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In Tune With the World

A THEORY OF FESTIVITY

Translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston

A HELEN AND KURT WOLFF BOOK

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I

Certain things can be adequately discussed only if at the same time we speak of the whole of the world and of life. If we are not ready to do that, we give up all claim to saying anything significant. Death and love are such subjects. Festivity, too, must be included in that category. This becomes apparent as soon as we try to get beyond mere description of the facts.

Let us start with what lies nearest to hand. If, for example, we consider the distinction between the festive and the workaday, we soon realize that the antithesis belongs to quite a different category from, say, that of left and right, or day and night. We do not mean only that a working day and a feast day are mutually exclusive; we also mean that work is an everyday occurrence, while a feast is something special, unusual, an interruption in the ordinary passage of time. "A holiday every day"—or even every other day—is an idea that cannot be realized in practice; even though it may not necessarily run counter to the concept of festivity in itself,¹ it is hardly feasible in the lives of men existing here and now. The festive quality of a holiday depends on its being exceptional. A festival can arise only out of the foundation of a life whose ordinary shape is given by the working day.

An idle-rich class of do-nothings are hard put to it even to amuse themselves, let alone to celebrate a festival. The *dolce vita* is a desperately unfestive affair. There is, incidentally, considerable testimony that this sad truth applied also to the courtly festivals of the Baroque period, which many an innocent historian has described as highly festive occasions. The probability is that they sprang not from joy in living, but from fear, from *horror vacui*, because the true prerequisite for festivity was lacking at these courts. They had "no everyday life and no work, nothing but time on their hands and boredom." ²

Incidentally, pseudo-festivals exist, as well as pseudo-work. Not all activity, not every kind of expenditure of effort and earning of money, deserves the name of work. That should be applied only to the active—and usually also laborious—procurement of the things that are truly useful for living. And it is a good guess that only *meaningful* work can provide the soil in which festivity flourishes. Perhaps both work and celebration spring from the same root, so that when the one dries up, the other withers.

But of course meaningful work signifies more than the mere fact of workaday accomplishment. The implication is that man understands the work and accepts it for what it really is, namely, the "tilling of the field" which always includes both happiness and toil, satisfaction as well as sweat of the brow, joy as well as the consumption of vital energy. If one element in these pairs is suppressed, the reality of work is falsified and festivity is ruled out.

We must consider this matter in more concrete terms. In a totalitarian state labor is glorified, and government propaganda romanticizes rises in the production indices as if work were itself a form of celebration. At the same time, true festivity cannot exist in such a state; the very nature of the state is against it. But the possibility of festivity is destroyed even more thoroughly by the other falsification, the view that man's daily life, taken as a whole, is nothing but vexation, meaningless bustle, deadly drudgery, in a word: an absurdity—which, however, the intrepid man who

wishes to surrender neither his dignity nor his clarity of vision will not simply endure in dull passivity, but will explicitly affirm and "choose," for the sake of its very absurdity. "One must imagine Sisyphus happy," says Albert Camus.³ Not that this strenuously pursued happiness, this celebration of the "victory of the absurd," is very credible. In fact it is even less credible than the touted "radiant expression" of the tractor driver who is meeting his quota. Neither the dedication of the Stakhanovite nor the doggedness of Sisyphus allows room for the spontaneity of life which is indispensable to festal exaltation. For that, it is essential to look upon reality whole, and above all "to taste things as they really are," ⁴ the bitter bitter and the sweet sweet.

To be sure, bitterness itself can contain a healing element; the good may be found in the bad, *bonum in malo*.⁵ This remarkable postulate holds, apparently, only in a single context. I hesitate to call it by name, because to do so will inevitably give rise to a host of misunderstandings, if not worse. I refer to the context of *just punishment*, and to the fact that the soundest, sanest, and most therapeutic thing a justly punished person can do is to accept his punishment as his due, and not try to falsify it by pretending that he enjoys the taste of it, or that he has chosen it. For by enduring the bitterness, the *malum*, he may hope that at least by his own life he is atoning for what he has done, repairing the wrong and turning evil to good; that he is restoring a balance that could not be restored in any other way.

The fact is, as everyone knows, that Christendom's sacred books call work, and incidentally death also, a punishment. That is a subject too broad to discuss here. If we even attempted it, we should have to answer the question: Why has punishment been imposed, and by whom? And then we should find ourselves squarely in the heart of theology. Still, it is good to remind ourselves that such questions can be meaningfully asked, and can also be answered. And it is good for us to be leavened, now and again, by the idea that a path has already been laid down and leads away

from an attitude toward work that is essentially inhuman in both its affirmative and negative aspects.

The real nature of festivity, of course, is not made apparent solely by its contrast to labor. A festival is not just a day without work, of course. This must be stated, because some writers have tried to define the essence of festivity only in terms of this difference.⁶ Ordinary speech must be taken at its face value, the argument runs; as a rule people can say no more about a successful festival than that it was "something different, for a change," that "you felt as if you were transported to another world for the time being." This, the argument continues, expresses precisely "what makes the celebration a celebration": that "something other . . . than daily life . . . becomes accessible in it." However, the author adds—he is a theologian—no one is going to be duped into imagining that "either a village shooting contest or, say, a 'festival' play is really 'another world'"—for which reason "the phenomenon of genuine celebration⁷ . . . is really present only in religious acts in which man as creature can grasp the truly 'other' and absolutely 'new' world of the glory of God." This observation, however, indicates that we need to understand more about the dichotomy between the festive and the everyday than that they are opposites. At one point or another we must define the inner nature of this difference in positive terms.

To do so, we need not immediately cross the border into theological territory, as we have done here—although that border is, of course, not far away. First, it will be profitable to examine somewhat more closely the relationship of festivity to work. In doing so, we find that we can come closer to formulating the quality of a festival, and that it is more than the pause which interrupts the normal course of everyday work. To be sure, it is that too; let us remember that Plato calls the religious holiday a breathing spell,⁸ *anápaula*. A day off from work, a day free from the necessity of

earning one's livelihood, is after all essential to a festival; in other words, a day free of *servile* work.

Quite understandably, that adjective *servile* brings us up short. Yet concealed behind it is an insight indispensable to our grasping the essence of festivity. It must be noted in passing that the underlying concept of *artes serviles* originally carried no slightest implication of contempt. Rather, the term referred only to activity serving a purpose outside itself (our corresponding adjective would be "useful" or "utilitarian"). But quite aside from the connotation of the term, servile work is by nature dependent on something else. It cannot be thought of apart from its purpose. As a concept, it is part of a system of ideas, and we can scarcely consider it without considering its co-ordinate counterpart.⁹ That counterpart is not inactivity or nonwork, but free activity, *ars liberalis*: work that does not have a purpose outside itself, that is meaningful in itself, and for that very reason is neither useful in the strict sense, nor servile or serviceable.

At this point we can grasp the very tip, at least, of that hidden insight. Far be it from us to suggest that activity that is meaningful in itself is synonymous with festivity. But we have, it would seem, discovered a crucial component of festivity. To celebrate a festival means to do something which is in no way tied to other goals, which has been removed from all "so that" and "in order to." True festivity cannot be imagined as residing anywhere but in the realm of activity that is meaningful in itself.

The further implication is, then, that anyone who is at a loss to say what activity that is meaningful in itself is will also be at a loss to define the concept of festivity. And if that incapacity is existential, instead of merely intellectual, then the prerequisite for achieving any kind of festivity is lacking. With the death of the concept of human activity that is meaningful in itself, the possibility of any resistance to a totalitarian laboring society also perishes (and such a regime could very well be established even

II

But, someone may remonstrate, "does not everyone know what a festival is, anyhow?" The question is not altogether irrelevant. However, "If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asks, I know not." This sentence from St. Augustine's *Confessions*,¹ although written in relation to something else, is highly applicable to the concept of festivity. The problem is to put into words what everyone means and knows.

Nowadays, however, we are forcefully "asked" both what a festival is and, even more, what the psychological prerequisites are for celebrating one. "The trick is not to arrange a festival, but to find people who can *enjoy* it." The man who jotted down this aphorism nearly one hundred years ago was Friedrich Nietzsche;² his genius, as this sentence once again illustrates, lay to no small degree in that seismographic sensitivity to what was to come. The implication is that festivity in general is in danger of extinction, for arrangements alone do not make a festival. Since Nietzsche's day it has become a more or less standard matter to connect the "misery of this present age" with "man's incapacity for festivity."³ We may, of course, suspect that this gloomy diagnosis rather oversimplifies. In all ages, the chances are, it was never easy to meet

the requirement that great festivals be celebrated in the proper spirit. As the history of religions tells us,⁴ empty and wearisome pomp existed even at the Greek festivals. Nevertheless, it is peculiar to our time that we may conceive of festivity itself as being expressly repudiated. This very situation gives rise to the "question," prompts us to decide for ourselves what presumably everybody knows and takes for granted: namely, what the essence of festivity is, and what should be done so that men in our time can preserve or regain the capacity to celebrate real festivals festively—a capacity which concerns the heart of life, and perhaps constitutes it. Mere description of classical or medieval or even East Indian festivals, no matter how accurate and stirring, does not further our aim at all. Even a "morphology," stylistic history, or sociology of festivals would not especially help us.⁵ Such studies not only fail to answer the question; they do not even touch it. We must attack the question in a far more fundamental sense.

But does not celebrating a festival mean simply the equivalent of having a good time? And does not everyone know what that is? Perhaps so—but again a few questions arise. What is a good time? Does anything of the sort exist? May it not be that the only kind of good time that is really possible is a time of good work?

These are questions we cannot answer unless we have a conception of man. For what is involved is the fulfillment of human life, and the form in which this fulfillment is to take place. Inevitably, therefore, we find ourselves concerned with such ideas as "the perfection of man," "eternal life," "bliss," "Paradise." Now, there is little point in learning what any individual thinks all on his own about such fundamental matters, no matter how original his ideas may be. In this realm, we should be wary of originality. It is more rewarding to consider what the tradition of humanity's wisdom, into which the thought of whole generations has entered, has to tell us. To be sure, we need scarcely expect that this tale will be easy to decipher.

The traditional name for the utmost perfection to which man

may attain, the fulfillment of his being, is *visio beatifica*, the "seeing that confers bliss." This is to say that the highest intensification of life, the absolutely perfect activity, the final stilling of all volition, and the partaking of the utmost fullness that life can offer, takes place as a kind of seeing; more precisely, that all this is achieved in seeing awareness of the divine ground of the universe.⁶

Incidentally, the tradition in which this view may be found extends much further back than the Christian centuries, perhaps back beyond historical time altogether. A few generations before Plato, the Greek Anaxagoras, in answer to the question of what he had been born for, replied: "For seeing." And in Plato's *Symposium* Diotima clearly expresses the traditional wisdom of the *visio beatifica*: "This is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of divine beauty; this makes man immortal."⁷

But eschatology alone is not the issue; the traditional wisdom does not speak only of the ultimate perfection of life in the "hereafter." It speaks also of man as an earthly being appearing in history, and asserts that man by nature craves the appeasement of his yearnings through seeing. In this present life also, the utmost happiness takes the form of contemplation.⁸ "Most of all we esteem the sense of sight," Aristotle says in the very beginning of his *Metaphysics*. And Pierre Teilhard de Chardin belongs to the same tradition when he suggests (in the remarkable chapter on vision which surprisingly opens his book, *The Phenomenon of Man*) that all life is comprehended within seeing, and that the whole evolution of the cosmos aims above all at "the elaboration of ever more perfect eyes."⁹

Such "earthly" contemplation can take a good many different forms. It may be the philosopher's consideration of the Whole of existence; or the particular vision of the artist, who seeks to penetrate to the prototypal images of things in the universe; or the contemplative prayer of one absorbed in the divine mysteries. Whenever anyone succeeds in bringing before his mind's eye the hidden

ground of everything that is, he succeeds to the same degree in performing an act that is meaningful in itself, and has a "good time."

From this it follows that the concept of festivity is inconceivable without an element of contemplation. This does not mean exerting the argumentative intellect, but the "simple intuition" of reason; not the unrest of thought, but the mind's eye resting on whatever manifests itself. It means a relaxing of the strenuous fixation of the eye on the given frame of reference, without which no utilitarian act is accomplished. Instead, the field of vision widens, concern for success or failure of an act falls away, and the soul turns to its infinite object; it becomes aware of the illimitable horizon of reality as a whole.

Ethnological and historico-cultural writers have often pointed out that "a union of peace, intensity of life, and contemplation"¹⁰ is essential for festivity, so that to celebrate a festival is equivalent to "becoming contemplative and, in this state, directly confronting the higher realities on which the whole of existence rests."¹¹ Such observations accord completely with everyone's experience. Bustle does not make a festival; on the contrary, it can spoil one. Of course this does not mean that a festival is simply contemplation and recollection of self; any such claim is clearly belied by experience. Nevertheless, we cling to the feeling that a special spice, essential to the right celebration of a festival, is a kind of expectant alertness. One must be able to look through and, as it were, beyond the immediate matter of the festival, including the festal gifts; one must engage in a listening, and therefore necessarily silent, meditation upon the fundament of existence.

The only truly legitimate reason for a day free from work is this form of recognition of what is meaningful in itself. In a work written by Thomas Aquinas¹² in his youth this idea is expressed in an unusual way. He comments that the Roman philosopher Seneca was not so wrong in his mockery of the Jewish Sabbath for being filled with empty rituals. For, he says, such a day is not lost, *non*

amittitur, only "if that is done on the Sabbath for which it is appointed: the contemplation of divine things," *divinorum contemplatio*.

The antithesis between holiday and workday, or more precisely, the concept of the day of rest, tells us something further about the essence of festivity. The day of rest is not just a neutral interval inserted as a link in the chain of workaday life. It entails a loss of utilitarian profit. In voluntarily keeping the holiday, men renounce the yield of a day's labor. This renunciation has from time immemorial been regarded as an essential element of festivity.¹³ A definite span of usable time is made, as the ancient Romans understood it, "the exclusive property of the gods."¹⁴ As the animal for sacrifice was taken from the herd, so a piece of available time was expressly withdrawn from utility.¹⁵ The day of rest, then, meant not only that no work was done, but also that an offering was being made of the yield of labor. It is not merely that the time is not gainfully used; the offering is in the nature of a sacrifice, and therefore the diametric opposite of utility.

It scarcely need be said that in a world governed by the concept of utility, there can be no time set aside on principle, any more than there can be land set aside on principle. Anyone who called for it would be accused of "sabotaging work." For that very reason the totalitarian laboring society must of necessity be an altogether unfestive society, just as it is marked by scarcity and impoverishment even when there is the greatest abundance of material goods. Similarly, the man who is limited to absolutely utilitarian activity, to the *artes serviles*, and who is thus "proletarianized" in that sense, has rightly been called "unfestive."¹⁶ On the other hand, voluntary renunciation of the yield of a working day cuts through the principle of calculating utility, and the principle of poverty also. Even in conditions of extreme material scarcity, the withholding from work, in the midst of a life normally governed by work, creates an area of free surplus.

This, then, unexpectedly brings us to a new aspect of a holiday.

A festival is essentially a phenomenon of wealth; not, to be sure, the wealth of money, but of existential richness. Absence of calculation, in fact lavishness, is one of its elements. Of course there is a natural peril and a germ of degeneration inherent in this. The way is open to senseless and excessive waste of the yield of work, to an extravagance that violates all rationality. The product of a whole year's labor can be thrown away on a single day. As is well known, men are quite capable of such behavior. But this potential perversion cannot be included within the definition of festivity, as has recently been done.¹⁷ We may properly say that every festival conceals within itself "at least a germ of excess";¹⁸ but it is highly misleading if festival itself is defined as "*le paroxysme de la société*,"¹⁹ as a submergence in "creative" chaos. True enough, the fact remains that the paramountcy of a calculating, economizing mentality prevents both festive excess and festivity itself. In the workaday world all magnificence and pomp is calculated, and therefore unfestive. The myriad lights of a commercialized Christmas inevitably seem basically meager, without any real radiance. We remember G. K. Chesterton's keen comment on the dazzling advertisements of Times Square at night: What a glorious sight for those who luckily do not know how to read.

Such an act of renunciation and sacrificial offering, however, cannot be imagined as being performed at random. The talk of "valuable working time" is, after all, not just talk; something utterly real is involved. Why should anyone decide to sacrifice this precious article without sufficient reason? If we probe a little more insistently for a reason, we find a curious analogy to the other, the contemplative aspect of the day of rest, of which we have already spoken. The achievement of contemplation, since it is the seeing, the intuition of the beloved object,²⁰ presupposes a specific non-intellectual, direct, and existential relation to reality, an existential concord of man with the world and with himself. Precisely in the same way, the act of freely giving oneself cannot take place unless it likewise grows from the root of a comprehensive affirmation

—for which no other term can be found than “love.” In spite of the thickets of banality, sentimentality, and unrealistic spiritualization that threaten to smother the true meaning of this word, it remains indispensable. There is no other word that so precisely denotes what is at issue.

We do not renounce things, then, except for love. This hypothesis will have to be examined more closely. Nevertheless, we have not advanced it without considerable thought. Above all, we hope that it will serve as a new vantage point from which we will be able to see more deeply into the idea as well as the actuality of festivity.

III

Perhaps because we are so allergic to big words, we hesitate to speak of a festival as a “day of rejoicing.” All the same, we should have to concur if someone chose to understate a little and called it at the least a “joyous affair.” On a festival day, people enjoy themselves. Even one who terms it quite a “trick” to find such people is merely saying that it has become difficult and rare to celebrate a festival festively. But no one denies that it should be, by its nature, a day of rejoicing. An early Christian Greek went so far as to say: “Festivity is joy and nothing else.”¹

Now it is the nature of joy to be a secondary phenomenon. No one can rejoice “absolutely,” for joy’s sake alone. To be sure, it is foolish to ask a man why he wants to rejoice—to that extent joy is an end in itself. Nevertheless, the longing for joy is nothing but the desire to have a reason and pretext for joy. This reason, to the extent that it actually exists, precedes joy and is different from it. The reason comes first; the joy comes second.

But the reason for joy, although it may be encountered in a thousand concrete forms, is always the same: possessing or receiving what one loves, whether actually in the present, hoped for in the future, or remembered in the past.² Joy is an expression of

love. One who loves nothing and nobody cannot possibly rejoice, no matter how desperately he craves joy. Joy is the response of a lover receiving what he loves.

True as it is that a real festival cannot be conceived without joy, it is no less true that first there must be a substantial reason for joy, which might also be called the festive occasion. Strictly speaking, it is not enough for this reason to exist objectively. Men must also accept and acknowledge it as a reason for joy; they must experience it themselves as a receiving of something they love. An odd sort of objectivity has sometimes been attributed to festivals, as though they could exist even without people: "It is . . . Easter even where nobody celebrates it."³ It seems to me that such a notion is illusory, as long as we are speaking of festivals as a human reality.

The inner structure of real festivity has been stated in the clearest and tersest possible fashion by Chrysostom: "*Ubi caritas gaudet, ibi est festivitas*,"⁴ "Where love rejoices, there is festivity."

Now, what sort of reason underlies festal joy and therefore festivity itself? "Plant a flower-decked pole in the middle of an open place, call the people together—and you have a fête!" Everyone—one would think—sees that that is not enough. But I did not invent the sentence as an example of naïve simplification. It was written by Jean Jacques Rousseau.⁵

It is an almost equally hopeless simplification to imagine that mere ideas can be the occasion for real festivals. Something more is needed, something of another order. The celebrant himself must have shared in a distinctly real experience. When Easter is declared a festival of "immortality," it is scarcely surprising that no response is forthcoming—not to speak of such fantastic proposals as those of Auguste Comte, whose reformed calendar established festivals of Humanity, Paternity, and even Domesticity. Not even the idea of freedom can inspire people with a spirit of festivity, though the celebration of liberation might—assuming that the event, though possibly belonging to the distant past, still has com-

elling contemporary force. Memorial days are not in themselves festival days. Strictly speaking, the past cannot be celebrated festively unless the celebrant community still draws glory and exaltation from that past, not merely as reflected history, but by virtue of a historical reality still operative in the present.⁶ If the Incarnation of God is no longer understood as an event that directly concerns the present lives of men, it becomes impossible, even absurd, to celebrate Christmas festively.

Josef Andreas Jungmann has recently suggested that festivals as an institution have already become derivative, whereas the "prototypical form" of festival still takes place where a specific event such as birth, marriage, or homecoming is being directly celebrated.⁷ If the implication is that the specific event is the real reason of all celebrations, and also the highest rationale which a modern theory of festivals can provide, the thesis is not altogether convincing. We can and must pursue the inquiry further, to ask, for example: On what grounds does a specific event become the occasion for festival and celebration? Can we festively celebrate the birth of a child if we hold with Jean Paul Sartre's dictum: "It is absurd that we are born"?⁸ Anyone who is seriously convinced that "our whole existence is something that would be better not being,"⁹ and that consequently life is not worth living, can no more celebrate the birth of his child than any other birthday, his own or anyone else's, a fiftieth or sixtieth or any other. No single specific event can become the occasion for festive celebrations unless—unless what?

Here is where we must be able to name the reason underlying all others, the "reason why" events such as birth, marriage, homecoming are felt as the receiving of something beloved, without which there can be neither joy nor festivity. Again we find Nietzsche expressing the crucial insight—one painfully brought home, it would seem, as the result of terrible inner trials, for he was as familiar with the despair of being unable to take "enough joy

in anything" ¹⁰ as with "the vast unbounded Yea- and Amen-saying." ¹¹ The formulation is to be found in his posthumous notes, and reads: "To have joy in anything, one must approve everything." ¹²

Underlying all festive joy kindled by a specific circumstance there has to be an absolutely universal affirmation extending to the world as a whole, to the reality of things and the existence of man himself. Naturally, this approval need not be a product of conscious reflection; it need not be formulated at all. Nevertheless, it remains the sole foundation for festivity, no matter what happens to be celebrated *in concreto*. And as the radical nature of negation deepens, and consequently as anything but ultimate arguments becomes ineffectual, it becomes more necessary to refer to this ultimate foundation. By ultimate foundation I mean the conviction that the prime festive occasion, which alone can ultimately justify all celebration, really exists; that, to reduce it to the most concise phrase, at bottom *everything that is, is good, and it is good to exist*. For man cannot have the experience of receiving what is loved, unless the world and existence as a whole represent something good and therefore beloved to him.

Incidentally, there is a kind of confirmation of this from the other shore, as it were. Whenever we happen to feel heartfelt assent, to find that something specific is good, wonderful, glorious, rapturous—a drink of fresh water, the precise functioning of a tool, the colors of a landscape, the charm of a loving gesture, a poem—our praise always reaches beyond the given object, if matters take their natural course. Our tribute always contains at least a smattering of affirmation of the world, as a whole. So that the converse of the sentence we have just quoted is also valid—and again Nietzsche has formulated it: "If it be granted that we say Yea to a single moment, then in so doing we have said Yea not only to ourselves, but to all existence." ¹³

Need we bother to say how little such affirmation has to do with shallow optimism, let alone with smug approval of that which is?

Such affirmation is not won by deliberately shutting one's eyes to the horrors in this world. Rather, it proves its seriousness by its confrontation with historical evil. The quality of this assent is such that we must attribute it even to martyrs, at the very moment, perhaps, that they perish under brutal assault. A theologian commenting on the Apocalypse has said ¹⁴ that what distinguishes the Christian martyr is that he never utters a word against God's Creation. In spite of everything he finds the things that are "very good"; therefore in spite of everything he remains capable of joy and even, as far as it concerns him, of festivity. Whereas, on the other hand, whoever refuses assent to reality as a whole, no matter how well off he may be, is by that fact incapacitated for either joy or festivity. Festivity is impossible to the nay-sayer. The more money he has, and above all the more leisure, the more desperate is this impossibility to him.

This is also true of the man who refuses to approve the fact of his own existence—having fallen into that mysterious, ineffable "despair from weakness" of which Sören Kierkegaard ¹⁵ has spoken and which in the old moral philosophy went by the name of *acedia*, "slothfulness of the heart." ¹⁶ At issue is a refusal regarding the very heart and fountainhead of existence itself, because of the "despair of not willing to be oneself" ¹⁷ which makes man unable to live with himself. He is driven out of his own house—into the hurly-burly of work-and-nothing-else, into the fine-spun exhausting game of sophistical phrase-mongering, into incessant "entertainment" by empty stimulants—in short, into a no man's land which may be quite comfortably furnished, but which has no place for the serenity of intrinsically meaningful activity, for contemplation, and certainly not for festivity.

Festivity lives on affirmation. Even celebrations for the dead, All Souls and Good Friday, can never be truly celebrated except on the basis of faith that all is well with the world and life as a whole. If there is no consolation, the idea of a funeral as a solemn act is self-contradictory. But consolation is a form of rejoicing, al-

though the most silent of all—just as catharsis, the purification of the soul in the witnessing of tragedy, is at bottom a *joyful* experience. (The real locus of the tragic is not in those works of literature we term tragedies, but in man's historical reality.) Consolation exists only on the premise that grief, sorrow, death, are accepted, and therefore affirmed, as meaningful in spite of everything.

This is the point at which to correct the misconception which sometimes prevails,¹⁸ that the festive is also the cheerful. It is significant that according to Greek myth all great festivals had their origins in the celebration of funeral rites.¹⁹ And historians of religion have repeatedly pointed out that the ancient Roman festivals must not be considered simply as days of rejoicing.²⁰ Naturally, for a festival to develop a broad and rich appeal, jesting, gaiety, and laughter cannot be excluded from it, nor even some riotousness and carnival. But a festival becomes true festivity only when man affirms the goodness of his existence by offering the response of joy. Can it be that this goodness is never revealed to us so brightly and powerfully as by the sudden shock of loss and death? This is the implication of Hölderlin's famous distich (on Sophocles' *Antigone*):

*Viele versuchten umsonst, das Freudigste freudig zu sagen,
Hier spricht endlich es mir, hier in der Trauer sich aus.*

Many endeavored in vain joyfully to speak profoundest joy;
Here at last, in the tragic, I see it expressed.²¹

Is it therefore so surprising that both the affirmation of life and its rejection should be hard to recognize, not only to the eye of the outsider but possibly to one's own inner eye? ²² When we look at the martyr, it is by no means plain that he is affirming the world in spite of everything; for after all, he is not instantly recognizable as a "martyr," but as a defendant, a convict, a ridiculous eccentric—but above all as one who has been silenced. Similarly, non-assent may also appear under a disguise. For example, it may be

covered over by pleasure—agreeable enough in itself and springing from sheer vitality—in dancing, music, drinking, so that the rejection remains for a while hidden even from the self. Above all, this rejection may be concealed behind the façade of a more or less sham confidence in life. The jovial laughter of Sisyphus, "who negates the gods and raises rocks," ²³ is deceptive, even in the sense that the deception may succeed or, which would be infinitely harder, that he may deceive himself.

Strictly speaking, however, it is insufficient to call affirmation of the world a mere prerequisite and premise for festivity. In fact it is far more; it is the substance of festivity. Festivity, in its essential core, is nothing but the living out of this affirmation.

To celebrate a festival means: to live out, for some special occasion and in an uncommon manner, the universal assent to the world as a whole.

This statement harmonizes with the conclusions cultural and religious historians have drawn from their studies of the great typical festivals in ancient cultures and among primitive peoples. And because that assent to life, if it is there at all, is there all the time, it becomes the wellspring for a thousand legitimate occasions for festivity. The immediate event may be equally the coming of spring or of a baby's first tooth.

Consequently, we may properly speak of *everlasting* festival as existing at least in latent form. In fact, Church liturgy recognizes only festival days—which by a strange and devious linguistic evolution has led to a change in the meaning of *feria*; originally, the word meant "festival," but now it is beginning to signify the festival celebrated on ordinary weekdays.²⁴ So significant a philosopher and theologian as Origen contended that the naming of specific holy days was done only for the sake of the "uninitiate" and "beginners" who were not yet capable of celebrating the "eternal festival."²⁵ But it is still too early in our discussion to examine this phase of the matter.

. . .

First of all, we must now state explicitly a conclusion toward which all our foregoing ideas have inexorably led. To be sure, as I have found time and again, this statement is usually greeted with alarm and distrust, as though to voice it is somehow equivalent to launching an unfair surprise attack. Nevertheless, I see no legitimate way of avoiding it; it is absolutely compelling, both logically and existentially.

The conclusion is divisible into several parts. *First*: there can be no more radical assent to the world than the praise of God, the lauding of the Creator of this same world. One cannot conceive a more intense, more unconditional affirmation of being. If the heart of festivity consists in men's physically expressing their agreement with everything that is, then—*secondly*—the ritual festival is the most festive form that festivity can possibly take. The other side of this coin is that—*thirdly*—there can be no deadlier, more ruthless destruction of festivity than refusal of ritual praise. Any such Nay tramples out the spark from which the flickering flame of festivity might have been kindled anew.

IV

When we say that the ritual festival is the most festive form of festivity, do we mean that there can be no secular festivals? Of course not. But the matter is complicated, and a simple answer does not suffice.

On the one hand, real festivity cannot be restricted to any one particular sphere of life, neither to the religious nor to any other; it seizes and permeates all dimensions of existence—so that from a mere description of the proceedings we cannot easily tell whether a festival is “really” a social, economic, athletic, or church event, a fair, a dance, or a feast. Until I was eight years old I thought that Whitsun simply meant country fair, because our village would “celebrate” both the same day. In Toledo on Corpus Christi Day the streets, canopied with canvas, are transformed into a vast festive tent whose walls are formed by the tapestry-decked façades of the houses and whose floor is strewn with rosemary and lavender, which give out a stronger perfume the more they are walked on. High Mass in the Cathedral is followed by the procession: a musical performance, military parade, social display, and Exposition of the Sacrament. The bullfight in the afternoon is, of course, as secular as it is at other times; but it is the *Corrida del Corpus*.

Wherever festivity can freely vent itself in all its possible forms, an event is produced that leaves no zone of life, worldly or spiritual, untouched.

But now we must consider the "on the other hand." There are worldly, but there are no purely profane, festivals. And we may presume that not only can we not find them, but that they cannot exist. A festival without gods is a non-concept, is inconceivable. For example, Carnival remains festive only where Ash Wednesday still exists. To eliminate Ash Wednesday is to eliminate the Carnival itself. Yet Ash Wednesday is obviously a day in Christendom's liturgical year. The pallor of the merely "legal" holidays is evident from the fact that there is much discussion of how they really should be "celebrated." This is not to say that we should not single out days of "Unity" and "Constitution" and pay them special heed. But can we seriously call them *festival days*? If there were no other evidence against their being festivals, their origin alone would serve. Where in the world has there been a real festival arising from a mere act of legislation, a decision by a representative assembly? Who is empowered to establish a festival? Plato maintained that the "recreation"¹ of festivals was established divinely. And certainly no Christian would say otherwise of the great holy days of Christendom.

Festivals are, it would seem, traditional in a very special sense, a *traditum* in the strictest meaning of that concept: received from a superhuman source, to be handed on undiminished, received and handed on again.² It has been said that the living force of tradition is nowhere manifested so clearly as in the history of festivals.³ That is true. Nevertheless, we must quickly add that the subject entails a whole complex of problems. Real handing down, the living process of transmission from one generation to another, is deterred rather than abetted by the kind of traditionalism that clings to external appearances. For what really matters is not mere preservation and conservation, but a constant succession of new, creative reshapings which give contemporaneity to the content of

the festivals. On the other hand, although people are sometimes too ready to talk of breaches of tradition and lack of tradition, such criticism is sometimes quite apt in connection with the decadence of festivals. If the sons truly no longer knew the significance of the great holidays celebrated by their fathers, then the most immediate tie between the generations would be cut and tradition would, strictly speaking, no longer exist.

Secular as well as religious festivals have their roots in the rituals of worship. Otherwise, what arises is not a profane festival, but something quite artificial, which is either an embarrassment or—we shall have more to say on this—a new and more strenuous kind of work.

Side by side with the history of festivals runs the history of their interpretations, thus corroborating the close link between festival and worship in men's thinking. The list of concepts which was long believed to be a work of Plato's, and which is still included in his collected works under the title of *Definitions*,⁴ contains a terse phrase for festival: *hierós chrónos*,⁵ "holy time." That definition was fully accepted by Cicero⁶ and by the people of ancient Rome in general. They regarded a festival as a holy day, *par définition un "jour divin."*⁷ The phrase defines the essential trait of festivals, and to the present day that concept holds, however little the question is regarded from a theological point of view. Even in Roger Caillois, one of the few contemporary writers who have attempted a culturo-philosophical theory of festivity, we find the statement that a festival is "*la période de la prééminence du sacré.*"⁸

The special relationship of festivals to ritual sacrifices was also recognized and stated very early in the history of our culture. Plato seemed to consider the terms for both as virtually equivalent.⁹ And from the time of Augustus, an etymology has come down to us claiming that the very word *feria* derives from the killing of animals for sacrifice, "*a feriendis victimis.*"¹⁰ The etymology is wrong,

of course; but it proves how unquestioningly these two concepts were considered to be in closest relation to each other. By the same reasoning, the early Christians called exclusion from communion banishment to unfeastivity.¹¹ "The sacrifice is the soul of festivals."¹²

Ritual worship is essentially an expression of the same affirmation that lies at the heart of festivals. Hegel said that the "general character" of Greek worship was "that the subject has an essentially affirmative relationship to his god."¹³ This is true not only of the forms of worship practiced in classical antiquity. All worship is affirmation, not only of God but also of the world. Nietzsche, as we know, thought otherwise. When he hailed pagan worship as "a form of affirmation of life,"¹⁴ he was opposing it to Christianity, which he was indicting on that score as well. Along with so much else, the Church had "spoiled" festivals.¹⁵ Of course there are facts that make such charges comprehensible—but no truer. However, that is a separate subject. On the crucial point, at any rate, Nietzsche is perfectly right: festivals are doomed unless they are preceded by the pattern of ritual religious praise. That is the fire that kindles them. But it is that very thing—praise of God—which constitutes almost the entire content of Christian ritual—virtually the only ritual, incidentally, which continues to have meaning within those civilizations that stem from Europe.

We need only examine the liturgical texts for their manifest and overt meaning to see at once, without need for further glosses, that affirmation is the fundamental form of Christian liturgy. Christian liturgy is in fact "an unbounded Yea- and Amen-saying." Every prayer closes with the word: Amen, thus it is good, thus shall it be, *ainsi soit-il*. What is the *Alleluia* but a cry of jubilation? The heavenly adoration in the Apocalyptic vision¹⁶ is also a single great acclamation, composed of reiterated exclamations of Hail, Praise, Glory, Thanks. St. Augustine has defined worship in the same terms: "Worship takes place," he says,¹⁷ "by the offering of praise and thanksgiving." Indeed, the Church itself uses the name

"thanksgiving" for the sacramental offering which is the source and center of all other acts of worship. The Mass is called and is *eucharistia*. Whatever the specific content of this thanksgiving may be, the "occasion" for which it is performed and which it comports with is nothing other than the salvation of the world and of life as a whole. Even the non-Christian, I think, can be asked to take note of this. Of course, everything depends on whether or not we think the historical world and human life are "made whole" or at any rate "capable of being made whole" by Christ. This is the all-important question. I am not actually discussing this question in this book; rather, it is the underlying assumption. My purpose is only to make clear that Christian worship sees itself as an act of affirmation that expresses itself in praise, glorification, thanksgiving for the whole of reality and existence.

The Christian *eucharistia* manifests that in all acts of public worship something else occurs besides the praise or sacrifice performed by human beings. Perhaps it is not quite accurate to say that this something else simply "occurs"; but at any rate, that "occurrence" is always what public worship aims at and hopes for. In practicing the rites of worship men hope that they will be vouchsafed a share in the superhuman abundance of life. From time immemorial, this very thing has always been considered the true, the immanent fruit of all great festivals.

Language harbors a variety of names for this phenomenon: renewal, transformation, restoration, rejuvenation, rebirth. But they all mean the same thing, even though it does not lend itself to clear definition and description. There are many ways in which the gift is experienced. It is recreation; it is, as Goethe put it, release from the pressure of daily obligation. Passing time stands still.¹⁸ The constant attrition of our portion of vital substance is suspended for a moment by that "resting Now" in which the reality of Eternity is revealed. Men are swept away from the here and now to utterly tranquil contemplation of the ground of existence;

to happiness, as in absorption in beloved eyes. Everyday things unexpectedly take on the freshness of Eden; the world, again in Goethe's words, is "glorious as on the first of days."¹⁹

The train of images is endless. But all of them convey the same meaning: that the fruit of the festival, for which alone it is really celebrated, is pure gift; it is the element of festivity that can never be "organized," arranged and induced. The will is bent on action; however easy it may seem, we have far less talent for relaxation, slackening effort, letting ourselves go, than for the hard task of work. To be sure, relaxation can be learned and practiced to a certain degree. But no amount of effort, no matter how desperate, can force festivity to yield up its essence. All we can do is prepare ourselves to receive the hoped-for gift; and perhaps the idea of "ritual purity," which as has been said is inherent in the idea of festivity,²⁰ should be rethought and recaptured. All these considerations, however, do not in any way nullify the nature of the gift, which is in no way pledged, predictable, or meritable, and descends only of its own accord. "In order for a festival to emerge out of human efforts, something divine must be added, which alone makes possible the otherwise impossible."²¹ That is an ethnologist's conclusion, but it applies not only to primitive peoples. It suddenly makes us realize the very real sense of the statement in both the Psalms²² and the Platonic Dialogues²³ that the festival is a day God has made.

Thus, when a festival goes as it should, men receive something that it is not in human power to give. This is the by now almost forgotten reason for the age-old custom of men wishing one another well on great festival days. What are we really wishing our fellow men when we send them "best wishes for Christmas"? Health, enjoyment of each other's company, thriving children, success—all these things, too, of course. We may even—why not?—be wishing them a good appetite for the holiday meal. But the real thing we are wishing is the "success" of the festive celebration itself, not just its outer forms and enrichments, not the trimmings,

but the gift that is meant to be the true fruit of the festival: renewal, transformation, rebirth. Nowadays, to be sure, all this can barely be sensed behind the trite formula: "Happy holidays."

"Swept away from the here and now." That phrase, which we used above, merits brief consideration. If it is not just a poetic exaggeration—and it is not meant as such—it suggests among other things that a "there and then" exists. It suggests also that the true existence of man takes place in both spheres. Nor is there very much theology underlying this idea. It is merely the simple conclusion to be drawn from the creatureliness of reality. In regarding man and world as *creatura* we imply that our own existence, as well as that of things, is founded upon the non-temporal, non-successive, and therefore still continuing act of creation. Existence as we know it, therefore, does not just "adjoin" the realm of Eternity; it is entirely permeated by it. Not that we can, by our power and volition, "step out of time." Nevertheless, to do so remains among our real potentialities. And these potentialities are realized in the rapture of the true celebrant. Suddenly the walls of the solid here and now are burst asunder and the everyday realm of existence is thrown open to Eternity.²⁴ "To celebrate a festival means to enter into the presence of the Deity."²⁵

Of course rapture is always a shattering of man's ordinary, "normal" relationship to the world. And as in the case of the shattering emotions of erotic or artistic experience,²⁶ which threaten to overwhelm the rational order of existence, festivals naturally carry with them the danger of both interrupting the orderly course of human events and opening them to question. We have already spoken of that.

A true festival does not take place "here" at all. It "occurs only apparently here and now . . . not in time, but beyond time." This sentence from a modern philosophical essay²⁷ on culture might be concluded by a quotation from Origen's commentary on John,²⁸ without creating a feeling of discrepancy: ". . . not in this eon

nor on earth." History seems to agree. As Wilamowitz tells us,²⁹ one of the great Attic festivals, the Cronia, came about so that "men might taste for a single day the blessed life enjoyed in the Golden Age under Cronos." It hardly matters whether we conceive of festivals as anchored in the extrahistorical past or the extrahistorical future: the concept of *paradiso* includes both dimensions. When, therefore, Roger Caillois speaks of the recall of the primordial, mythic past and of the festival as "*une actualisation des premiers temps de l'univers*,"³⁰ he is not very far from what the Greek theologian Athanasius said in the fourth century: "To us who live here our festivals are an unobstructed passage to that life."³¹ The common meaning of all these statements is clear: In celebrating festivals festively, man passes beyond the barriers of this present life on earth.

Inability to be festive, on the other hand, can be explained in such a way as to illuminate the core of the problem. It signifies "immurement" within the zone of the given present, "exposure to the terrors of history."³² Festivity, on the other hand, is a liberation. Through it the celebrant becomes aware of, and may enter, the greater reality which gives a wider perspective on the world of everyday work, even as it supports it.

V

In spite of cultural history and modern ethnology, we know little about the inner nature of the hunting and harvest festivals of savages, the Eleusinian festival of the Greeks or the secular festivals of Augustan Rome. And today, even when we attend the religious festivals of alien cultures, we can scarcely deceive ourselves into thinking we understand them. At bottom, we must admit, they remain inaccessible to us. This does not mean that sociological data and statistics can tell us nothing about festivals. After all, festivals are public by nature; they are affairs of the community, in fact its "self-portrait,"¹ and consequently visible, "objective" events. An instructive way to begin such an inquiry might be to see how a red-letter day in the calendar differs from other days of the year. Incidentally, in approaching the problem in this factual way, we cannot fail to notice that here and there a day that is still called a holiday is no longer celebrated as such. We may next notice that there are so-called days of rest, designated as such by law and governed by law. (Ancient Rome, by the way, agreed with Old Testament Judaism on the principle underlying such regulations. In the *Georgics*² Virgil lists the activities permitted to peasants on holidays. The famous formula that everything is permitted that it

would be injurious to omit, *quod praetermissum noceret*, was first handed down by the ancient Roman jurist Scaevola.³⁾

Nevertheless, the fact remains that what really happens in the celebration of a festival cannot be identified immediately from outward appearances. For true understanding, it is necessary to enter a chamber that is barred to non-initiates. Thus the only festivals whose invisible core we can directly comprehend are the Christian holidays. At first sight there seem to be a multitude of them, but they reduce down to two: Sunday and Easter. Josef Andreas Jungmann has recently set forth that idea in a wholly convincing way. His conclusion is: "To read the original idea of the Christian festival, we must look to Sunday and to Easter."⁴

If Sunday is no more than a day free of work, established by men for purely practical reasons and therefore also a convenient time for common religious services; if it is really "nothing but a voluntary institution of the community" and distinctly "not divinely founded"—then the quality of a holy day can scarcely be attributed to it. That, I think, should be clear even before we begin studying the nature of Sunday in detail. This is the view taken by the theologian Günther Dehn⁵ in the *Evangelisches Soziallexikon* (1954). We can understand it only if we consider it in conjunction with another, equally theological argument. For the same author takes up the question of whether the Christian Sunday is related to the Old Testament Sabbath, in which case what the Holy Scriptures have to say about the Sabbath—in the Ten Commandments, for example—as a day of rest appointed by God, to be kept holy, is also binding for the Christian Sunday. His conclusion is that "Sabbath and Sunday have nothing in common."⁶ I know that Protestants by no means universally accept this opinion,⁷ but the view does exist. It seems that theological controversy is bound to arise when the discussion turns to subjects of such existential importance as festivals. Karl Kerényi once remarked

that the great Anglo-Saxon ethnologists of the turn of the century had completely overlooked the phenomenon of festivals, despite their conspicuous part in all primitive cultures. He rather surprisingly explained this curious blind spot as a consequence of the mentality of the "great Protestant cultures."⁸ For my part, I do not propose to become involved in controversial theological problems, nor in theology at all. I mention these matters only in order to state my own premises as clearly as possible, for they too are inevitably theological in nature. My assumptions are: first, that the Old Testament Sabbath entered into the Christian Sunday and was "absorbed" by it; and second, that consequently Sunday, like the Sabbath, must be conceived as, to put it most cautiously, an institution not altogether established by men. Both days represent the Biblical Seventh Day, the *requies Domini Dei tui* (Deut. 5, 14), the divine day of rest on which not only master and servant but even the cattle are to rest. The Decalogue, incidentally, adds another note that nowadays strikes us in terms of the greatest immediacy—a reference to *political* servitude: "Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence" (Deut. 5, 15).

The Seventh Day commemorates not only the completion of the divine work, but also the divine *assent* to Creation. It was on the Seventh Day that the prodigious words were spoken that everything was "very good." We cannot conceive a more radical, a deeper-lying justification of the essential goodness of all reality than this, that God Himself, in bringing things into being, affirms and loves these very same things, all of them without exception. And to man also, insofar as he accepts it, this is the uttermost legitimation—perhaps I should also say, the ultimate encouragement which alone is unassailable, likewise to find the things of the world good, in spite of everything. And therefore it is also legitimation and encouragement to celebrate festivals festively.

During the great autumn festivals in Bengal I asked quite a few

persons whether they could tell me the reason for their present festive joy. The answer of one orthodox Hindu ran: It is the joy of being a creature whom God has created out of joy.

But this is the very thing, the "gift of being created," which is celebrated on Sunday, says Thomas Aquinas.⁹ This *beneficium creationis*, he says, is the "first and foremost" of all divine gifts. Thus he portrays Sunday as the model of all festive celebration. On that day we particularly celebrate what underlies all other times of festivity: assent to Creation.

At the same time, however, the Seventh Day has always been conceived as a symbol pointing ahead, a prefiguring of the "last and foremost" ¹⁰ divine gift, the eternal peace of God coming to all beings. Sunday is dedicated to this hope; the day itself becomes "an image of the coming age," "*imago venturi saeculi*."¹¹

Thus the holiday and day of worship for Christendom, recurring every week, is meant to serve both to recall the beginning of Creation and to herald future bliss. And in thus summoning before the soul's vision both the beginning and the end of time,¹² it throws open that wide, that infinite horizon which the great festivals must have for their full celebration.

Plainly, it is an extraordinary demand that such an interpretation of Sunday makes upon the average man. Some may call it an excessive demand, although it is scarcely more challenging than the task of meeting the demands of being human. At any rate, this precise interpretation, which does not draw any romantic veil over the measurements of reality, shows men one clearly drawn potentiality of their psychic life. And perhaps the average man, some time when he is thrown back upon his last resources, will be forced to recognize this potentiality as his own. And with that recognition will come, perhaps, a great sense of freedom and relief.

Nevertheless, this "Lord's day," *dies Dominica*, is not a specifically Christian holiday, insofar as it fulfills the Old Testament

Sabbath, the Seventh Day. What makes Sunday Christian is its relation to Christ, its celebration of God's Incarnation, which reached its full fruit and revelation in the Resurrection of the Lord. The Christian Sunday is an emanation of *Easter*.

Easter itself, although it celebrates a historical event, could never be a real festival, let alone "*the festival of the Church*,"¹³ if it were not something more than and different from a mere memorial day. What is in truth involved is a mysterious contemporizing of this event, which evokes an incomparably more real present than memory ever can (although it is also true that "a pleasure is full grown only when it is remembered" ¹⁴). What is more, the reason and occasion for this festival is that in Christ's Resurrection something began by which man's life ever since, and today and for all the future, received that incomprehensible exaltation that the language of theology calls Grace and New Life. And therefore in the Christian celebration of Easter quite particularly an affirmation of the whole of existence is experienced and celebrated. No more rightful, more comprehensive and fundamental an affirmation can be conceived.

The gift of having been created, the promise of perfect bliss, the communication of divine vitality through Incarnation and Resurrection—all these are things, we might say, which determine human life every hour of every day, if the Christians are right. Why, then, are they "celebrated" only now and again, only every seventh day, or only on the rare great feast days? As we see, once again the theme of "everlasting festival" comes into view. In point of fact festivals could not be celebrated as special, rare, and exceptional days, and celebrated spontaneously, if the festive occasion did not exist continually and without cessation and were not so experienced (as the receiving of something beloved). If any specific day is to be singled out from the rest and celebrated as a festival, this can only be done as the manifestation of a perpetual though hidden festivity.

This idea is not limited to the Christian realm, although in that

realm we find it expressed with particular stress: "We spend our whole lives like a feast day";¹⁵ "we have unending holiday";¹⁶ "ours . . . is an eternal festival";¹⁷ "*in domo Dei festivitas sempiterna est*"¹⁸—and so on. Pythagoras, too, called man's life a *panegyris*,¹⁹ a festival. And in Plato's great late Dialogue, *Laws*, when the talk turns to the festivals to be celebrated in the ideal republic and the question is raised of how many there will be, the "Athenian" (Socrates) answers: "There should be no less than three hundred and sixty-five of them,"²⁰ so that it will be possible to sacrifice to one of the gods every day (to which one modern German edition of Plato²¹ makes the comment that this is a "pretty conceit"). The same basic conception is also to be found in ancient Rome; one of the highest priests, the *Flamen Dialis*, was spoken of as *cotidie feriatus*,²² one who celebrated festivals every single day.

Even now, however little it may seem so on the surface, the latent presence of the everlasting festival constitutes one of the basic elements of these present times also.

VI

Within the same sentence in which Plato calls the recreation of festival divinely founded, he also says that the Muses were given to us as "festival companions."¹ And indeed, a festival without singing, music, dancing, without visible forms of celebration, without any kind of works of art, cannot be imagined. But what we find is a surprisingly many-stranded relationship linking the arts to festivity.

First of all, the artistic act is like festivity itself, something out of the ordinary, something unusual, which is not covered by the rules governing the workaday world. This is true not only of the artist's creative act, which gives rise to the work of art, but also of the secondary act of the person who (for example) reads a poem poetically. Both events depend upon "being struck by the lightning-flash of vision," and both "stand out of the flow of existence much as festivals stand out of the chain of almost indistinguishable days."² Both are rather rare; both have an "insular" character.³

It should be clear, moreover, that the invisible aspect of festivity, the praise of the world which lies at a festival's innermost core, can attain a physical form, can be made perceptible to the senses, only