so much in the sense of a peace as a *treuga dei* between the conflicting opinions.

When, as is the case in the *Trauerspiel*, history becomes part of the setting, it does so as script. The word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience. The allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history, which is put on stage in the *Trauerspiel*, is present in reality in the form of the ruin. In the ruin history has

physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay. Allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. This explains the baroque cult of the ruin. Borinski, less exhaustive in his argument than accurate in his account of the facts, is aware of this. 'The broken pediment, the crumbling columns are supposed to bear witness to the miracle that the sacred edifice has withstood even the most elemental forces of destruction, lightning and earthquake. In its artificiality, however, such a ruin appears as the last heritage of an antiquity which in the modern world is only to be seen in its material form, as a picturesque field of ruins.'⁴⁶ A footnote adds: 'The rise of this tendency can be traced by examining the ingenious practice of renaissance artists in setting the Birth of Christ and the Adoration in the ruins of an antique temple instead of the mediaeval stable. In Domenico Ghirlandaio (Florence, Accademia), for instance, these ruins still consisted simply of impeccably preserved showpieces; now they become an end in themselves, serving as a picturesque setting representing transitory splendour, in the plastic and colourful Nativity-scenes.'⁴⁷ What prevails here is the current stylistic feeling, far more than the reminiscences of antiquity. That which lies here in ruins, the highly significant fragment, the remnant, is, in fact, the finest material in baroque creation. For it is common practice in the literature of the baroque to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal, and, in the unrelenting expectation of a miracle, to take the repetition of stereotypes for a process of intensification. The baroque writers must have regarded the work of art as just such a miracle. And if, on the other hand, it seemed to be the calculable result of the process of accumulation, it is no more difficult to reconcile these two things than it was for the alchemist to reconcile the longed-for miraculous 'work' and the subtle theoretical recipes. The experimentation of the baroque writers resembles the practice of the adepts. The legacy of antiquity constitutes, item for item, the elements from which the new whole is mixed. Or rather: is constructed. For the perfect vision of this new phenomenon was the ruin. The exuberant subjection of antique elements in a structure which, without uniting them in a single whole, would, in destruction, still be superior to

the harmonies of antiquity, is the purpose of the technique which applies itself separately, and ostentatiously, to realia, rhetorical figures and rules. Literature ought to be called *ars inveniendi*. The notion of the man of genius, the master of the *ars inveniendi*, is that of a man who could manipulate models with sovereign skill. 'Fantasy', the creative faculty as conceived by the moderns, was unknown as the criterion of a spiritual hierarchy. 'Dass bishero unsern Opitius niemand in der deutschen Poeterey nur gleichkommen, viel weniger überlegen sein können (welches auch ins künftige nicht geschehen wird), ist die vornehmste Ursache, dass neben der sonderbaren Geschicklichkeit der trefflichen Natur, so in ihm ist, er in der Latiner und Griechen Schriften sowohl [sic] belesen und selbe so artig auszudrücken und inventieren weiss.'^{48*} The German language, moreover, as the grammarians of the time saw it, was in this context, only another nature, alongside that of the ancient models. Hankamer explains their view as follows: 'Linguistic nature, like material nature, is a repository of all secrets. [The writer] brings no power to it, creates no new truth from the spontaneous outpourings of the soul'.⁴⁹ The writer must not conceal the fact that his activity is one of arranging, since it was not so much the mere whole as its obviously constructed quality that was the principal impression which was aimed at. Hence the display of the craftsmanship, which, in Calderón especially, shows through like the masonry in a building whose rendering has broken away. Thus, one might say, nature remained the great teacher for the writers of this period. However, nature was not seen by them in bud and bloom, but in the over-ripeness and decay of her creations. In nature they saw eternal transience, and here alone did the saturnine vision of this generation recognize history. Its monuments, ruins, are, according to Agrippa von Nettesheim, the home of the saturnine beasts. In the process of decay, and in it alone, the events of history shrivel up and become absorbed in the setting. The quintessence of these decaying objects is the polar opposite to the idea of transfigured nature as conceived by the early renaiss-

* The principal reason why no one in German poetry has yet been able even to approach our Opitz, let alone surpass him (which will not occur in the future either), is that, apart from the remarkable agility of his excellent nature, he is so well read in Latin and Greek writings, and he himself possesses such powers of expression and invention.

sance. Burdach has demonstrated that this latter concept was 'quite different from our own'. 'For a long time it continues to remain dependent on the linguistic usage and the thinking of the middle ages, even if the evaluation of the word and the notion 'nature' does visibly rise. However, in artistic theory from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, the imitation of nature means the imitation of nature as shaped by God.'⁵⁰ But it is fallen nature which bears the imprint of the progression of history. The penchant of the baroque for apotheosis is a counterpart to its own particular way of looking at things. The authorization of their allegorical designations bears the seal of the all-too-earthly. Never does their transcendence come from within. Hence their illumination by the artificial light of apotheosis. Hardly ever has there been a literature whose illusionistic virtuosity has more radically eliminated from its works that radiance which has a transcendent effect, and which was at one time, rightly, used in an attempt to define the essence of artistry. It is possible to describe the absence of this radiance as one of the most specific characteristics of baroque lyric. And the drama is no different. 'So muss man durch den Tod in jenes Leben dringen / | Das uns Aegyptens Nacht in Gosems Tag verkehrt / | Und den beperlten Rock der Ewigkeit gewehrt!'⁵¹ This is how Hallmann, from the point of view of the stage-manager, describes eternal life. Obdurate concentration on requisites frustrated the depiction of love. Unworldly voluptuousness, lost in its own fantasy, holds the floor. 'Ein schönes Weib ist ja, die tausend Zierden mahlen, | Ein unverzehrlich Tisch, der ihrer viel macht satt. | Ein unverseigend Quell, das allzeit Wasser hat, | Ja süsse Libes-Milch; Wenn gleich in hundert Röhre | Der linde Zucker rinnt. Es ist der Unhold Lehre, | Des schelen Neides Art, wenn andern man verwehrt | Die Speise, die sie labt, sich aber nicht verzehrt.'⁵² Any adequate masking of content is absent from the typical works of the baroque. The extent of their claims, even in the minor forms, is breathtaking. And they lack any feeling for the

* And so one must go through death to enter into that life which transforms Egypt's night into Gosen's day, and grants us the pearly robe of eternity!

† A beautiful woman, adorned with a thousand ornaments, is an inexhaustible table that satisfies many. An eternal spring from which water always flows, or rather love's sweet milk; as when sweet sugar runs in a hundred canes. It is the devil's doctrine, the way of squinting envy, to deny others the food which refreshes, but which is not consumed.

intimate, the mysterious. They attempt, extravagantly and vainly, to replace it with the enigmatic and the concealed. In the true work of art pleasure can be fleeting, it can live in the moment, it can vanish, and it can be renewed. The baroque work of art wants only to endure, and clings with all its senses to the eternal. This is the only way of explaining how, in the following century, readers were seduced by the liberating sweetness of the first *Tändeleien*, and how, in the rococo, Chinoiserie became the counterpart to hieratic byzantinism. In speaking of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as the summit of the aesthetic hierarchy of the age and the ideal of the *Trauerspiel* itself,⁵³ the baroque critic provides a new confirmation of this spirit of weightiness. As an experienced allegorist, Harsdörffer is, among many theoreticians, the one who spoke out most radically for the synthesis of all the arts. For this is precisely what is required by the allegorical way of looking at things. Winckelmann makes the connection abundantly clear when, with polemical overstatement, he remarks: 'Vain . . . is the hope of those who believe that allegory should be taken so far that one might even be able to paint an ode.'⁵⁴ More disconcerting is the question of how the literary works of the century are introduced: dedications, prefaces and epilogues, by the authors themselves or by others, testimonials, acknowledgements of the great masters – these are the rule. Without exception they provide an elaborate surrounding framework to the larger editions and the collected works. For it was only rarely that the eye was able to find satisfaction in the object itself. It was expected that works of art could be absorbed in the midst of ordinary every day affairs, and devotion to them was far less a private matter, for which account did not have to be given, than it was later to become. Reading was obligatory, and it was educational. The range of the products, their intentional bulkiness and lack of mystery should be understood as a correlative of such an attitude among the public. It was not felt that these products were intended to spread by growth over a period of time, so much as to fill up their allotted place here and now. And in many respects this was their reward. But for this very reason criticism is implied with rare clarity in the fact of their continued existence. From the very beginning they are set up for that erosion by criticism which befell them in the course of time. Beauty has nothing inalienable for the uninitiated. And for such people nothing

is less approachable than the German *Trauerspiel*. Its outer form has died away because of its extreme crudity. What has survived is the extraordinary detail of the allegorical references: an object of knowledge which has settled in the consciously constructed ruins. Criticism means the mortification of the works. By their very essence these works confirm this more readily than any others. Mortification of the works: not then – as the romantics have it – awakening of the consciousness in living works,⁵⁵ but the settlement of knowledge in dead ones. Beauty, which endures, is an object of knowledge. And if it is questionable whether the beauty which endures does still deserve the name, it is nevertheless certain that there is nothing of beauty which does not contain something that is worthy of knowledge. Philosophy must not attempt to deny that it re-awakens the beauty of works. 'Science cannot lead to the naive enjoyment of art any more than geologists and botanists can awaken a feeling for the beauty of landscape';⁵⁶ this assertion is as incorrect as the analogy which is supposed to support it is false. The geologist and the botanist can indeed do just this. Without at least an intuitive grasp of the life of the detail in the structure, all love of beauty is no more than empty dreaming. In the last analysis structure and detail are always historically charged. The object of philosophical criticism is to show that the function of artistic form is as follows: to make historical content, such as provides the basis of every important work of art, into a philosophical truth. This transformation of material content into truth content makes the decrease in effectiveness, whereby the attraction of earlier charms diminishes decade by decade, into the basis for a rebirth, in which all ephemeral beauty is completely stripped off, and the work stands as a ruin. In the allegorical construction of the baroque *Trauerspiel* such ruins have always stood out clearly as formal elements of the preserved work of art.

Even the story of the life of Christ supported the movement from history to nature which is the basis of allegory. However great the retarding, secular tendency of its exegesis had always been – seldom did it reach such a degree of intensity as in the work of Sigmund von Birken. His poetics

give, 'as examples of birth, marriage, and funeral poems, of eulogies and victory congratulations, songs on the birth and death of Christ, on his spiritual marriage with the soul, on his glory and his victory'.⁵⁷ The mystical instant [*Nu*] becomes the 'now' [*Jetzt*] of contemporary actuality; the symbolic becomes distorted into the allegorical. The eternal is separated from the events of the story of salvation, and what is left is a living image open to all kinds of revision by the interpretative artist. This corresponds profoundly to the endlessly preparatory, circumlocutious, self-indulgently hesitant manner of the baroque process of giving form. It has been quite correctly observed, by Hausenstein, that, in paintings of apotheoses, the foreground is generally treated with exaggerated realism so as to be able to show the remoter, visionary objects more reliably. The attempt to gather all worldly events into the graphic foreground is not undertaken only in order to heighten the tension between immanence and transcendence, but also in order to secure for the latter the greatest conceivable rigour, exclusiveness and inexorability. It is an unsurpassably spectacular gesture to place even Christ in the realm of the provisional, the everyday, the unreliable. The *Sturm und Drang* provides strong support; Merck writes that it 'cannot in any way detract from the great man if it is known that he was born in a stable and lay in swaddling clothes between an ox and an ass'.⁵⁸ Above all it is the offensive, the provocative quality of the gesture which is baroque. Where man is drawn towards the symbol, allegory emerges from the depths of being to intercept the intention, and to triumph over it. The same tendency is characteristic of baroque lyric. The poems have 'no forward movement, but they swell up from within'.⁵⁹ If it is to hold its own against the tendency to absorption, the allegorical must constantly unfold in new and surprising ways. The symbol, on the other hand, as the romantic mythologists have shown, remains persistently the same. How striking is the contrast between the uniform verses of the emblem-books, the 'vanitas vanitatum vanitas', and the fashionable bustle with which they appeared, on each others heels, from the middle of the century onwards! Allegories become dated, because it is part of their nature to shock. If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy, if melancholy causes life to flow out of it and it remains behind dead, but eternally secure, then it is exposed to the

allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power. That is to say it is now quite incapable of emanating any meaning or significance of its own; such significance as it has, it acquires from the allegorist. He places it within it, and stands behind it; not in a psychological but in an ontological sense. In his hands the object becomes something different; through it he speaks of something different and for him it becomes a key to the realm of hidden knowledge; and he reveres it as the emblem of this. This is what determines the character of allegory as a form of writing. It is a schema; and as a schema it is an object of knowledge, but it is not securely possessed until it becomes a fixed schema: at one and the same time a fixed image and a fixing sign. The baroque ideal of knowledge, the process of storing, to which the vast libraries are a monument, is realized in the external appearance of the script. Almost as much as in China it is, in its visual character, not merely a sign of what is to be known but it is itself an object worthy of knowledge. The romantics were the first to begin to become conscious of this aspect of allegory too. Particularly Baader. In his *Über den Einfluss der Zeichen der Gedanken auf deren Erzeugung und Gestaltung* he writes: 'It is well known that it is entirely up to us whether we use any particular object of nature as a conventional sign for an idea, as we see in symbolic and hieroglyphic writing, and this object only then takes on a new character when we wish to use it, not to convey its natural characteristics, but those which we have ourselves, so to speak, lent it.'⁶⁰ A note to this passage contains the following commentary: 'There is good reason for the fact that everything we see in external nature is, for us, already writing, a kind of sign-language, which nevertheless lacks the most essential feature: pronunciation; this must quite simply have come from somewhere else and been given to man.'⁶¹ 'From somewhere else' the allegorist then takes it up, by no means avoiding that arbitrariness which is the most drastic manifestation of the power of knowledge. The wealth of ciphers, which the allegorist discovered in the world of the creature with its profound historical stamp, justifies Cohen's charge of 'extravagance'. It may not accord with the authority of nature; but the voluptuousness with which significance rules, like a stern sultan in the harem of objects, is without equal in giving expression to nature. It is indeed characteristic of the sadist that he humiliates his object and then – or

thereby – satisfies it. And that is what the allegorist does in this age drunk with acts of cruelty both lived and imagined. This even applies to religious painting. The 'opening of the eyes', which baroque painting makes into 'a schema quite independent of the situation as conditioned by the subject in hand',⁶² betrays and devalues things in an inexpressible manner. The function of baroque iconography is not so much to unveil material objects as to strip them naked. The emblematiser does not present the essence implicitly, 'behind the image'.⁶³ He drags the essence of what is depicted out before the image, in writing, as a caption, such as, in the emblem-books, forms an intimate part of what is depicted. Basically, then, the *Trauerspiel*, too, which grew up in the sphere of the allegorical, is, in its form, a drama for the reader. Although this says nothing about the value or the possibility of its stage-performance. But it does make it clear that the chosen spectator of such examples of the *Trauerspiel* concentrated on them with at least the same thought and attentiveness as the reader; that the situations did not change very frequently, but that when they did, they did so in a flash, like the appearance of the print when a page is turned; and it explains how it is that, in a hostile and grudging intuition of the inner law of these dramas, the older school of research persisted in the view that they were never performed.

This view was certainly incorrect. For the only pleasure the melancholic permits himself, and it is a powerful one, is allegory. It is true that the overbearing ostentation, with which the banal object seems to arise from the depths of allegory is soon replaced by its disconsolate everyday countenance; it is true that the profound fascination of the sick man for the isolated and insignificant is succeeded by that disappointed abandonment of the exhausted emblem, the rhythm of which a speculatively inclined observer could find expressively repeated in the behaviour of apes. But the amorphous details which can only be understood allegorically keep coming up. For if the instructions are: 'everything [must be] considered in its own right, and then the intelligence [will] increase and taste be refined',⁶⁴ then the appropriate object of such intentions is ever present.

In his *Gesprächspiele* Harsdörffer sees the basis of a particular genre in the fact 'that, following the example of Judges, IX, 8, instead of the animals of Aesop's fables, lifeless objects, forests, trees, stones, may speak and act, while yet another genre emerges from the fact that words, syllables, and letters appear in personified form'.⁶⁵ As far as this latter trend is concerned, Christian Gryphius, the son of Andreas, distinguished himself with his didactic play *Der deutschen Sprache unterschiedene Alter*. It is perfectly clear that this fragmentation in the graphic aspects is a principle of the allegorical approach. In the baroque, especially, the allegorical personification can be seen to give way in favour of the emblems, which mostly offer themselves to view in desolate, sorrowful dispersal. A large part of Winckelmann's *Versuch einer Allegorie*, needs to be understood as a protest against this style. 'Simplicity consists in designing a picture which expresses the intended meaning in as few signs as possible, and this is the characteristic of allegories in the best periods of antiquity. In later times there arose the practice of bringing many concepts together, by means of just as many signs, in one single figure, like those divinities known as *panthei*, which are invested with the attributes of all the gods. . . . The best and most perfect allegory of one or of several concepts is comprised of one single figure, or should be thought of as such.'⁶⁶ This is the voice of the will to symbolic totality venerated by humanism in the human figure. But it is as something incomplete and imperfect that objects stare out from the allegorical structure. Even among the romantics the genuine theorists of this field had no use for them. They were weighed in the balance against the symbol and found wanting. 'The German emblem [*Sinnbild*] . . . is quite lacking in that dignity and substance. It ought therefore . . . to remain confined to the lower sphere, and be completely excluded from symbolic tests.'⁶⁷ Görres has the following to say about this statement of Creuzer: 'Since you explain the mystic symbol as the formal symbol in which the spirit aspires to transcend form and destroy the body, the plastic symbol, however, as the pure median between spirit and nature, you have omitted the opposite of the former, the real symbol, in which the bodily form absorbs the spiritual, and here the emblem, the German symbol [*Sinnbild*] in its restricted sense, fits in well.'⁶⁸ The romantic standpoint of both authors was still too precarious for them not

to feel some hostility towards the rational didacticism, to which this form seemed suspiciously close; but on the other hand the straightforward, whimsical, popular quality of many of its products could not but have appealed to Görres. Yet he did not clarify his position. And even today it is by no means self-evident that the primacy of the thing over the personal, the fragment over the total, represents a confrontation between the allegory and the symbol, to which it is the polar opposite and, for that very reason, its equal in power. Allegorical personification has always concealed the fact that its function is not the personification of things, but rather to give the concrete a more imposing form by getting it up as a person. In this respect the insight of Cysarz is very penetrating. The baroque vulgarizes ancient mythology in order to see everything in terms of figures (not souls): this is the ultimate stage of externalization after the hieratic religious content had been aestheticized by Ovid and secularized by the neo-Latin writers. There is not the faintest glimmer of any spiritualization of the physical. The whole of nature is personalized, not so as to be made more inward, but, on the contrary – so as to be deprived of soul.⁶⁹ That awkward heavy-handedness, which has been attributed either to lack of talent on the part of the artist or lack of insight on the part of the patron, is essential to allegory. It is therefore all the more remarkable that Novalis, who was incomparably more aware than the later romantics of what separated him from the ideals of classicism, shows a profound understanding of the essence of allegory in the few passages in which he touches on the subject. The attentive reader of the following note will immediately be able to see deep into the mind of the poet of the sixteenth century, a high official, experienced in privy affairs of state, and overwhelmed with duties: 'Business affairs can also be treated poetically . . . A certain archaism of style, a correct disposition and ordering of masses, a faint hint of allegory, a certain strangeness, respect, and bewilderment which shimmer through the writing – these are some of the essential features of this art.'⁷⁰ This is indeed the spirit in which the baroque approaches realia in practice. That there is an affinity between the romantic genius and baroque spiritual make-up in the field of the allegorical is equally clear from this further fragment: 'Poems, merely fine-sounding and full of beautiful words but without any meaning or

coherence – no more than a few verses of which are comprehensible – like fragments of the most heterogeneous objects. True poetry can, at most, have an allegorical meaning as a whole, and its effect can, at most, be an indirect one, like that of music etc. Nature is therefore purely poetic, and so it is a magician's den, a physicist's laboratory, a children's nursery, an attic and a lumber-room.⁷¹ It must not be assumed that there is anything accidental about the fact that the allegorical is related in this way to the fragmentary, untidy, and disordered character of magicians' dens or alchemists' laboratories familiar above all to the baroque. Are not the works of Jean Paul, the greatest allegorist in German literature, just such children's nurseries and haunted rooms? Indeed a genuine history of the romantic style could do no better than show, with reference to his works, that even the fragment, and even irony are variants of the allegorical. In short: the technique of romanticism leads in a number of respects into the realm of emblematics and allegory. And the relationship between these two might be formulated as follows: in its fully developed, baroque, form allegory brings with it its own court; the profusion of emblems is grouped around the figural centre, which is never absent from genuine allegories, as opposed to periphrases of concepts. They seem to be arranged in an arbitrary way: *The confused 'court'* – the title of a Spanish *Trauerspiel* – could be adopted as the model of allegory. This court is subject to the law of 'dispersal' and 'collectedness'. Things are assembled according to their significance; indifference to their existence allowed them to be dispersed again. The disorder of the allegorical scenery stands in contrast to the galant boudoir. In the dialectic of this form of expression the fanaticism of the process of collection is balanced by the slackness with which the objects are arranged: the extravagant distribution of instruments of penance or violence is particularly paradoxical. Borinski has written brilliantly of baroque form that 'for its excessive structural demands this form compensates by being decorative or, to use its own term, "galant"' ⁷² and this confirms it as a contemporary of allegory. This remark is also relevant to stylistic criticism of baroque poetics. For in the theory of 'tragedy' the rules of ancient tragedy are taken separately, as lifeless components, and piled up around an allegorical figure representing the tragic muse. Thanks only to the classicistic misinterpretation of the *Trauerspiel*,

such as the baroque practised in ignorance of its true self, could the 'rules' of ancient tragedy become the amorphous, binding, and emblematic rules according to which the new form developed. In such a context of allegorical decay and destruction the image of Greek tragedy seemed to be the only possible, the natural sign of 'tragic poetry'. Its rules become significant anticipations of the *Trauerspiel*; its texts are read as *Trauerspiel*-texts. The extent to which this was, and continued to be, possible can be seen from the Sophocles-translations of Hölderlin, which date from that late period which Hellingrath did not call the poet's 'baroque' period for nothing.

Ihr kraft beraubte Wort', ihr seid zerstückte Stück',
Und seichte schattenstreif, allein, entweicht zu rük;
Vermehlet mit Gemähl ihr werdet zu gelassen,
Wenn ein tief Sinnbild hilft das verborgne fassen.
Franz Julius von dem Knesebeck:
*Dreyständige Sinnbilder**

The philosophical understanding of allegory, and especially the dialectical understanding of its extreme form, is the only background against which the image of the *Trauerspiel* stands out in living and – if one may venture to say so – beautiful colours, the only background not darkened by the grey of retouching. In the chorus and the interlude the allegorical structure of the *Trauerspiel* is so conspicuous that it could never have entirely escaped the notice of the onlookers. But for that very reason these remained the critical points at which the edifice, which so boldly raised the claim to be a Greek temple, was stormed and eventually destroyed. Wackernagel writes: 'The chorus is the heritage and property of the Greek theatre: even there it is only the natural consequence of certain historical

* Ye words robbed of power, you are shattered fragments, and by itself a pale shadow vanishes away. Married to a painting, you will be admitted, when a profound emblem helps you to grasp that which is concealed.

premises. In Germany there was never any basis for the development of anything of this kind, and so the attempts of the German dramatists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries . . . to transpose it to the German theatre could only come to grief.¹ There can be no doubt about the dependence of the Greek chorus-drama on certain national conditions; but equally there can be no doubt that the same is true of the apparent imitations of the Greeks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chorus of the baroque drama is not something external. It is as internal to it as is the carving of a Gothic altar behind the open wings on which stories from the lives of the saints are painted. In the chorus, or the interlude, allegory is no longer colourful, rich in historical associations, but pure and severe. At the end of the fourth act of Lohenstein's *Sophonisbe* Lechery and Virtue appear in conflict. Finally Lechery is unmasked, and allows itself to be addressed by Virtue as follows: 'Wol! wir wolln bald des Engels Schönheit sehn! Ich muss dir den geborgten Rock ausziehen. Ich Kan sich ein Bettler in was ärgers nehn? Wer wollte nicht für dieser Slavlin fliehen? Wirff aber auch den Bettler-Mantel weg. Schaut / ist ein Schwein besudelter zu schauen? Diss ist ein Krebs- und diss ein Aussatz-Fleck. Muss dir nicht selbst für Schwer- und Eyster grauen? Der Wollust Kopff ist Schwan / der Leib ein Schwein. Lasst uns die Schminck' im Antlitz auch vertilgen. Hier fault das Fleisch / dort frisst die Lauss sich ein / So wandeln sich in Koth der Wollust Liljen. Noch nicht genug! zeuch auch die Lumpen aus; Was zeigt sich nun? Ein Aass / ein todt Gerippe. Besieh' itzt auch der Wollust innres Haus: Dass man sie in die Schinder-Grube schippe!' ²* This is the ancient allegorical motif of Dame World. From such striking passages an inkling of what is going on here occasionally penetrated even to the authors of the last century. Conrad Müller writes: 'In the baroque choruses Lohenstein's

* Good! Now let us see the angel's beauty. I must take off your borrowed dress. Can a beggar sew himself into anything worse? Who would not flee before this slave? But throw away the beggar's mantle too. Look, is a swine more foul to behold? This is a canker and this a leprous sore. Are you not yourself revolted by the swelling and pus? The head of Lechery is a swan; the body a swine's. Let us also remove the cosmetics from the face. Here the flesh is decaying, and here the louse is eating its way in. Thus do the lilies of Lechery change into filth. Not yet enough! Pull off the rags; and what is now revealed? A corpse, a skeleton. Now behold Lechery's innermost dwelling: may she be shovelled into the knacker's pit!

tendency to complexity weighs less heavily on his linguistic genius, because those verbal flourishes, which seem strange in the stylistic temple of tragedy, are quite in keeping with the fantastic decorations of allegory.³ And just as it is manifest in the word, so too is the allegorical manifest in the figural and the scenic. The high point is reached in the interludes, with their personified attributes, incarnations of the virtues and vices, without in any way being confined to them. For it is illuminating that a series of types such as is formed by king, courtier, and fool, has an allegorical significance. Here the divinations of Novalis are again correct: 'Scenes which are genuinely visual are the only ones which belong in the theatre. Allegorical characters, these are what people mostly see. Children are hopes, young girls are wishes and requests.'⁴ With great insight this suggests connections between spectacle proper and allegory. In the baroque, of course, their figures were different and – in a Christian and courtly respect – more precisely defined than Novalis depicts them. The allegorical character of the figures is betrayed in the infrequency and the hesitancy with which the plot refers to their particular morality. In *Leo Armenius* it is left completely unclear whether he whom Balbus strikes is guilty or innocent. It is enough that he is the king. Nor is there any other way of explaining the fact that practically any character can find a place in the *tableau vivant* of an allegorical apotheosis. 'Virtue' extols Masinissa,⁵ a pitiful rogue. Never did the German *Trauerspiel* succeed in distributing the person's characteristics so secretly in the thousand folds of allegorical drapery, after the manner of Calderón. Nor was it any more successful in the re-interpretation of the allegorical figure in unique new roles, after the manner of Shakespeare. 'Certain of Shakespeare's figures possess the physiognomic features of the morality-play allegory; but this is only recognizable to the practised eye; as far as these features are concerned, they move, as it were, in the allegorical cloak of invisibility. Such figures are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.'⁶ Because of its obsession with earnestness the German *Trauerspiel* never mastered the art of using allegory inconspicuously. Only comedy accorded the allegorical the rights of citizenship in the secular drama; but when comedy moves in seriously, then the consequences are unexpectedly fatal.

The growing significance of the interlude, which, in Gryphius' middle period, already occupies the place of the chorus before the dramatic catastrophe,⁷ coincides with the increasing obtrusiveness of its display of allegorical pomp. It reaches its high point in the work of Hallmann. 'Just as the structural, logical meaning is obscured by the ornamental aspect of speech . . . which becomes mannered to the point of catachresis, so . . . too is the dramatic structure concealed by the ornamental tendency, which is borrowed from the style of the speech, and which takes the form, in the interludes, of staged *exemplum*, staged antithesis, and staged metaphor.'⁸ These interludes are recognizably the consequences of that allegorical approach which has been discussed above. Whether, following the example of the Jesuit didactic drama, an allegorical, *spiritualiter* relevant *exemplum* is extracted from ancient history (in Hallmann: the Dido chorus from *Adonis und Rosibella*, the Callisto-chorus from *Catharina*⁹), whether, as Lohenstein prefers, the choruses expound an edifying psychology of the passions, or whether, as in Gryphius, religious reflection is dominant, it is more or less true that in all of these types the dramatic incident is not conceived as an isolated catastrophe, but rather as one that is necessary by nature and inherent in the way of the world. But even in its functional use allegory is not associated with the climax of the dramatic action, but it is an extended explanatory interlude. The acts do not follow rapidly from each other, but they are built up in the manner of terraces. The structure of the drama is such that there are several broad layers whose chronological perspective is identical, and the level represented by the interlude became the site for a display of expressive statuary. 'The mention of an *exemplum* in words is accompanied by a scenic representation of it as a *tableau vivant* (*Adonis*); three, four, even as many as seven such *exempla* can be seen on stage together (*Adonis*). The rhetorical apostrophe, "Look how . . ." underwent the same transformation into scenic terms in the prophetic speeches of spirits.¹⁰ With all the power at its disposal the will to allegory makes use of the 'dumb show' to bring back the fading word, in order to make it accessible to the unimaginative visual faculty. The tendency to achieve a balance, so to speak, between the atmosphere of the dramatic character's visionary

perception and that of the spectator's profane perception – a theatrical gamble which even Shakespeare seldom risks – can be seen all the more clearly, the more unsuccessful these lesser masters were. The visionary description of the *tableau vivant* is one of the triumphs of baroque vigour and baroque antitheticism. 'Action and chorus are separate worlds, they are as different as dream and reality'.¹¹ 'The dramatic technique of Andreas Gryphius produces a clear distinction in action and chorus between the real world of objects and events and an ideal world of causes and meanings.'¹² If it is permissible to treat these two statements as premises, it is not far to the conclusion that the world which becomes perceptible in the chorus is the world of dreams, and of meaning. The melancholic possesses an intimate awareness of the unity of these two worlds. But the radical distinction between action and interlude also vanishes before the gaze of its chosen spectator. Here and there the connection is revealed in the dramatic action itself. When, for instance, in the chorus Agrippina finds herself rescued by mermaids. And, characteristically, nowhere more beautifully and more emphatically than in the person of a sleeper, the Emperor Bassian, in the intermezzo which follows the fourth act of *Papinian*. During his slumber a chorus enacts its significant play. 'Der Käyser erwachet und gehet traurig ab.'^{13*} 'It would be idle to ask how the poet, for whom ghosts were a reality, conceived of the combination of them with allegories', observes Steinberg unjustly.¹⁴ Ghosts, like the profoundly significant allegories, are manifestations from the realm of mourning; they have an affinity for mourners, for those who ponder over signs and over the future. The explanation for the strange appearance of the spirits of the living is not quite so clear. In the first chorus of Lohenstein's *Trauerspiel* 'die Seele der Sophonisbe'† confronts her passions,¹⁵ while in Hallmann's scenario *Liberata*,¹⁶ and in *Adonis und Rosibella*,¹⁷ it is only a question of a ghostly disguise. If Gryphius has a spirit appear in the form of Olympia,¹⁸ this is a new twist. This is not, of course, the utter 'nonsense'¹⁹ which Kerckhoffs says it is; it is rather a remarkable testimony to the fanaticism with which even the absolutely singular, the individual character, is multiplied in the allegorical. There is

* The emperor awakes and makes a mournful exit.

† the soul of Sophonisbe

perhaps a case of much more bizarre allegorization in a stage direction which occurs in Hallmann's *Sophia*: when, as one must suppose, it is not two dead people but two incarnations of death, which as 'zwey Todte mit Pfeilen . . . ein höchst trauriges Ballet nebst untergemischten grausamen Geberden gegen die Sophie tanzen'.^{20*} This sort of thing resembles certain emblematic illustrations. The *Emblemata selectiora*, for instance, contain a plate²¹ which shows a rose simultaneously half in bloom and half faded, and the sun rising and setting in the same landscape. 'The essence of the baroque lies in the simultaneity of its actions',²² writes Hausenstein rather crudely, but with some awareness. For where it is a question of a realization in terms of space – and what else is meant by its secularization other than its transformation into the strictly present – then the most radical procedure is to make events simultaneous. The duality of meaning and reality was reflected in the construction of the stage. The use of the drop-scene permitted the alternation between actions on the forestage and scenes which extended to the full depth of the stage. And 'the splendour that was uninhibitedly displayed could . . . only properly be displayed on the rear part of the stage'.²³ Since it was not feasible to bring about a resolution of the situation without the apotheosis of the finale, the complexities of plot could only be woven in the restricted area of the forestage; the solution took place in allegorical fullness. The same duality runs through the tectonic structure of the whole. It has already been suggested that the classicistic framework stands in contrast to the style of expression employed in these dramas. Hausenstein has observed something similar, and asserts that whereas the external structure of palace and house, and to some extent even church, are mathematically determined, the style of the interior is the province of uncontrolled imagination.²⁴ If indeed surprise, even complexity, has any meaning in the structure of these dramas, and should be emphasized by contrast to a classicistic transparency of plot, then exoticism in the choice of subject-matter is also not foreign to it. The *Trauerspiel* gives more emphatic encouragement to the invention of the literary plot than tragedy. And if reference should be made here to the *bürgerliches Trauerspiel*, then one might well

* two deaths with arrows . . . dance an extremely mournful ballet, mingled with cruel gestures at Sophia

wish to go so far as to recall the original title of Klinger's *Sturm und Drang*. *Der Wirrwarr* is the title the dramatist gave to his play. Complexity was what the baroque *Trauerspiel* sought with its vicissitudes and intrigues. And it is precisely here that it becomes palpably clear how allegory is related to it. The meaning of its action is expressed in a complicated configuration like letters in a monogram. Birken calls one kind of *Singspiel* (musical drama) a ballet, 'Thereby implying that the disposition of the figures and the external splendour are what is most essential. Such a ballet is nothing more than an allegorical picture executed with living figures, and with changes of scene. The spoken word makes no pretence to be dialogue; it is only a commentary on the images, spoken by the images themselves.'²⁵

So long as they are not imposed too rigidly these explanations are relevant to the *Trauerspiel*. That this form is concerned with the display of allegorical types is clear from the custom of the double title alone. It would be well worth investigating why it is that only Lohenstein makes no use of it. One of the titles always refers to the subject matter, the other to its allegorical content. Following mediaeval linguistic practice the allegorical form is shown triumphant. The summary of the content of *Cardenio und Celinde* contains the following statement: 'Wie nun Catharine den sieg der heiligen liebe über den tod vorhin gewiesen, so zeigen diese den triumph oder das sieges-gepränge des todes über die irdische liebe'.^{26*} Hallmann says of *Adonis und Rosibella*: 'Der Hauptzweck dieses Hirtenspieles Adonis und Rosibella, ist die Sinnreiche und über den Todt triumphierende Liebe.'^{27†} 'Obsiegende Tugend' [Virtue triumphant] is the sub-title of Haugwitz's *Soliman*. The modern fashion for this form of expression came from Italy, where the *trionfi* were the dominant feature in the processions. The impressive translation of the

* Just as *Catharine* showed the victory of sacred love over death, so does this play show the triumph or victory parade of death over profane love.

† The main aim of this pastoral play is to show the significance of love and its triumph over death.

Trionfi which was published in Köthen in 1643 may have been influential in promoting the influence of this model. Italy, the home of emblematics, has always led the way in such matters. Or, as Hallmann puts it: 'Die Italiäner gleich wie sie in allen Erfindungen excelliren: also haben sie nichts weniger in Emblematischer Entschattung [der] Menschlichen Unglückseeligkeit . . . ihre Kunst erwiesen.'^{29*} It is not uncommon for speech in the dialogues to be no more than a caption, conjured up from allegorical constellations in which the figures are related to one another. In short: as its caption, the maxim declares the stage-setting to be allegorical. The maxims can therefore quite properly be called 'schöne eingemengte Sprüche',^{30†} as Klai calls them in the preface to his Herod-drama. Certain instructions for their disposition, derived from Scaliger, are still current. 'Die Lehr- und Dancksprüche (scil: Denksprüche) sind gleichsam des Trauerspiels Grundseulen; Solche aber müssen nicht von Dienern und geringen Leuten / sondern von den fürnemsten und ältesten Personen angeführet . . . werden.'^{31‡} Not only emblematic utterances,³² but also entire speeches sound as if they properly belong beneath an allegorical engraving. For instance the hero's opening lines in *Papinian*. 'Wer über alle steigt und von der stolzen höh | Der reichen ehre schaut, wie schlecht der pövel geh, | Wie unter ihm ein reich in lichten flammen krache, | Wie dort der wellen schaum sich in die felder mache | Und hier der himmel zorn, mit blitz und knall vermischt, | In thürm und tempel fahr, und was die nacht erfrischt, | Der heisse tag verbrenn, und seine sieges-zeichen | Sieht hier und dar verschränckt mit viel mahl tausend leichen, | Hat wol (ich geb es nach) viel über die gemein. | Ach! aber ach! wie leicht nimmt ihn der schwindel ein.'^{33§} The maxim has the

* Just as they excell in all inventions, so have the Italians equally demonstrated their skill . . . in the allegorical adumbration of human misfortune.

† beautiful, interspersed apophthegms

‡ The maxims and apophthegms are, so to speak, the basic pillars of the *Trauerspiel*; they must not, however, be spoken by servants and lesser persons, but by the most noble and senior characters.

§ Whoever rises above everyone and from the lofty heights of rich honour sees how ill the common people fare, how, below him, an empire bursts into bright flames, how here the foam of the waves bursts into the fields, and there the anger of the heavens, with both thunder and lightning, strikes tower and temple, and what is refreshed by the night is scorched by hot day, and sees how his trophies go hand in hand with many thousands of corpses, he may (I admit) have many advantages over ordinary men. But, alas, how easily he falls prey to giddiness.

same function here as lighting in baroque painting: it is a flash of light in the entangling darkness of allegory. Once again there is a connection with an older form of expression. In his *Über die Kritische Behandlung der geistlichen Spiele* Wilken has compared the roles in such plays with the scrolls which 'in the old paintings are attached . . . to the images of the persons from whose mouths they come',³⁴ and this applies to many passages in the texts of *Trauerspiele*. Only twenty-five years ago R. M. Meyer could write: 'We find it disturbing when in the paintings of old masters the figures have scrolls hanging out of their mouths . . . and we find it almost horrifying that there was a time when every figure created by the hand of an artist had, so to speak, such a scroll in its mouth, which the observer was supposed to read like a letter, and then forget the bearer. However, we must not . . . overlook the fact that this almost childish conception of the detail was based on a magnificent overall idea.'³⁵ Of course an *ad hoc* critical consideration of this idea will not stop at offering a half-hearted palliative, but will also necessarily depart as far from any understanding of it as this writer does with the explanation that the approach is derived from the 'primitive period', when 'everything was endowed with life'. The situation is rather – and this will be shown – that, in comparison to the symbol, the western conception of allegory is a late manifestation which has its basis in certain very fertile cultural conflicts. The allegorical maxim is comparable to the scrolls. Or again, it can be described as a conventional sector or frame, into which the action, in constant variations, intermittently penetrates, to reveal itself therein as an emblematic subject. The *Trauerspiel* is therefore in no way characterized by immobility, nor indeed by slowness of action (Wysocki has remarked: 'immobility is encountered in place of movement'³⁶), but by the irregular rhythm of the constant pause, the sudden change of direction, and consolidation into new rigidity.

The greater the desire to emphasize the sententious quality of a line, the more lavishly the poet will decorate it with the names of objects which serve the emblematic description of what is meant. The stage-property, whose significance is implicit in the baroque *Trauerspiel* before it is made

explicit by courtesy of the drama of fate, is already stirring in the seventeenth century in the form of the emblematic metaphor. In a stylistic history of this period – such as Erich Schmidt planned but did not complete³⁷ – a substantial chapter would have to be given over to illustrations of this mannerism. In all of these examples the exuberant use of metaphor, the ‘exclusively sensuous character’³⁸ of the figures of speech, should be attributed to a penchant for an allegorical mode of expression, and not to an oft-cited ‘poetic sensuality’, because, in its refined form, the language of the time, including poetic language, avoids constant emphasis of its basically metaphorical character. But, on the other hand, it is just as wrong to see in this ‘fashionable’ linguistic mannerism ‘the principle of . . . divesting language of part of its sensuous character and making it more abstract, [such] as is always evident in endeavours to make language suitable for more cultivated social intercourse’;³⁹ indeed it is a misconceived application of a principle of the euphuistic language of the *Alamode* period to the ‘fashionable’ language of the great poetry of the earlier age. For the preciosity of the latter, as indeed of the baroque style in general, consists to a great extent in an extreme recourse to concrete words. And there is such a pronounced obsession with using these words on the one hand and, on the other, displaying elegant antitheses, that when an abstract word seems quite unavoidable, a concrete word is added to it with quite uncommon frequency, so that new words are invented. For instance: ‘Verleumdungs-Blitz’,⁴⁰ ‘Hoffahrts-Gift’,⁴¹ ‘Unschulds-Zedern’,^{42*} ‘Freundschafts-Blut’.⁴³ Or else: ‘So weil auch Mariamn’ als eine Natter beisst | Und mehr die Zwietrachts-Gall’ als Friedens-Zucker liebet.’^{44†} The counterpart to such an approach is triumphantly evident when the writer succeeds in significantly dividing a living entity into the *disiecta membra* of allegory, as Hallmann does in an image of court-life: ‘Es hat Theodoric auch auff dem Meer geschifft | Wo statt der Wellen / Eiss; des Saltzes / heimlich Gift | Der Ruder / Schwert und Beil; der Seegel / Spinneweben; | Der Ancker / falsches Bley / des

* the lightning of calumny, the poison of Vainglory, the cedars of innocence, the blood of friendship.

† Because Mariamne too bites like a viper and loves the gall of discord more than the sugar of peace.

Nachens Glass umgeben.’^{45*} Cysarz observes pertinently: ‘Every idea, however abstract, is compressed into an image, and this image, however concrete, is then stamped out in verbal form.’ None of the dramatists was more prone to this mannerism than Hallmann. It destroys the unity of his dialogues. For hardly has an argument begun, than it is immediately transformed by one or other of the speakers into a metaphor which keeps on being extended as it is subjected to greater or lesser variation in numerous exchanges. With the remark: ‘Der Tugenden Pallast kan Wollust nicht beziehn’, Sohemus deeply insults Herod; but he, far from punishing him, sinks straight into allegory: ‘Man siehet Eisenkraut bey edlen Rosen blühn.’^{46†} Thus it is that ideas evaporate in images.⁴⁷ Many a literary historian has given examples of the outlandish linguistic creations to which this writer was led in the search for conceits.⁴⁸ ‘Mund und Gemüthe stehn in einem Meineids-Kasten | Dem hitz’ger Eifer nun die Riegel loss gemacht.’^{49‡} ‘Seht / wie dem Pheroras das traur’ge Sterbekleid | Im Gifft-Glas wird gereicht.’^{50§} ‘Imfall die Warheit kan der Greuel-That erhell’n | Dass Mariamns Mund unreine Milch gesogen | Aus Tyridatens Brust / so werde stracks vollzogen / | Was Gott und Recht befihlt / und Rath und König schleusst.’^{51¶} There are certain words, in Hallmann the word ‘comet’ in particular, which acquire a grotesque allegorical usage. In order to describe the dire events taking place in the palace in Jerusalem, Antipater remarks that ‘die Cometen sich in Salems Schloss begatten’.^{52||} Occasionally the imagery seems almost to get out of control, and the poetry to degenerate into flights of ideas. A prime example of this is provided by Hallmann: ‘Die Frauen-List: Wenn meine Schlang’ in edlen Rosen lieget / | Und Züngelnd saugt

* Theodoric too has embarked on that sea where his fragile boat is surrounded by ice instead of waves, secret poison instead of salt, sword and axe instead of oars, spider’s webs instead of sails, perfidious lead instead of an anchor.

† Lechery cannot occupy the palace of virtue. . . . Ironwort blossoms beside noble roses.

‡ Mouth and mind are contained in one perjury-chest of which feverish zeal is now loosing the bolts.

§ Look how Pheroras is offered his mournful death-robe in the glass of poison.

¶ If truth can reveal the horrible deed of Mariamne in sucking impure milk from the breast of Tyridates, then what God and justice command, and council and king conclude will straightway be done.

|| The comets are copulating in the castle of Salem.

den Weissheits-vollen Safft / | Wird Simson auch von Delilen besieget / |
 Und schnell beraubt der überird'schen Krafft: | Hat Joseph gleich der
 Juno Fahn getragen / | Herodes ihn geküsst auff seinem Wagen / | So
 schaut doch / wie ein Molch [Dolch?] diss Karten-Blat zerritzt / | Weil
 ihm sein Eh-Schatz selbst durch List die Bahre schnitzt.^{53*} In *Maria
 Stuarda* by Haugwitz a lady-in-waiting to the queen says of God: 'Er
 treibt die See von unsern Hertzen / | Dass derer Wellen stolzer Guss | Uns
 oft erziehet heisse Schmetzen / | Doch ist es nur der Wunder-Fluss / |
 Durch dessen unbegreiflichs regen / | Sich unsers Unglücks Kranckheit
 legen.'^{54†} This is every bit as obscure and allusive as the psalms of
 Quirinus Kuhlmann. The rationalist criticism which has proscribed
 these poems, begins with a polemic against their linguistic allegories.
 'What a hieroglyphic and enigmatic obscurity casts its shadow over the
 entire expression',⁵⁵ observes Breiting, about a passage from Lohen-
 stein's *Cleopatra*, in his *Critische Abhandlung von der Natur, den Absichten
 und dem Gebrauche der Gleichnisse*; while Bodmer reproaches Hofmanns-
 waldau in the same spirit: 'He wraps up the concepts in similes and figures
 of speech as in a prison'.⁵⁷

This poetry was in fact incapable of releasing in inspired song the pro-
 found meaning which was here confined to the verbal image. Its language
 was heavy with material display. Never has poetry been less winged. The
 re-interpretation of ancient tragedy is no less strange than the new
 hymnic form which represented an attempt to equal the flights of Pindar –
 however obscure and baroque these may have been. The baroque
Trauerspiel is not – as Baader says – endowed with the ability to make its

* Woman's cunning: When my serpent lies in noble roses and, hissing, sucks in the sap
 of wisdom, Samson is vanquished by Delilah and quickly robbed of his supernatural
 strength: if Joseph has carried the banner of Juno and Herod has kissed him in his chariot,
 then look yet how a salamander [dagger?] tears up this card, because his marriage treasure
 herself cunningly carves the bier.

† He stirs up the sea of our hearts so that the proud surge of its waves often causes us hot
 pains, but this is only the miraculous tide through whose strange movement our sickness and
 misfortune abate.

hieroglyphic element public. For its writing does not achieve transcen-
 dence by being voiced; rather does the world of written language remain
 self-sufficient and intent on the display of its own substance. Written
 language and sound confront each other in tense polarity. The relation-
 ship between them gives rise to a dialectic, in the light of which 'bombast'
 is justified as a consistently purposeful and constructive linguistic
 gesture. This view of the matter, one of the happiest and most fruitful,
 veritably falls into the lap of anyone who approaches the sources in a
 receptive frame of mind. Only when the power of reasoned enquiry was
 overcome by dizziness at the profundity of the abyss before it, could
 bombast become the bogey of epigonal stylistics. The division between
 signifying written language and intoxicating spoken language opens up a
 gulf in the solid massif of verbal meaning and forces the gaze into the
 depths of language. And although philosophical reflection on this subject
 was unknown to the baroque, the writings of Böhme provide a number of
 clear leads. Where he speaks of language Jacob Böhme, one of the greatest
 allegorists, upholds the value of sound over silent profundity. He
 developed the doctrine of the 'sensual' or natural language. This latter is
 not (and this is decisive) the emergence of the allegorical world into
 sound, for this remains confined to silence. 'Word-baroque' and 'image-
 baroque' – as Cysarz has only recently called these forms of expression –
 are rooted in each other as polar opposites. In the baroque the tension
 between the spoken and the written word is immeasurable. The spoken
 word, it might be said, is the ecstasy of the creature, it is exposure, rash-
 ness, powerlessness before God; the written word is the composure of the
 creature, dignity, superiority, omnipotence over the objects of the world.
 This, at least, is the case in the *Trauerspiel*, whereas in Böhme's more
 gentle outlook there is room for a more positive image of spoken language.
 'Das ewige Wort oder Göttliche Hall oder Stimme / welche ein Geist ist /
 das hat sich in Formungen als in ein aussgesprochen Wort oder Hall mit
 der Gebährung des grossen Mysterii eingeführet / und wie das Freuden-
 spiel im Geiste der ewigen Gebährung in sich selber ist / also ist auch der
 Werckzeug / als die aussgesprochene Form in sich selber / welches der
 lebendige Hall führet / und mit seinem eigenen ewigen Willen-geist
 schläget / dass es lautet und hallet / gleich wie eine Orgel von vielen

Stimmen mit einer einigen Luft getrieben wird / dass eine jede Stimme / ja eine jede Pfeiffe ihren Thon gibt.^{57*} 'Alles was von GOtt geredet / geschrieben oder gelehret wird / ohne die Erkännüss der Signatur, das ist stumm und ohne Verstand / dann es kommt nur aus einem historischen Wahn / von einem andern Mund / daran der Geist ohne Erkännüss stumm ist: So ihm aber der Geist die Signatur eröffnet / so versteht er des andern Mund / und versteht ferner / wie sich der Geist . . . im Hall mit der Stimme hat offenbahret . . . Dann an der äusserlichen Gestaltnüss aller Creaturen / an ihrem Trieb und Begierde / item, an ihrem ausgehenden Hall / Stimm oder Sprache / kennet man den verborgenen Geist . . . Ein jedes Ding hat seinen Mund zur Offenbahung. Und das ist die Natur-sprache / daraus jedes Ding aus seiner Eigenschafft redet / und sich immer selber offenbahret.'^{58†} Spoken language is thus the domain of the free, spontaneous utterance of the creature, whereas the written language of allegory enslaves objects in the eccentric embrace of meaning. This language, for Böhme the language of the blessed creature, in the verse of the *Trauerspiel* the language of the fallen creature, is accounted natural not only by virtue of its expression, but rather by its very origin. 'Von den Wörtern ist diese alte Streitfrage / ob dieselbige [sic] / als äusserliche Anzeigen unsers inwendigen Sinnbegriffs / weren von Natur oder Chur / natürlich oder willkürlich / φύσει oder θέσει. Und wird von den Gelahrten / was die Wörter in den Hauptsprachen

* The Eternal Word, or Divine Sound or Voice, which is a Spirit, has introduced itself with the Generation of the great Mystery into Formings, viz. into an expressed Word or Sound: And as the joyful Melody is in itself in the Spirit of the eternal Generation, so likewise is the Instrument, viz. the expressed Form in itself, which the living Eternal Voice guides, and strikes with his own Eternal Will-Spirit, that it sounds and melodizes; as an Organ of divers and various Sounds or Notes is moved with one only Air, so that each Note, yea every Pipe has its peculiar Tune.

† All whatever is spoken, written, or taught of God, without the Knowledge of the Signature is dumb and void of Understanding; for it proceeds only from an historical Conjecture, from the Mouth of another, wherein the Spirit without Knowledge is dumb; but if the Spirit opens to him the *Signature*, then he understands the Speech of another; and further he understands how the Spirit has manifested and revealed itself . . . in the Sound with the Voice . . . For by the external Form of all Creatures, by their Instigation, Inclination and Desire, also by their Sound, Voice and Speech which they utter, the hidden Spirit is known . . . Every Thing has its Mouth to Manifestation; and this is the Language of Nature, whence every Thing speaks out of its Property, and continually manifests itself.

betrifft / dieses einer sonderbaren natürlichen Wirkung zugeschrieben.'^{59*} Naturally enough the first place among the 'major languages' was occupied by the 'deutsche Haupt- und Heldensprache' [German chief and heroic language]—an expression which first occurs in Fischart's *Geschichtsklitterung* of 1575. The theory that it was directly descended from Hebrew was widespread, and it was not the most radical theory. There were others which actually traced Hebrew, Greek, and Latin back to German. According to Borinski, 'in Germany it was proved historically, from the Bible, that the whole world, including classical antiquity, was originally German'.⁶⁰ And so, on the one hand, attempts were made to lay claim to the most remote cultural materials, and on the other hand, the aim was to conceal the artificiality of this attitude in an extreme foreshortening of the historical perspective. Everything is placed in the same rarified atmosphere. As for the complete assimilation of all oral manifestations to a single primeval linguistic state, this sometimes took a spiritualist, sometimes a naturalist direction. The extremes are represented by the theory of Böhme and the practice of the Nuremberg school. Scaliger provided a starting-point for both, but only in the sense of a subject. The passage of the *Poetics* in question sounds remarkable enough. 'In A, latitudo. In I, longitudo. In E, profunditas. In O, coarctatio . . . Multum potest ad animi suspensionem, quae in Voto, in Religione: praesertim cum producitur, vt dij. etiam cum corripitur: Pij. Et ad tractum omnen denique designandum, Littora, Lites, Lituus, It, Ira, Mitis, Diues, Ciere, Dicere, Diripiunt . . . Dij, Pij, Iit: non sine manifestissima spiritus profectio. Lituus non sine soni, quem significat, similitudine . . . P, tamen quandam quaerit firmitatem. Agnosco enim in Piget, pudet, poenitet, pax, pugna, pes, paruus, pono, pauor, piger, aliquam fictionem. Parce metu, constantiam quandam insinuat. Et Pastor plenius, quam Castor. sic Plenum ipsum, et Purum, Posco, et alia eiusmodi. T, vero plurimum sese ostentat: Est enim litera sonitus explicatrix, fit namque sonus aut per S, aut per R, aut per T. Tuba, tonitru, tundo. Sed in fine

* There is a long-standing controversy about words: whether, as external indications of our inner sense of meaning, they derive from nature or nurture, necessarily or arbitrarily, φύσει or θέσει: and as far as the words of the major languages are concerned, do scholars ascribe this to a particular natural effect.

tametsi maximam verborum claudit apud Latinos partem, tamen in iis, quae sonum afferunt, affert ipsum quoque soni non minus. Rupit enim plus rumpit, quam Rumpo.^{61*} Analogously, but clearly independently of Scaliger, Böhme pursued his own speculations on speech. He thinks of the language of creatures 'not as a realm of words but . . . as something resolved into its sounds and noises'.⁶² 'In his view A was the first letter which forces its way from the heart, I the centre of the highest love, R possessed the character of the source of fire because it "schnarrt, prasselt und rasselt" [rasps, crackles, and rattles], and S was sacred fire.'⁶³ It can be assumed that the obviousness which such descriptions then possessed partly derived from the vitality of the dialects which still flourished universally. For the attempts of the linguistic societies to standardize the language were confined to written German. On the other hand creaturely language was naturalistically described as an onomatopoeic structure. A typical example is provided by the poetics of Buchner, which only carry through the opinions of his teacher Opitz.⁶⁴ It is true that, according to Buchner himself, genuine onomatopoeia is not permissible in the

* The letter A has a suggestion of breadth about it, the letter I suggests length, while about the letter E there is a hint of depth. The letter O indicates a certain degree of concentration . . . The vowel combination figuring in the word 'voto' and in the word 'religione' contributes in an abundant manner to a heightening of the sensibilities. This is especially true of a word which is dragged out, like 'dii',† but is no less true of a word uttered rapidly, like 'pii'. Finally, to indicate every sort of lengthening taking place within a word, there are words like 'Littora, Lites, Lituus, It, Ira, Mitis, Dives, Ciere, Dicere, Diripiunt . . . Dii, Pii, Iit', all of them words which cannot be spoken without a marked exhalation of breath. The word 'Lituus' carries a sound not unlike the thing it signifies . . . The letter P, however, is lacking, to some degree, in firmness. For in words like 'piget, pudet, poenitet, pax, pugna, pes, paruus, pono, pavor' and 'piger' I recognize a certain onomatopoeic quality. The word 'parce', however, through fear does succeed in introducing an element of toughness. And 'pastor' exhibits this firmness much more than the word 'Castor'. The same is true of the word 'plenum' and 'purum, posco' and other examples of this kind. But the letter T is that letter which makes its mark most of all. For it is a letter which seems to proclaim its own sound. You could say that a very definite kind of sound is produced by the letter S, or R or T. 'Tuba, tonitru' and 'tundo' are examples in which the last letter figures. But in the last analysis, even though it ends the majority of Latin verbs, nevertheless, in the case of those verbs which are onomatopoeic, whatever their inflexions, the addition of the letter T contributes its own special kind of sound. Thus the word 'rupit' has within it a greater sense of 'breaking' than the word 'rumpo'.

† N.B. The word 'dii' is a biform of the word 'di', and thus is 'dragged out' in pronunciation in a way in which the word 'pii' is not. *Translator's note.*

Trauerspiel.⁶⁵ But is not pathos to some extent the regal natural sound of the *Trauerspiel*? The Nuremberg school goes furthest here. Klajus declares: 'there is no word in the German language which does not express its meaning in a "sonderliches Gleichniss"'.^{66*} Harsdörffer inverts the statement. 'Die Natur redet in allen Dingen / welche ein Getön von sich geben / unsere Teutsche Sprache / und daher haben etliche wännen wollen / der erste Mensch Adam habe das Geflügel und alle Thier auf Erden nicht anderst als mit unseren Worten nennen können / weil er jedes eingeborne selbstlautende Eigenschaft Naturmässig ausgedrucket; und ist sich deswegen nicht zu verwundern / dass unsere Stammwörter meinsten Theils mit der heiligen Sprache gleichstimmig sind.'⁶⁷† He deduced from this that the task of German lyric poetry was 'to grasp the language of nature, so to speak, in words and rhythms. For him as for Birken such lyric poetry was actually required by religion, because it is God who is revealed in the rustling of the forests . . . and the roar of the storm.'⁶⁸ Something similar is again evident in the *Sturm und Drang*. 'Tears and sighs are the common language of the nations; I can understand even the helpless Hottentots, and will not be dumb before God, although I am from Tarent! . . . Dust possesses will-power, that is the sublimest thought I have for the creator, and I value the all-powerful impulse to freedom even in the struggling fly.'⁶⁹ This is the philosophy of the creature and its language, removed from the context of allegory.

The explanation of the status of the alexandrine as the verse-form of the baroque *Trauerspiel*, with reference to that strict division into two halves which frequently leads to antithesis, is not an entirely satisfactory one.

*peculiar analogy.

† In all things which utter sounds, nature speaks in the German language, and so some have wished to presume that Adam, the first man, cannot but have used our words to name the fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth, because he expressed every original, self-sounding property in a natural way; and it is therefore not surprising that our root-words are for the most part similar in sound to those of the holy language.

Every bit as characteristic of this verse is the contrast between the logical – if one will, the classicistic – structure of the façade, and the phonetic violence within. For, in the words of Omeis, the 'tragische *Stilus* . . . [ist] mit prächtigen, langtönenden Wörtern angefüllt'.^{70*} If, in the fact of the colossal proportions of baroque architecture and baroque painting, it has been permissible to emphasize the 'tendency to simulate the occupation of space'⁷¹ that is common to both, then the language of the *Trauerspiel*, which expands in painterly fashion in the alexandrine, has the same function. The sententious maxim – even if the action with which it deals becomes quite static – must at least give the impression of movement; this made pathos a technical necessity. The violence which is a characteristic of maxims, as indeed of all verse, is made clearly visible by Harsdörffer. 'Warum solche Spiele meistens in gebundner Rede geschrieben werden? Antwort: weil die Gemüter eifrigst sollen bewegt werden / ist zu den Trauer- und Hirtenspielen das Reimgebäude bräuchlich / welches gleich einer Trompeten die Wort / und Stimme einzwunget / dass sie so viel grössern Nachdruck haben.'^{72†} And since the maxim, which often adheres involuntarily to the stock imagery, is prone to push thought along in well-worn grooves, the phonetic aspect is all the more noteworthy. It was inevitable that, in its treatment of the alexandrine, stylistic criticism also fell into the general error of the older school of philology in accepting the ancient stimuli to, or pretexts for, its formation as evidence of its real essence. Although very perceptive in its first part, the following comment from Richter's study, *Liebeskampf 1630 und Schaubühne 1670*, is typical: 'The special artistic merit of the great dramatists of the seventeenth century is closely connected with the creative distinction of their verbal style. It is not so much by its characterization or its composition . . . as by what it achieves with rhetorical artistic means, which in the last analysis are always derived from antiquity, that the high tragedy of the seventeenth century affirms its unique stature. But not only

did the image-packed concentration and taut structure of the periods and stylistic figures create difficulties for the actors who had to memorize them, they were so deeply rooted in the completely heterogeneous formal world of antiquity that their remoteness from the language of the people was infinite . . . It is a matter for regret that we . . . possess no evidence as to what the average man made of it.'⁷³ Even if the language of these dramas had been exclusively a matter for scholars, the uneducated would still have derived enjoyment from the element of spectacle. But the bombast corresponded to the expressive impulses of the age, and these impulses are usually immeasurably stronger than the intellectual interest in the transparent details of plot. The Jesuits, who had a masterly understanding of the public, could scarcely have had, at their performances, an audience consisting entirely of people who understood Latin.⁷⁴ They probably felt convinced of the ancient truth that the authority of a statement depends so little on its comprehensibility that it can actually be increased by obscurity.

The practices of these writers combine with the principles of their linguistic theories to bring out a basic motif of the allegorical approach in a most surprising place. In the anagrams, the onomatopoeic phrases, and many other examples of linguistic virtuosity, word, syllable, and sound are emancipated from any context of traditional meaning and are flaunted as objects which can be exploited for allegorical purposes. The language of the baroque is constantly convulsed by rebellion on the part of the elements which make it up. It is only in its greater plasticity, which derives from its greater artistry, that the following passage from the Herod-drama of Calderón is superior to similar passages, particularly in Gryphius. By chance, Mariamne, the wife of Herod, catches sight of the fragments of a letter in which her husband orders that, in the event of his own death, she should be killed in order to preserve his supposedly threatened honour. She picks up these fragments from the ground and gives an account of their content in extremely evocative lines. 'What do they contain? | Death is the very first word | which I encounter; here is

* the tragic style is full of grand, resonant words.

† Why are such plays usually written in metrical language? Answer: because the feelings must be most keenly moved, *Trauerspiele* and pastoral plays are best served by the system of rhyming, which compresses words and voice like a trumpet so that they have a much greater emphasis.

the word honour, | And there I see Mariamne. | What does this mean? Heaven help me! | For much is said in the three words | Mariamne, death, and honour. | Here it says: secretly; here: | dignity; here: commands; and here: ambition; | And here, it continues: if I die. | But what doubt can there be? I am already informed | By the folds of the paper, | Which are related | to the crime they enfold. | O field, on your green carpet | Let me piece them together!⁷⁵ Even in their isolation the words reveal themselves as fateful. Indeed, one is tempted to say that the very fact that they still have a meaning in their isolation lends a threatening quality to this remnant of meaning they have kept. In this way language is broken up so as to acquire a changed and intensified meaning in its fragments. With the baroque the place of the capital letter was established in German orthography. It is not only the aspiration to pomp, but at the same time the disjunctive, atomizing principle of the allegorical approach which is asserted here. Without any doubt many of the words written with an initial capital at first acquired for the reader an element of the allegorical. In its individual parts fragmented language has ceased merely to serve the process of communication, and as a new-born object acquires a dignity equal to that of gods, rivers, virtues and similar natural forms which fuse into the allegorical. As has already been said, the work of the young Gryphius provides particularly extreme examples of this. And if it is not possible, either here or elsewhere in German literature, to find a counterpart to the incomparable passage from Calderón, the vigour of Andreas Gryphius is, in comparison with the refinement of the Spaniard, by no means to be despised. For he possesses a quite astonishing mastery of the art of allowing characters to answer each other in debate with, so to speak, independent fragments of speech. In the second act of *Leo Armenius*, for instance. 'Leo: Diss hauss wird stehn, dafern des hauses feinde fallen. | Theodosia: Wo nicht ihr fall verletzt, die dieses hauss umwallen. | Leo: Umwallen mit den schwerdt. Theodosia: Mit dem sie uns beschützt. | Leo: Das sie auf uns gezuckt. Theodosia: Die unsern stuhl gestützt.'^{76*}

* Leo: This house will stand if the enemies of the house fall. Theodosia: If their fall does not harm those who ring round this house. Leo: Ring it round with the sword. Theodosia: With which they have defended us. Leo: With which they have threatened us. Theodosia: Who have supported our throne.

When the exchanges become angry and violent there is an evident preference for accumulations of fragmentary passages of dialogue. They are more numerous in Gryphius than in the later writers,⁷⁷ and, along with the abrupt laconisms, they fit very well into the overall stylistic fabric of his dramas: for both produce an impression of the fragmentary and chaotic. However useful this technique of presentation is for the creation of theatrical excitement, it is by no means dependent on the dramatic genre. In the following utterance from the work of Schiebel it is a consciously pastoral device: 'Noch heutiges Tages bekommt manchmal ein andächtiger Christ ein Tröpflein Trostes / (auch wohl ein Wörtgen nur / aus einem geistreichen Liede oder erbaulichen Predigt /) das schlingt er (gleichsam) so appetitlich hinunter / dass es ihm wohl gedeyet / inniglich afficiret / und dermassen erquicket / dass er bekennen muss / es stecke was Göttliches darunter.'^{78*} It is no accident that, in such a figurative turn of speech, the reception of words is, as it were, attributed to the sense of taste. For the baroque sound is and remains something purely sensuous; meaning has its home in written language. And the spoken word is only afflicted by meaning, so to speak, as if by an inescapable disease; it breaks off in the middle of the process of resounding, and the damming up of the feeling, which was ready to pour forth, provokes mourning. Here meaning is encountered, and will continue to be encountered as the reason for mournfulness. The antithesis of sound and meaning could not but be at its most intense where both could be successfully combined in *one*, without their actually cohering in the sense of forming an organic linguistic structure. This task, a deducible one, is accomplished in a scene which stands out as a masterpiece in an otherwise uninteresting Viennese *Haupt- und Staatsaktion*. In *Die Glorreiche Marter Joannes von Nepomuck* the fourteenth scene of the first act shows one of the intriguers (Zytho) acting as an echo to the mythological speeches of his victim (Quido), and answering them with ominous intimations.⁷⁹ The conversion of the pure sound of [creaturely language] into the richly significant irony which re-

* Even today a devout Christian sometimes receives a crumb of comfort (be it only a word from an intelligent song or an edifying sermon), and this he swallows (as it were) so hungrily that it does him good, inwardly stirs him and refreshes him so much that he has to confess that it contains something divine.

echoes from the mouth of the intriguer, is highly indicative of the relationship of this character to language. The intriguer is the master of meanings. In the harmless effusion of an onomatopoeic natural language they are the obstacle, and so the origin of a mourning for which the intriguer is responsible along with them. If the echo, the true domain of the free play of sound, is now, so to speak, taken over by meaning, then it must prove to be entirely a manifestation of the linguistic, as the age understood it. And a form was indeed provided for it. 'The echo, which repeats the last two or three syllables of a strophe, often omitting a letter so that it sounds like an answer, a warning, or a prophecy, is something very "pleasing" and very popular.' This game, like other similar ones, which were so readily taken for foolish trifles, brings us to the heart of the matter. In them the linguistic attitude of bombast is so far from being denied that they could very well serve as illustrations of its formula. Language which, on the one hand, seeks, in the fullness of sound, to assert its creaturely rights, is, on the other hand, in the pattern of the alexandrine, unremittingly bound to a forced logicity. This is the stylistic law of bombast, the formula for the 'Asiatische Worte'^{80*} of the *Trauerspiel*. The gesture, which thereby seeks to incorporate meaning, is of a piece with the violent distortion of history. In language, as in life, to adopt only the typical movement of the creature and yet to express the whole of the cultural world from antiquity to Christian Europe – such is the remarkable mental attitude which is never renounced even in the *Trauerspiel*. The enormous artificiality of its mode of expression thus has its roots in that same extreme yearning for nature as the pastoral plays. On the other hand, this very mode of expression, which only represents – that is to say represents the nature of language – and as far as possible avoids profane communication, is courtly and refined. One cannot perhaps speak of a genuine transcendence of the baroque, a reconciliation of sound and meaning, before Klopstock, thanks to what A. W. Schlegel called the 'grammatical' tendency of his odes. His bombast depends much less on sound and image than on the arrangement of words, the word-order.

* Asiatic words

The phonetic tension in the language of the seventeenth century leads directly to music, the opposite of meaning-laden speech. Like all the other roots of the *Trauerspiel*, this one too is entwined with those of the pastoral. That which is initially present in the *Trauerspiel* as a dancing chorus, and with the passage of time tends increasingly to become a spoken, oratorical chorus, openly displays its operatic character in the pastoral play. The 'passion for the organic',⁸¹ which has long had a place in the discussion of the visual art of the baroque, is not so easy to describe in literary terms. And it must always be borne in mind that such words refer not so much to the external form as to the mysterious interiors of the organic. The voice emerges from out of these interiors and, properly speaking, its dominion extends in fact to what might be called an organic impulse in poetry, such as can be studied in the oratorio-like intermezzi, in the work of Hallmann especially. He writes: 'Palladius: Der zuckersüsse Tantz ist Göttern selbst geweiht! | Antonius: Der zuckersüsse Tantz verzuckert alles Leid! | Svetonius: Der zuckersüsse Tantz beweget Stein' und Eisen! | Julianus: Den zuckersüssen Tantz muss Plato selber preisen! | Septitius: Der zuckersüsse Tantz besieget alle Lust! | Honorius: Der zuckersüsse Tantz erquicket Seel' und Brust!'^{82*} On stylistic grounds it may be supposed that such passages were spoken in the chorus.⁸³ Flemming says the same with reference to Gryphius: 'Too much could not be expected of the subsidiary roles. He therefore gives them little to say, preferring to combine them in the chorus, and in so doing he achieves significant artistic effects which could never have been attained through naturalistic speech on the part of individuals. In this way the artist effectively turns the constraints of the material to artistic account.'⁸⁴ Here one should think of the judges, the conspirators, and the underlings in *Leo Armenius*, the courtiers of Catharina, the maidens of Julia. A further operatic impulse was the musical overture, which preceded the plays of both the Jesuits and the protestants. Nor do the choreographical interludes and the – in a deeper

* Palladius: The sugar-sweet dance is dedicated to the gods themselves! Antonius: The sugar-sweet dance sweetens all pain! Svetonius: The sugar-sweet dance moves stone and iron! Julianus: The sugar-sweet dance must Plato himself praise! Septitius: The sugar-sweet dance is victorious over all pleasure! Honorius: The sugar-sweet dance refreshes soul and breast!

sense – choreographical style of the intrigue run counter to this development which, at the end of the century brought about the dissolution of the *Trauerspiel* into opera. The related ideas which it is the purpose of these observations to call to mind have been developed by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. His concern was to make a proper distinction between Wagner's 'tragic' *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the frivolous opera, which had its preparatory stages in the baroque. He threw down the gauntlet with his condemnation of recitative. And in so doing he proclaimed his adherence to that form which so completely corresponded to the fashionable tendency to re-awaken the primal voice of all creatures. 'They could abandon themselves to the dream of having descended once more into the paradisiacal beginnings of mankind, where music also must have had that unsurpassed purity, power, and innocence of which the poets, in their pastoral plays, could give such touching accounts . . . The recitative was regarded as the rediscovered language of this primitive man; opera as the rediscovered country of this idyllically or heroically good creature, who simultaneously with every action follows a natural artistic impulse, who accomplishes his speech with a little singing, in order that he may immediately break forth into full song at the slightest emotional excitement . . . The man incapable of art creates for himself a kind of art precisely because he is the inartistic man as such. Because he does not sense the Dionysian depth of music, he changes his musical taste into an appreciation of the understandable word-and-tone-rhetoric of the passions in the *stilo rappresentivo*, and into the voluptuousness of the arts of the song. Because he is unable to behold a vision, he forces the machinist and the decorative artist into his service. Because he cannot comprehend the true nature of the artist, he conjures up the "artistic primitive man" to suit his taste, that is, the man who sings and recites verses under the influence of passion.'⁸⁵ Just as every comparison with tragedy – not to mention musical tragedy – is of no value for the understanding of opera, so it is that from the point of view of literature, and especially the *Trauerspiel*, opera must seem unmistakably to be a product of decadence. The obstacle of meaning and intrigue loses its weight, and both operatic plot and operatic language follow their course without encountering any resistance, issuing finally into banality. With the disappearance of the

obstacle the soul of the work, mourning, also disappears, and just as the dramatic structure is emptied, so too is the scenic structure, which looks elsewhere for its justification, now that allegory, where it is not omitted, has become a hollow façade.

The self-indulgent delight in sheer sound played its part in the decline of the *Trauerspiel*. Nonetheless, music – by virtue of its own essence rather than the favour of the authors – is something with which the allegorical drama is intimately familiar. This, at least, is the lesson to be derived from the musical philosophy of the romantic writers, who have an elective affinity with the baroque, and whose voice ought to be heeded here. This, and this alone, would, at least yield a synthesis of the antitheses deliberately opened up by the baroque, and only through it would the full justification of the antitheses be clear. Such a romantic approach to the *Trauerspiel* does at least raise the question of how far music has a more than functional, theatrical role in the work of Shakespeare and Calderón. For it surely does. And so the following account by the brilliant Johann Wilhelm Ritter may be presumed to open up a perspective, the penetration of which we must ourselves forego, for it would be irresponsible improvisation. It could only be accomplished by a fundamental discussion of language, music, and script. What follow are passages from a long and, if one may say so, monologue-like essay in which, perhaps almost involuntarily, in the course of a letter which the scholar is writing about Chladni's figures, ideas arise which embrace many things, either powerfully or more tentatively: 'It would be beautiful,' he remarks about those lines which form different patterns on a glass plate strewn with sand at the touch of different notes, 'if what became externally clear here were also exactly what the sound pattern is for us inwardly: a light pattern, fire-writing . . . Every sound would then have its own letter directly to hand . . . That inward connection of word and script – so powerful that we write when we speak . . . has long interested me. Tell me: how do we transform the thought, the idea, into the word; and do we ever have a thought or an idea without its hieroglyph, its letter, its script? Truly, it is so: but we do

not usually think of it. But once, when human nature was more powerful, it really was more extensively thought about; and this is proved by the existence of word and script. Their original, and absolute, simultaneity was rooted in the fact that the organ of speech itself writes in order to speak. The letter alone speaks, or rather: word and script are, at source, one, and neither is possible without the other . . . Every sound pattern is an electric pattern, and every electric pattern is a sound pattern.⁸⁶ 'My aim . . . was therefore to re-discover, or else to find the primeval or natural script by means of electricity.'⁸⁷ 'In reality the whole of creation is language, and so is literally created by the word, the created and creating word itself . . . But the letter is inextricably bound up with this word both in general and in particular.'⁸⁸ 'All the plastic arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, etc. belong pre-eminently among such script, and developments and derivations of it.'⁸⁹ With these comments the virtual romantic theory of allegory concludes, on a question as it were. Any answer would have to find a place for this divination of Ritter's among the concepts proper to it; it would have to bring oral and written language together, by whatever means possible, which can only mean identifying them dialectically as thesis and antithesis; to secure for music, the antithetical mediating link, and the last remaining universal language since the tower of Babel, its rightful central position as antithesis; and it would have to investigate how written language grows out of music and not directly from the sounds of the spoken word. These are tasks which lie far outside the domain of both romantic intuitions and non-theological philosophy. This romantic theory of allegory remains only virtual, but it is nonetheless an unmistakable monument to the affinity of baroque and romanticism. There is no need to add that actual discussions of allegory, such as that in Friedrich Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie*,⁹⁰ do not possess the same profundity as Ritter's exposition; indeed, following the example of Friedrich Schlegel's imprecise use of language, they probably mean, with the statement that all beauty is allegory, nothing more than the classicistic commonplace that it is a symbol. Not so Ritter. With the theory that every image is only a form of writing, he gets to the very heart of the allegorical attitude. In the context of allegory the image is only a signature, only the monogram of essence, not the essence itself in a mask.

But there is nothing subordinate about written script; it is not cast away in reading, like dross. It is absorbed along with what is read, as its 'pattern'. The printers, and indeed the writers of the baroque, paid the closest possible attention to the pattern of the words on the page. It is known that Lohenstein practised 'the inscription of the engraving 'Castus amor Cygnis vehitur, Venus improba corvis' [Chaste love is expressed by swans, base Venus by crows], in its printed form, on the paper with his own hand'.⁹¹ Herder finds – and this is still valid today – that the baroque literature is 'almost unsurpassed . . . in printing and decoration'.⁹² And so the age was not entirely without some sense of those comprehensive relationships between spoken language and script, which provide the philosophical basis of the allegorical, and which contain within them the resolution of their true tension. If, that is, Strich's ingenious and illuminating hypothesis about the pictorial poems is correct, namely that 'the underlying idea may have been that the changing length of the lines, if it imitates an organic form, must also yield an organically rising and falling rhythm'.⁹³ The opinion of Birken – expressed through the mouth of Floridan in the *Dannebergische Helden-Blut* – points very much in the same direction: 'every natural occurrence in this world could be the effect of the materialization of a cosmic reverberation or sound, even the movement of the stars'.⁹⁴ This finally establishes the unity, in terms of theory of language, between the verbal and the visual manifestations of the baroque.

Ja / wenn der Höchste wird vom Kirch-Hof erndten
ein / So werd ich Todten-Kopff ein Englisch Antlitz
seyn.

Daniel Casper von Lohenstein: *Redender Todten-Kopff*
*Herrn Matthäus Machners**

All the material, with its far-reaching implications, which it has been possible to uncover by a method which occasionally seemed vague, occa-

* Yea, when the Highest comes to bring in the harvest from the graveyard, so will I, a death's-head, become an angel's countenance.

sionally reminiscent of cultural history, forms a whole when seen in relation to allegory, comes together in the idea of the *Trauerspiel*. Our account may, indeed must, linger so insistently over the allegorical structure of this form for the simple reason that it is only thanks to this structure that the *Trauerspiel* can assimilate as its content the subjects which contemporary conditions provide it. Moreover this assimilated content cannot be elucidated without the aid of the theological concepts, which were indispensable even to its exposition. If, in the concluding part of this study, we do not hesitate to use such concepts, this is no *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος* [transition to a different subject]. For a critical understanding of the *Trauerspiel*, in its extreme, allegorical form, is possible only from the higher domain of theology; so long as the approach is an aesthetic one, paradox must have the last word. Such a resolution, like the resolution of anything profane into the sacred, can only be accomplished historically, in terms of a theology of history, and only dynamically, not statically in the sense of a guaranteed economics of salvation; that would be clear even if the baroque *Trauerspiel* were less obviously related to the *Sturm und Drang* and romanticism, and even if its – probably vain – hopes for the rehabilitation of what is best in it by current dramatic experiments were less intense. The long-overdue interpretation of its content will – this much is obvious – have to get especially seriously to grips with those awkward motifs with which it does not seem possible to do anything except establish their material content. Above all: what is the significance of those scenes of cruelty and anguish in which the baroque drama revels? It is of a piece with the un-self-conscious and unreflective attitude of baroque art-criticism that there is not a torrent of direct replies. A concealed but valuable one is contained in the statement that: 'Integrum humanum corpus symbolicam iconem nigredi non posse, partem tamen corporis ei constituendae non esse ineptam.'^{1*} This occurs in the account of a controversy about the norms of emblematics. The orthodox emblematicist could not think differently: the human body could be no exception to the commandment which ordered the destruction of the organic so that the true meaning, as it was written and ordained, might be picked up from

*The whole human body cannot enter a symbolical icon, but it is not inappropriate for part of the body to constitute it.

its fragments. Where, indeed, could this law be more triumphantly displayed than in the man who abandons his conventional, conscious physis in order to scatter it to the manifold regions of meaning? Emblematics and heraldry have not always unreservedly complied with this. In the *Ars heraldica*, to which we have already referred, it says only: 'Die Haar bedeutend die vielfältigen Gedancken',^{2*} while 'die Herolden' [the heralds] cut the lion right in two: 'Das Haupt / die Brust / und das gantze vordere Theil bedeutet Grossmüthigkeit und Dapfferkeit / das hintere aber / die Stärcke / Grimm und Zorn / so dem Brüllen folget.'^{3†} Transferred to the sphere of a quality which still affects the body, this emblematic division is the inspiration of Opitz's exquisite phrase, 'Handhabung der Keuschheit',^{4‡} which he claims to have learned from Judith. It is the same in Hallmann, as he illustrates this virtue in the chaste Ägytha, whose 'Geburts-Glied'§ is said to have been found still undecayed in her grave many years after her burial.⁵ If martyrdom thus prepares the body of the living person for emblematic purposes, it is not without significance that physical pain as such was ever present for the dramatist to use as an element in the action. It is not only the dualism of Descartes that is baroque; as a consequence of the doctrine of psycho-physical determination, the theory of the passions also deserves the closest consideration. Since, in fact, the spirit is in itself pure reason, true to itself, and it is physical influences alone which bring it into contact with the world, the torture which it endures was a more immediate basis of violent emotions than so-called tragic conflicts. And if it is in death that the spirit becomes free, in the manner of spirits, it is not until then that the body too comes properly into its own. For this much is self-evident: the allegorization of the physis can only be carried through in all its vigour in respect of the corpse. And the characters of the *Trauerspiel* die, because it is only thus, as corpses, that they can enter into the homeland of allegory. It is not for the sake of immortality that they meet their end, but for the sake of the

* Hair signifies many and varied thoughts

† The head, the breast, and the whole front part signify magnanimity and courage, but the hind part signifies the strength, rage, and anger, which follow the roar.

‡ use of chastity

§ Birth-member (i.e. womb)

corpse. 'Er lässt uns seine leichen | Zum pfande letzter gunst',^{6*} says the daughter of Charles Stuart about her father, who, for his part, did not forget to request that it be embalmed. Seen from the point of view of death, the product of the corpse is life. It is not only in the loss of limbs, not only in the changes of the aging body, but in all the processes of elimination and purification that everything corpse-like falls away from the body piece by piece. It is no accident that precisely nails and hair, which are cut away as dead matter from the living body, continue to grow on the corpse. There is in the physis, in the memory itself, a *memento mori*; the obsession of the men of the middle ages and the baroque with death would be quite unthinkable if it were only a question of reflection about the end of their lives. The corpse-poetry of a writer like Lohenstein is, in essence, not mannerism, although it would not be wrong to recognise this element in it. Among the earliest works of Lohenstein there are remarkable experiments in this lyric theme. While still at school he had had the task of celebrating 'the passion of Christ in alternate Latin and German poems, arranged like the limbs of the human body',⁷ in accordance with a traditional scheme. The *Denck- und Danck-Altar* [Altar of memory and gratitude], which he dedicated to his dead mother, is an example of the same type. The parts of the body are described in the state of putrefaction in nine unrelenting strophes. Such themes must have had similar relevance for Gryphius, and his study of anatomy, which he never abandoned, was doubtless influenced by these strange emblematic interests as well as by scientific ones. Sources for corresponding descriptions in drama were found in Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* in particular, but also in his *Phaedra*, *Troades*, and elsewhere. 'In the manner of anatomical dissection, and with an unmistakable delight in cruelty, the parts of the body are individually enumerated.'⁸ It is well known that Seneca was, in other respects as well, a respected authority for the baroque theatre of cruelty, and it would be worth investigating how far analogous assumptions provide the basis for those motifs in his dramas which were influential at that time. In the *Trauerspiel* of the seventeenth century the corpse becomes quite simply the pre-eminent emblematic property. The apotheoses are

* He leaves us his body as a pledge of final goodwill

barely conceivable without it. 'Mit blassen Leichen prangen [sie]',^{9*} and it is the function of the tyrant to provide the *Trauerspiel* with them. Thus the conclusion of *Papinian*, in which there are traces of the influence of the troupe-play on the late Gryphius, shows what Bassianus Caracalla has done to the family of Papinian. The father and two sons are killed. 'Beyde leichen werden auf zweyen trauerbetten von Papiniani dienern auf den schauplatz getragen und einander gegenüber gestellt. Plautia redet nichts ferner, sondern gehet höchst-traurig von einer leiche zu der andern, küsset zuweilen die häupter und hände, bis sie zuletzt auf Papiniani leichnam ohnmächtig sincket und durch ihre statsjungfern den leichen nachgetragen wird.'^{10†} At the conclusion of Hallmann's *Sophia*, after the execution of every kind of torture on the constant Christian and her daughters, the inner stage opens, 'in welchem die Todtenmahlzeit gezeigt wird / nehmlich die drey Köpfe der Kinder mit drey Gläsern Blut'.^{11‡} The 'Todtenmahlzeit' [banquet of death] was held in high regard. In Gryphius it is not yet shown, but reported. 'Fürst Meurab, blind von hass, getrotzt durch so viel leiden, | Liess der entleibten schaar die bleichen köpff abschneiden, | Und als der häupter reyh, die ihn so hoch verletzt, | Zu einem schaugericht auf seinen tisch gesetzt, | Nam er, schier ausser sich, den dargereichten becher | Und schrie: diss ist der kelch, den ich, der meinen rächer, | Nu nicht mehr slav, erwisch!'^{12§} In later works such banquets came to be seen on stage, the dramatists availing themselves of an Italian trick, which is recommended by Harsdörffer and Birken. Through a hole in the top of a table, the cloth of which hung down to the ground, there appeared the head of an actor. Occasionally these displays of the dead body occur at the beginning of the

* They are resplendent with pale corpses

† The two bodies are borne onto the stage on biers by servants of Papinian, and placed on opposite sides. Plantia speaks no more but goes most mournfully from one corpse to the other, kisses the heads and the hands, until she finally sinks down unconscious over the body of Papinian, and is carried off after the bodies by her ladies-in-waiting.

‡ and the banquet of death is revealed: the heads of the three children with three glasses of blood.

§ Prince Meurab, blind with hatred, obstinate through so much suffering, had the pallid heads cut off from the dead men, and when the row of heads, which had so injured him, had been served up as a feast on his table, quite beside himself, he took the proffered cup and cried: this is the cup which I, the avenger of my own, a slave no longer, now take hold of!

Trauerspiel. The introductory stage direction to *Catharina von Georgien*¹³ provides one example of this, as does the curious set in the first act of *Heraclius*: 'Ein grosses Feld / erfüllet mit sehr vielen Leichen des geschlagenen Krieger-Heeres des Kaisers Mauriti' nebst etlichen aus dem benachbarten Gebirge entspringenden Wässerbächlein.'^{14*}

It is not antiquarian interest which enjoins us to follow the tracks which lead from here, more clearly than from anywhere else, back into the middle ages. For it is not possible to overestimate the importance for the baroque of the knowledge of the Christian origin of the allegorical outlook. And these tracks, although they have been left by so many and so different spirits, are the signposts on a road followed by the genius of allegorical vision even in its changing intentions. The writers of the seventeenth century have often re-assured themselves with a backward glance at this trail. In connection with his *Leidender Christus* [Christ in agony] Harsdörffer referred his pupil Klai to the Passion-poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus.¹⁵ Gryphius, too, 'translated almost twenty early mediaeval hymns . . . into his own language, which was well suited to their solemn but vigorous style; he particularly favours the greatest of all the hymn-writers, Prudentius'.¹⁶ There is a threefold material affinity between baroque and mediaeval Christianity. The struggle against the pagan gods, the triumph of allegory, the torment of the flesh, are equally essential to both. These motifs are most intimately connected. In terms of the history of religion – so it becomes clear – they are one and the same. And it is only in these terms that the origin of allegory can be illuminated. If the dissolution of the pantheon of antiquity has a decisive role in this origin, it is exceedingly instructive that its reinvigoration in humanism arouses the seventeenth century to protest. Rist, Moscherosch, Zesen, Harsdörffer, Birken, raise their voices against mythologically embellished literature as, before them, only the old Christian Latin authors had done;

* A large field, filled with very many bodies, soldiers in the defeated army of the Emperor Mauritius, as well as several rivulets flowing from the nearby mountains.

and then Prudentius, Juvenecus, Venantius Fortunatus, are cited as praiseworthy examples of a chaste muse. 'Wahre Teufel'* is how Birken describes the pagan gods,¹⁷ and there is a passage in Hallmann in which the attitude of a thousand years earlier is quite strikingly re-echoed; and this is clearly not the result of any concern for historical colour. In the religious dispute between Sophia and the Emperor Honorius the following question is asked: 'Beschützt nicht Jupiter den Kaiserlichen Thron?' And Sophia replies: 'Vielmehr als Jupiter ist Gottes wahrer Sohn!'^{18†} This archaic swiftness in response derives directly from the baroque attitude. For once again antiquity was threateningly close to Christianity, in that form in which it made a final, and not unsuccessful attempt to impose itself upon the new teaching: gnosticism. With the Renaissance, occultist tendencies gained in strength, being particularly favoured by neo-Platonic studies. Rosicrucianism and alchemy took their places alongside astrology, the ancient occidental residue of oriental paganism. European antiquity was divided and its obscure after-effects in the middle-ages drew inspiration from its radiant after-image in humanism. Out of deep spiritual kinship Warburg has given a fascinating explanation of how, in the Renaissance 'heavenly manifestations were conceived in human terms, so that their demonic power might be at least visually contained'.¹⁹ The Renaissance stimulates the visual memory – how much, can be seen from the conjuration scenes in the *Trauerspiel* – but at the same time it awakens a visual speculation which is perhaps of greater import for the formation of style. And the emblematics of this speculation are bound up with the world of the middle ages. There is no product of allegorical fantasy, however baroque, which is without a counterpart in this world. The allegorists among the mythographers, who had already been a subject of interest in early Christian apologetics, are resurrected. At the age of sixteen, Grotius edits Martianus Capella. Entirely in the early Christian manner, the ancient Gods and the allegories are on one and the same level in the chorus of the *Trauerspiel*. And because the fear

* veritable devils

† Does not Jupiter protect the imperial throne? . . . The true son of God is much more than Jupiter!

of demons cannot but make the flesh, suspect as it already is, seem particularly oppressive, the middle ages saw the beginnings of a radical attempt at its subjection in emblematics. 'Nakedness as an emblem' – this could well be used as a title for the following account by Bezold. 'Only in the beyond were the blessed supposed to enjoy an incorruptible corporeality and a reciprocal pleasure in each other's beauty in complete purity (Augustine: *De Civitate dei*, xxii, 24). Until then nakedness remained a sign of impurity, and as such it was, at most, appropriate for Greek gods, or infernal demons. Accordingly, whenever mediaeval scholarship came across unclothed figures, it sought to explain this impropriety with reference to a symbolism which was frequently far-fetched, and generally hostile. It is only necessary to read the explanations of Fulgentius and his followers as to why Venus, Cupid, and Bacchus are painted naked; Venus, for instance, because she sends her admirers away stripped bare, or because the crime of lust cannot be concealed; Bacchus, because drinkers throw away all their possessions, or because the drunkard cannot keep his most secret thoughts to himself . . . The implications which a Carolingian writer, Walahfrid Strabo, seeks to discover in his extremely obscure description of a naked sculpture are ingenious to a wearisome degree. In question is a subordinate figure in the gilded equestrian statue of Theodoric . . . The fact that . . . the black, ungilded "attendant" shows his naked flesh, leads the poet to the conceit that the naked man brings particular discredit upon the other, who is also naked, that is to say the Arian tyrant, naked of all virtue.'²⁰ As can be seen, allegorical exegesis tended above all in two directions: it was designed to establish, from a Christian point of view, the true, demonic nature of the ancient gods, and it also served the pious mortification of the flesh. It is therefore no accident that the middle ages and the baroque took pleasure in the meaningful juxtaposition of statues of idols and the bones of the dead. In the *Vita Constantini* Eusebius can write of skulls and bones in the statues of the gods, and Männling asserts that the 'Egyptier [hätten] in hölzernen Bildern Leichen begraben'.*

* the Egyptians buried bodies in wooden images

The concept of the allegorical can do justice to the *Trauerspiel* only in the particular form in which it is distinguished, not just from the theological symbol, but equally from the mere decorative epithet. Allegory did not originate as a scholastic arabesque to the ancient conception of the gods. Originally it had none of that playfulness, detachment, and superiority which, with an eye to its latest products, it has been customary to attribute to it; quite the contrary. If the church had not been able quite simply to banish the gods from the memory of the faithful, allegorical language would never have come into being. For it is not an epigonal victory monument; but rather the word which is intended to exorcise a surviving remnant of antique life. It is, of course, true that in the first centuries of the Christian era the gods themselves very frequently took on an element of the abstract. Usener writes: 'To the extent that the belief in the gods of the classical age lost its strength, the ideas of the gods, as shaped by art and literature, were released and became available as suitable means of poetic representation. This process can be traced from the writers of Nero's age, indeed from Horace and Ovid, to its peak in the later Alexandrian school; its most important, and, for the subsequent period, most influential representative is Nonnos; in Latin literature, Claudius Claudianus of Alexandria. In their work everything, every action, every event, is transformed into an interaction of divine powers. Small wonder that with these writers there is more room even for abstract concepts; for them the personified gods have no greater significance than these concepts; they have both become very flexible forms for the ideas of the poetic imagination.'²¹ All this is, of course, part of an intensive preparation for allegory. But, if allegory itself is more than the 'vaporization' – however abstract – of theological essences, their survival in an unsuitable, indeed hostile, environment, then this late-Roman version is not the truly allegorical way of looking at things. In the course of such a literature the world of the ancient gods would have had to die out, and it is precisely allegory which preserved it. For an appreciation of the transience of things, and the concern to rescue them for eternity, is one of the strongest impulses in allegory. In the middle ages there was nothing, either in art, or science, or the state, which could stand alongside the legacy of antiquity in all these domains. At that time the knowledge of the impermanence of

things was inescapably derived from observation; just as, several centuries later, at the time of the Thirty Years War, the same knowledge stared European humanity in the face. Here it is worth noting that the most obvious catastrophes did not perhaps impress this experience on men any more bitterly than the changes in legal norms, with their claims to eternal validity, which were particularly evident at those historical turning-points. Allegory established itself most permanently where transitoriness and eternity confronted each other most closely. In his *Götternamen* [The names of the gods] Usener himself has provided the means with which to draw accurately the historico-philosophical line of demarcation between the only 'apparently abstract' nature of certain antique divinities and allegorical abstraction. 'We must therefore reconcile ourselves to the fact that the excitable religious sensibility of antiquity could unhesitatingly elevate even abstract concepts to divine status. The reason why, almost without exception, they remained shadowy and bloodless is none other than the reason why the particular gods [*sondergötter*] also could not but pale before the personal [*persönlich*] gods: the transparency of the word.'²² It may well be that the ground of antiquity was prepared for the reception of allegory by these religious improvisations; but allegory itself was sown by Christianity. For it was absolutely decisive for the development of this mode of thought that not only transitoriness, but also guilt should seem evidently to have its home in the province of idols and of the flesh. The allegorically significant is prevented by guilt from finding fulfilment of its meaning in itself. Guilt is not confined to the allegorical observer, who betrays the world for the sake of knowledge, but it also attaches to the object of his contemplation. This view, rooted in the doctrine of the fall of the creature, which brought down nature with it, is responsible for the ferment which distinguishes the profundity of western allegory from the oriental rhetoric of this form of expression. Because it is mute, fallen nature mourns. But the converse of this statement leads even deeper into the essence of nature: its mournfulness makes it become mute. In all mourning there is a tendency to silence, and this infinitely more than inability or reluctance to communicate. The mournful has the feeling that it is known comprehensively by the unknowable. To be named – even if the name-giver is god-like and saintly – perhaps always brings with it a

presentiment of mourning. But how much more so not to be named, only to be read, to be read uncertainly by the allegorist, and to have become highly significant thanks only to him. On the other hand, the more nature and antiquity were felt to be guilt-laden, the more necessary was their allegorical interpretation, as their only conceivable salvation. For in the midst of the conscious degradation of the object the melancholic intention keeps faith with its own quality as a thing in an incomparable way. But even after twelve hundred years the prophecy of Prudentius: 'Cleansed of all blood, the marble will ultimately gleam; the bronzes, which are now regarded as idols, will stand innocent',²³ had still not been fulfilled. For the Baroque, even for the Renaissance, the marble and the bronzes of antiquity still preserved something of the horror with which Augustine had recognized in them 'the bodies of the gods so to speak'. 'Certain spirits have been induced to take up their abode in them, and they have the power either to do harm or to satisfy many of the wants of those who offer them divine honours and obedient worship.'²⁴ Or, as Warburg puts it, with reference to the Renaissance: 'The formal beauty of the figures of the gods, and the tasteful reconciliation of Christian and pagan beliefs should not blind us to the fact that even in Italy around 1520, that is at the time of the most free and creative artistic activity, antiquity was venerated, as it were, in a double herma, which had one dark, demonic countenance, that called for a superstitious cult, and another, serene Olympian one, which demanded aesthetic veneration.'²⁵ The three most important impulses in the origin of western allegory are non-antique, anti-antique: the gods project into the alien world, they become evil, and they become creatures. The attire of the Olympians is left behind, and in the course of time the emblems collect around it. And this attire is as creaturely as a devil's body. In this sense the enlightened Hellenistic theology of Euhemerus incorporates, curiously enough, in its share, an element of the nascent popular belief. For 'the reduction of the gods to mere mortals was bound ever closer to the idea that evil magic powers continued to be effective in the remnants of their cult, above all in their images. But the proof of their complete impotence was weakened again by the fact that the powers which had been stripped from them were taken over by satanic substitutes.'²⁶ On the other hand, alongside the emblems and the attire, the

words and the names remain behind, and, as the living contexts of their birth disappear, so they become the origins of concepts, in which these words acquire a new content, which is predisposed to allegorical representation; such is the case with Fortuna, Venus (as Dame World) and so on. The deadness of the figures and the abstraction of the concepts are therefore the precondition for the allegorical metamorphosis of the pantheon into a world of magical, conceptual creatures. This is the basis of the representation of Cupid by Giotto, 'as a demon of wantonness with a bat's wings and claws'; and it is the basis for the survival of fabulous creatures like the faun, centaur, siren and harpy as allegorical figures in the circle of Christian hell. 'The classically refined world of the ancient divinities has, of course, been impressed upon us so deeply since the time of Winckelmann, that we entirely forget that it is a new creation of scholarly humanist culture; this "Olympic" aspect of antiquity had first to be wrested from the traditional "demonic" side; for the ancient divinities had, as cosmic demons, belonged among the religious powers of Christian Europe uninterruptedly since the end of antiquity, and in practice they influenced its way of life so decisively that it is not possible to deny the existence of an alternative government of pagan cosmology, in particular astrology, tacitly accepted by the Christian church.'²⁷ Allegory corresponds to the ancient gods in the deadness of its concrete tangibility. There is, then, a profounder truth than is generally believed in the statement: 'The proximity of the gods is indeed one of the most important prerequisites for the vigorous development of allegory.'²⁸

The allegorical outlook has its origin in the conflict between the guilt-laden physis, held up as an example by Christianity and a purer *natura deorum* [nature of the gods], embodied in the pantheon. With the revival of paganism in the Renaissance, and Christianity in the Counter-Reformation, allegory, the form of their conflict, also had to be renewed. The importance of this for the *Trauerspiel* is that, in the figure of Satan, the middle ages had bound the material and the demonic inextricably together. Above all, the concentration of the numerous pagan powers into

one, theologically rigorously defined, Antichrist meant that this supreme manifestation of darkness was imposed upon matter more unambiguously than in a number of demons. And not only did the middle ages come thus to impose strict limits on the scientific study of nature; even mathematicians were rendered suspect by this devilish essence of matter. The schoolman, Henry of Ghent, explains: 'Whatever they think, it is something spatial (*quantum*), or else it is located in space like a point. Such people are therefore melancholic, and make the best mathematicians, but the worst metaphysicians.'²⁹ If it is the creaturely world of things, the dead, or at best the half-living, that is the object of the allegorical intention, then man does not enter its field of vision. If it sticks exclusively to emblems, then revolution, salvation is not inconceivable. But scorning all emblematic disguise, the undisguised visage of the devil can raise itself up from out of the depths of the earth into the view of the allegorist, in triumphant vitality and nakedness. It was only in the middle ages that these sharp, angular features were etched in the originally greater demonic head of antiquity. According to gnostic-manichaean doctrine, matter was created to bring about the 'de-Tartarization' of the world, and was destined to absorb everything devilish, so that with its elimination the world might display itself in its purity; but in the devil it calls to mind its Tartarean nature, scorns its allegorical 'significance', and mocks anyone who believes he can pursue it into the depths with impunity. Just as earthly mournfulness is of a piece with allegorical interpretation, so is devilish mirth with its frustration in the triumph of matter. This explains the devilish jocularly of the intriguer, his intellectuality, his knowledge of significance. The mute creature is able to hope for salvation through that which is signified. The clever versatility of man expresses itself, and, in a most basely calculating act, lends its material aspect an almost human self-confidence, so that the allegorist is countered by the scornful laughter of hell. Here, of course, the muteness of matter is overcome. In laughter, above all, mind is enthusiastically embraced by matter, in highly eccentric disguise. Indeed it becomes so spiritual that it far outstrips language. It is aiming higher, and ends in shrill laughter. However brutish the external effect may be, the inner madness is conscious of it only as spirituality. There is no jesting with 'Lucifer / Fürst der finsternis /

regierer der tiefen trawrigkeit / keiser des Hellischen Spuls / Hertzog des Schwebelwassers / König des abgrunds'.^{30*} Julius Leopold Klein rightly calls him the 'original allegorical figure'. Indeed, one of the most powerful of Shakespeare's characters is, as this literary historian has suggested in some excellent observations, to be understood only in terms of allegory, with reference to the figure of Satan. 'Shakespeare's Richard III... relates himself to the iniquity role of Vice, Vice swollen into the historical buffoon-devil, and so he reveals, in a highly remarkable way, his development and descent, in terms of the history of the theatre, from the Devil of the mystery-plays and from the deceitfully "moralizing" Vice of the "morality play", as the legitimate, historical, flesh-and-blood descendant of both: the devil and Vice.' This is illustrated in a footnote: "Gloster (aside): Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity, I moralize two meanings in one word." In the character of Richard III, Devil and Vice appear, according to his own confessional aside, fused into a warlike hero of tragedy with a historical pedigree.³¹ But precisely not a hero of tragedy. Rather may we point out once again – and this is the justification for this digression – that for *Richard III*, for *Hamlet*, as indeed for all Shakespearean 'tragedies', the theory of the *Trauerspiel* is predestined to contain the prolegomena of interpretation. For in Shakespeare allegory reaches much deeper than the metaphorical forms where Goethe noticed it: 'Shakespeare is rich in wonderful figures of speech, which arise from personified concepts and which would not be at all suitable nowadays, but which are entirely in place in his work because in his day all art was dominated by allegory.'³² Novalis is more emphatic: 'In a Shakespearean play it is possible to find an arbitrary idea, allegory, etc.'³³ But the *Sturm und Drang*, which discovered Shakespeare for Germany, had eyes only for the elemental aspect of his work, not the allegorical. And yet what is characteristic of Shakespeare is precisely that both aspects are equally essential. Every elemental utterance of the creature acquires significance from its allegorical existence, and everything allegorical acquires emphasis from the elemental aspect of the world of the senses. With the

* Lucifer, prince of darkness, ruler of deep mournfulness, emperor of the hellish cesspit, duke of sulphurous water, king of the abyss

extinction of the allegorical impetus the elemental power is also lost to the drama until, in the *Sturm und Drang*, it is revived – in the form of the *Trauerspiel*. Romanticism subsequently regained a glimpse of the allegorical. But so long as romanticism adhered to Shakespeare, it was no more than a glimpse. For in Shakespeare the elemental takes pride of place, in Calderón, the allegorical. Before causing terror in mourning, Satan tempts. He initiates men in knowledge, which forms the basis of culpable behaviour. If the lesson of Socrates, that knowledge of good makes for good actions, may be wrong, this is far more true of knowledge about evil. And it is not as an inner light, a *lumen naturale*, that this knowledge shines forth in the night of mournfulness, but a subterranean phosphorescence glimmers from the depths of the earth. It kindles the rebellious, penetrating gaze of Satan in the contemplative man. This confirms once again the significance of baroque polymathy for the *Trauerspiel*. For something can take on allegorical form only for the man who has knowledge. But on the other hand, if contemplation is not so much patiently devoted to truth, as unconditionally and compulsively, in direct meditation, bent on absolute knowledge, then it is eluded by things, in the simplicity of their essence, and they lie before it as enigmatic allegorical references, they continue to be dust. The intention which underlies allegory is so opposed to that which is concerned with the discovery of truth that it reveals more clearly than anything else the identity of the pure curiosity which is aimed at mere knowledge with the proud isolation of man. 'Der greuliche Alchimist der erschreckliche Todt'^{34*} – Hallmann's profound metaphor is not based only on the process of decay. Magical knowledge, which includes alchemy, threatens the adept with isolation and spiritual death. As alchemy and rosicrucianism, and the conjuration-scenes in the *Trauerspiel* prove, this age was no less devoted to magic than the renaissance. Whatever it picks up, its Midas-touch turns it into something endowed with significance. Its element was transformation of every sort; and allegory was its scheme. Because this passion did not remain confined to the age of the baroque, it is all the more suitable as an unambiguous

* That cruel alchemist, horrible death.

indication of baroque qualities in later periods. It justifies a more recent linguistic practice, whereby baroque features are recognized in the late Goethe or the late Hölderlin. Knowledge, not action, is the most characteristic mode of existence of evil. Accordingly, physical temptation conceived in sensual terms, as lechery, gluttony, and sloth, is far from being the sole basis of its existence; indeed, strictly speaking, it is ultimately and precisely not basic to it at all. Rather is the basis of its existence revealed in the *fata morgana* of a realm of absolute, that is to say godless, spirituality, bound to the material as its counterpart, such as can only be concretely experienced through evil. Its dominant mood is that of mourning, which is at once the mother of the allegories and their content. And from it three original satanic promises are born. They are spiritual in kind. The *Trauerspiel* continually shows them at work, now in the figure of the tyrant, now in that of the intriguer. What tempts is the illusion of freedom – in the exploration of what is forbidden; the illusion of independence – in the secession from the community of the pious; the illusion of infinity – in the empty abyss of evil. For it is characteristic of all virtue to have an end before it: namely its model, in God; just as all infamy opens up an infinite progression into the depths. The theology of evil can therefore be derived much more readily from the fall of Satan, in which the above-mentioned motifs are confirmed, than from the warnings in which ecclesiastical doctrine tends to represent the snarer of souls. The absolute spirituality, which is what Satan means, destroys itself in its emancipation from what is sacred. Materiality – but here soulless materiality – becomes its home. The purely material and this absolute spiritual are the poles of the satanic realm; and the consciousness is their illusory synthesis, in which the genuine synthesis, that of life, is imitated. However, the speculation of the consciousness, which clings to the object-world of emblems, ultimately, in its remoteness from life, discovers the knowledge of the demons. According to Augustine's *The City of God*, 'The word *Δαίμονες* is Greek; and demons are so called because of their knowledge.'³⁵ The verdict of fanatic spirituality was most spiritedly uttered by St Francis of Assisi. It points out the true path to a disciple who shut himself up all too deeply in study: 'Unus solus daimon plus scit quam tu.'^{*}

* One single demon knows more than you

In the form of knowledge instinct leads down into the empty abyss of evil in order to make sure of infinity. But this is also the bottomless pit of contemplation. Its data are not capable of being incorporated in philosophical constellations. They are therefore to be found in the emblem-books of the baroque as the stock requisites of gloomy spectacle. More than any other form, the *Trauerspiel* operates with this stock of requisites. Tirelessly transforming, interpreting, and deepening, it rings the changes on its images. Above all it is contrast which is dominant. And yet it would be mistaken, or, at least, it would be superficial, to attribute to delight in antithesis for its own sake those numerous effects in which, visually or only verbally, the throne room is transformed into the dungeon, the pleasure-chamber into a tomb, the crown into a wreath of bloody cypress. Even the contrast of being and appearance does not accurately describe this technique of metaphors and apotheoses. Its basis is the emblematic schema from which, by means of an artifice whose effect always had to be overwhelming, that which is signified springs obviously into view. The crown – that means the wreath of cypress. Among the countless documents of this rash of emblems – examples have long since been assembled³⁶ – one that is not to be surpassed in its unashamed crudity is Hallmann's transformation of a harp into a 'Mordbeil . . . wann der Politische Himmel blitzet'.^{37*} In much the same style is the following exposition from his *Leich-Reden*: 'Denn betrachtet man die unzählbaren Leichen / womit theils die raasende Pest / theils die Kriegerischen Waffen nicht nur unser Teutschland / sondern fast gantz Europam erfüllet / so müssen wir bekennen / dass unsere Rosen in Dornen / unsre Lilgen in Nesseln / unsre Paradise in Kirchhöfe / ja unser gantzes Wesen in ein Bildnüss dess Todes verwandelt worden. Dannenhero wird mir hoffentlich nicht ungütig gedeutet werden / dass ich auf dieser allgemeinen Schaubühne dess Todes auch meinen papirenen Kirchhoff zu eröffnen mich unterwunden.'^{38†} Such metamorphoses also occur in the choruses.³⁹

* executioner's axe . . . when lightning flashes in the political firmament

† For if we consider the innumerable corpses with which, partly, the ravages of the plague and, partly, weapons of war, have filled not only our Germany, but almost the whole of Europe, then we must admit that our roses have been transformed into thorns, our lilies into nettles, our paradises into cemeteries, indeed our whole being into an image of death. It is therefore my hope that it will not be held against me that in this general theatre of death I have not foreborne to set up my own paper graveyard.

As those who lose their footing turn somersaults in their fall, so would the allegorical intention fall from emblem to emblem down into the dizziness of its bottomless depths, were it not that, even in the most extreme of them, it had so to turn about that all its darkness, vainglory, and godlessness seems to be nothing but self-delusion. For it is to misunderstand the allegorical entirely if we make a distinction between the store of images, in which this about-turn into salvation and redemption takes place, and that grim store which signifies death and damnation. For it is precisely visions of the frenzy of destruction, in which all earthly things collapse into a heap of ruins, which reveal the limit set upon allegorical contemplation, rather than its ideal quality. The bleak confusion of Golgotha, which can be recognized as the schema underlying the allegorical figures in hundreds of the engravings and descriptions of the period, is not just a symbol of the desolation of human existence. In it transitoriness is not signified or allegorically represented, so much as, in its own significance, displayed as allegory. As the allegory of resurrection. Ultimately in the death-signs of the baroque the direction of allegorical reflection is reversed; on the second part of its wide arc it returns, to redeem. The seven years of its immersion are but a day. For even this time of hell is secularized in space, and that world, which abandoned itself to the deep spirit of Satan and betrayed itself, is God's world. In God's world the allegorist awakens. 'Ja / wenn der Höchste wird vom Kirch-Hof erndten ein / I So werd ich Todten-Kopff ein Englisch Antlitz seyn.'⁴⁰ This solves the riddle of the most fragmented, the most defunct, the most dispersed. Allegory, of course, thereby loses everything that was most peculiar to it: the secret, privileged knowledge, the arbitrary rule in the realm of dead objects, the supposed infinity of a world without hope. All this vanishes with this *one* about-turn, in which the immersion of allegory has to clear away the final phantasmagoria of the objective and, left entirely to its own devices, re-discovers itself, not playfully in the earthly world of things, but seriously under the eyes of heaven. And this is the essence of melancholy immersion: that its ultimate objects, in which it believes it can most

* Yea, when the Highest comes to reap the harvest from the graveyard, then I, a death's head, will be an angel's countenance.

fully secure for itself that which is vile, turn into allegories, and that these allegories fill out and deny the void in which they are represented, just as, ultimately, the intention does not faithfully rest in the contemplation of bones, but faithlessly leaps forward to the idea of resurrection.

'Mit Weinen streuten wir den Samen in die Brachen / und giegen traurig aus.'⁴¹ Allegory goes away empty-handed. Evil as such, which it cherished as enduring profundity, exists only in allegory, is nothing other than allegory, and means something different from what it is. It means precisely the non-existence of what it presents. The absolute vices, as exemplified by tyrants and intriguers, are allegories. They are not real, and that which they represent, they possess only in the subjective view of melancholy; they are this view, which is destroyed by its own offspring because they only signify its blindness. They point to the absolutely subjective pensiveness, to which alone they owe their existence. By its allegorical form evil as such reveals itself to be a subjective phenomenon. } The enormous, anti-artistic subjectivity of the baroque converges here with the theological essence of the subjective. The Bible introduces evil in the concept of knowledge. The serpent's promise to the first men was to make them 'knowing both good and evil'.⁴² But it is said of God after the creation: 'And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good.'⁴³ Knowledge of evil therefore has no object. There is no evil in the world. It arises in man himself, with the desire for knowledge, or rather for judgment. Knowledge of good, as knowledge, is secondary. It ensues from practice. Knowledge of evil – as knowledge this is primary. It ensues from contemplation. Knowledge of good and evil is, then, the opposite of all factual knowledge. Related as it is to the depths of the subjective, it is basically only knowledge of evil. It is 'nonsense' [*Geschwätz*] in the profound sense in which Kierkegaard conceived the word. This knowledge, the triumph of subjectivity and the onset of an arbitrary rule over things, is the origin of all allegorical contemplation. In the very fall

* Weeping we scattered the seed on the fallow ground and sadly we went away.

of man the unity of guilt and signifying emerges as an abstraction. The allegorical has its existence in abstractions; as an abstraction, as a faculty of the spirit of language itself, it is at home in the Fall. For good and evil are unnameable, they are nameless entities, outside the language of names, in which man, in paradise, named things, and which he forsakes in the abyss of that problem. For languages the name is only a base in which the concrete elements have their roots. The abstract elements of language, however, have their roots in the evaluative word, the judgment. And while, in the earthly court, the uncertain subjectivity of judgment is firmly anchored in reality, with punishments, in the heavenly court the illusion of evil comes entirely into its own. Here the unconcealed subjectivity triumphs over every deceptive objectivity of justice, and is incorporated into divine omnipotence as a 'work of supreme wisdom and primal love',⁴⁴ as hell. It is not appearance, and, equally, it is not satiated being, but it is the reflection in reality of empty subjectivity in the good. In evil as such subjectivity grasps what is real in it, and sees it simply as its own reflection in God. In the allegorical image of the world, therefore, the subjective perspective is entirely absorbed in the economy of the whole. Thus it is that the pillars of a baroque balcony in Bamberg are in reality arrayed in exactly the way in which, in a regular construction, they would appear from below. And thus it is that the fire of ecstasy is preserved, without a single spark being lost, secularized in the prosaic, as is necessary: in a hallucination, St Theresa sees the Virgin strewing roses on her bed; she tells her confessor. 'I see none', he replies. 'Our Lady brought them to me', answers the Saint. In this way the display of manifest subjectivity becomes a formal guarantee of the miracle, because it proclaims the divine action itself. And 'there is no turn of events which the baroque style would not conclude with a miracle'.⁴⁵ 'The Aristotelian idea of θαυμαστόν [wonder], the artistic expression of the miracle (the Biblical σημεῖα [sign]), is what dominates [art and architecture too] in the period after the counter-reformation, most especially after the Council of Trent... The impression of supernatural forces is supposed to be aroused in the powerfully projecting and apparently self-supporting structures precisely in the upper regions, interpreted and accentuated by the perilously soaring angels of the sculptural decoration... With the sole pur-

pose of intensifying this impression, the reality of these laws is, on the other hand – in the lower regions – recalled in an exaggerated fashion. What else can be the purpose of the constant references to the violence of the supporting and supported forces, the enormous pedestals, the doubly and triply augmented projecting columns and pilasters, the strengthening and reinforcement of their interconnecting elements, all bearing – a balcony? What other function have they than to emphasize the soaring miracle above, by drawing attention to the difficulties of supporting it from below. The *ponderación misteriosa*, the intervention of God in the work of art, is assumed to be possible.⁴⁶ Subjectivity, like an angel falling into the depths, is brought back by allegories, and is held fast in heaven, in God, by *ponderación misteriosa*. But with the banal equipment of the theatre – chorus, interlude, and dumbshow – it is not possible to realize the transfigured apotheosis familiar from Calderón. This takes shape and acquires conviction from a meaningful arrangement of the whole, which only emphasizes it more strongly, but less enduringly. The inadequacy of the German *Trauerspiel* is rooted in the deficient development of the intrigue, which seldom even remotely approaches that of the Spanish dramatist. The intrigue alone would have been able to bring about that allegorical totality of scenic organization, thanks to which one of the images of the sequence stands out, in the image of the apotheosis, as different in kind, and gives mourning at one and the same time the cue for its entry and its exit. The powerful design of this form should be thought through to its conclusion; only under this condition is it possible to discuss the idea of the German *Trauerspiel*. In the ruins of great buildings the idea of the plan speaks more impressively than in lesser buildings, however well preserved they are; and for this reason the German *Trauerspiel* merits interpretation. In the spirit of allegory it is conceived from the outset as a ruin, a fragment. Others may shine resplendently as on the first day; this form preserves the image of beauty to the very last.

- 73 Werner Richter, *Liebeskampf 1630 und Schaubühne 1670. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Theatergeschichte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1910 (Palaestra, 78), pp. 170/171.
- 74 cf. Flemming, *Geschichte des Jesuitentheaters*, pp. 270 ff.
- 75 Calderón, *Schauspiele* (trans. Gries), III, 316 (Eifersucht das grosse Scheusal, II).
- 76 Gryphius, ed. cit., p. 62 (Leo Armenius, II, 455 ff.).
- 77 cf. Stachel, op. cit., p. 261.
- 78 Schiebel, op. cit., p. 358.
- 79 cf. *Die Glorreiche Marter Joannes von Nepomuck*; quoted from Weiss, op. cit., pp. 148 ff.
- 80 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, op. cit., p. 1 (of the unpaginated preface).
- 81 Hausenstein, op. cit., p. 14.
- 82 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, 'Sophia', p. 70 (V, 185 ff.); cf. p. 4 (I, 108 ff.).
- 83 cf. Richard Maria Werner, 'Johann Christian Hallmann als Dramatiker', *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien*, I (1899), p. 691. But see Horst Steger, 'Johann Christian Hallmann. Sein Leben und seine Werke' (doctoral dissertation), Leipzig (publ. Weida i. Th.), 1909, p. 89.
- 84 Flemming, *Andreas Gryphius und die Bühne*, p. 401.
- 85 Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, ed. cit., pp. 132 ff. [*Basic Writings*, pp. 115 ff.].
- 86 (Johann Wilhelm Ritter), *Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse eines jungen Physikers. Ein Taschenbuch für Freunde der Natur*, hrsg. von J. W. Ritter [editorship fictional], Zweytes Bändchen, Heidelberg, 1810, pp. 227 ff.
- 87 Ritter, op. cit., p. 230.
- 88 Ritter, op. cit., p. 242.
- 89 Ritter, op. cit., p. 246.
- 90 cf. Friedrich Schlegel, *Seine prosaischen Jugendschriften*, hrsg. von J. Minor, II, Zur deutschen Literatur und Philosophie, Vienna, 1906², p. 364.
- 91 Müller, op. cit., p. 71 (In.).
- 92 Herder, *Vermischte Schriften*, pp. 193-194.
- 93 Strich, op. cit., p. 42.
- 94 Cysarz, op. cit., p. 114.

Allegory and Trauerspiel (Part 3)

Motto - Lohenstein, *Blumen*, 'Hyacinthen', p. 50.

- 1 Anon., review of Menestrier, *La philosophie des images*, *Acta eruditorum* 1683, pp. 17/18.
- 2 Böckler, op. cit., p. 102.
- 3 Böckler, op. cit., p. 104.
- 4 Martin Opitz, *Judith*, Breslau, 1635, sheet Aij. v^o.
- 5 cf. Hallmann, *Leichreden*, p. 377.
- 6 Gryphius, ed. cit., p. 390 (Carolus Stuardus, II, 389/390).
- 7 Müller, op. cit., p. 15.
- 8 Stachel, op. cit., p. 25.
- 9 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, 'Sophia', p. 68 (stage-direction).
- 10 Gryphius, ed. cit., p. 614 (Aemilius Paulus Papinianus, V, stage-direction).
- 11 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, 'Sophia', p. 68 (stage-direction).
- 12 Gryphius, ed. cit., p. 172 (Catharina von Georgien, I, 649 ff.).
- 13 cf. Gryphius, ed. cit., p. 149 (Catharina von Georgien, I, stage-direction).
- 14 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, 'Die listige Rache oder der tapfere Heraklius', p. 10 (stage-direction).

- 15 cf. Tittmann, op. cit., p. 175.
- 16 Mannheimer, op. cit., p. 130.
- 17 cf. Tittmann, op. cit., p. 46.
- 18 Hallmann, *Trauer-, Freuden- und Schäferspiele*, 'Sophia', p. 8 (I, 220/230).
- 19 Warburg, op. cit., p. 70.
- 20 Friedrich von Bezold, *Das Fortleben der antiken Götter im mittelalterlichen Humanismus*, Bonn, Leipzig, 1922, pp. 31/32. cf. Vinzenz von Beauvais, op. cit., columns 295-296 (extracts from Fulgentius).
- 21 Usener, op. cit., p. 366.
- 22 Usener, op. cit., 368/369; cf. also pp. 316/317.
- 23 Aurelius P. Clemens Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, I, 501-502; quoted from Bezold, op. cit., p. 30.
- 24 *Des heiligen Augustinus zwey und zwanzig Bücher von der Stadt Gottes*. Aus dem Lateinischen der Mauriner Ausgabe übersetzt von J. P. Silbert, I, Vienna, 1826, p. 508 (VIII, 23). [Augustine of Hippo, *Concerning the City of God against Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson, ed. David Knowles, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 331.]
- 25 Warburg, op. cit., p. 34.
- 26 Bezold, op. cit., p. 5.
- 27 Warburg, op. cit., p. 5.
- 28 Horst, op. cit., p. 42.
- 29 *Quodlibet Magistri Henrici Goethals a Gandavo* [Heinrich von Gent], Parisiis, 1518, Fol. XXXIV^r (Quodl. II, Quaest. 9); quoted from the translation in Panofsky and Saxl, op. cit., p. 72.
- 30 From an anonymous Luciferan Letter of 1410 against John XXIII; quoted from Paul Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter*, Munich, 1922, p. 97.
- 31 Klein, op. cit., pp. 3/4.
- 32 Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, XXXVIII, Schriften zur Literatur, 3, p. 258 (Maximen und Reflexionen).
- 33 Novalis, *Schriften*, III, 13.
- 34 Hallmann, *Leichreden*, p. 45.
- 35 Augustinus, op. cit., p. 564. [*Concerning the City of God*, p. 366.]
- 36 cf. Stachel, op. cit., pp. 336/337.
- 37 Hallmann, *Leichreden*, p. 9.
- 38 Hallmann, op. cit., p. 3 (of the unpaginated preface).
- 39 cf. Lohenstein, *Agrippina*, p. 74 (IV), and *Sophonisbe*, p. 75 (IV).
- 40 Lohenstein, *Blumen*, 'Hyacinthen', p. 50 (Redender Todten-Kopff Herrn Matthäus Machners).
- 41 *Die Fried-erfreute Teutonie*. Ausgefertigt von Sigismundo Betulio [Sigmund von Birken], Nuremberg, 1652, p. 114.
- 42 *Die vierundzwanzig Bücher der Heiligen Schrift*. Nach dem Masoretischen Texte, hrsg. von Leopold Zunz, Berlin, 1835, p. 3; I, 3, (v). [Genesis, III, 5.]
- 43 *Heilige Schrift*, p. 2; I, 1, (xxxi). [Genesis, I, 31.]
- 44 cf. Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*. Edizione minore fatta sul testo dell' edizione critica di Carlo Witte. Edizione seconda, Berlin, 1892, p. 13 (Inferno, III, 6). [*The Divine Comedy*, The Inferno, trans. John Aitken Carlyle (The Temple Classics), London, 1950, p. 27.]
- 45 Hausenstein, op. cit., p. 17.
- 46 Borinski, *Die Antike*, I, 193.