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The Underlying Unity of Love, Justice, Art, and Liturgy

I have written extensively about justice,[1] about art,[2] and about liturgy.[3] I was not motivated to write about these three dimensions of our existence by some philosophical system I had devised that required, for its completion, that I address these particular dimensions. In each case, my decision to reflect on that dimension of our existence was motivated by certain engagements with justice and injustice, with works of art, and with liturgies. My reflections were motivated from below, as it were, not from above—motivated by experience.

Yet, when I now look back on how I have come to understand justice, art, and liturgy, I see that there is, in fact, a deep affinity among them. I see that it would have been possible to articulate, as three parts of a system, the conclusions to which I have been led. I do not propose doing that, neither here nor elsewhere. What I propose doing in this essay is to bring to light the deep affinity that I now discern among them and the distinctive way in which each of them embodies that affinity.

I have also written about love—though nowhere near as extensively as about justice, art, and liturgy. The English word "love" is used to refer to a number of quite distinct phenomena. One of those has the same deep affinity to justice, art, and liturgy that those have to each other. I propose, in this essay, bringing to light that affinity as well and the distinctive way in which that form of love embodies that affinity. Let me begin with what I have written least about, namely, love.

1. See especially Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs,* and Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*.

2. See especially Wolterstorff, *Art in Action,* and Wolterstorff, *Art Rethought*.

3. See especially Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*.

Distinct Forms of Love

One form of love is the love that seeks to promote or sustain what one judges to be the good of some person or animal, call it *love as benevolence.* The New Testament writers used the Greek term *agapē* to refer to this kind of love when its object was God or a human being. Another form of love is the love that consists of being drawn to someone or something on account of what one judges to be some intrinsic goodness of the person or thing, call it *love as attraction.* It is love as attraction that one has in mind when one says, for example, "I love Schubert's late sonatas" or "I loved last night's display of the northern lights." Such love was called *eros* by the ancient Greeks. Third, there is the love that consists of finding enjoyment in some activity: loving playing the piano, loving gardening, loving woodworking, and so forth. Call this form of love, *activity-love.* Fourth, there is the love that consists of being attached to someone or something: to one's children, to one's spouse, to one's pets, to one's house. Call this, *love as attachment*. And fifth, there is the love of friends for each other, call it *love as friendship*. Such love was called *philia* by the ancient Greeks and by the New Testament writers.[4]

Love as benevolence, love as attraction, and activity-love, are alike in being oriented toward what the agent judges to be some actual or prospective instance of goodness, some actual or prospective case of *embodied goodness*; they are distinct from each other in the nature or object of the orientation. The orientation of benevolence-love toward embodied goodness is that of the agent being committed to promoting or sustaining what she judges to be some good in the life of some person or animal. The orientation of attraction-love toward embodied goodness is that of the agent being drawn to someone or something on account of what she judges to be some intrinsic goodness that the person or thing already possesses. The orientation of activity-love toward embodied goodness is that of finding enjoyment in what one judges to be some intrinsic goodness of the activity one is performing or could perform.

Love as attachment is different from these and, to my mind, more mysterious; it does not consist of orientation toward what one judges to be embodied goodness. I find myself attached to my spouse, my children, my friends, our house, our cat. It was not my recognition of the excellence of the person or thing that caused my attachment. If I can manage to view the situation objectively I may concede that, if I were just going for excellence, I would not have fastened onto these children, this house, this cat. What

4. There are yet other forms of love, for example, *instrumental love:* prizing something on account of some benefit that it brings to oneself, for example, prizing one's dog for the companionship it provides one.

accounts for my attachment is that, in one way or another, I became bonded. I recognize that your cat is finer than mine. No matter. Mine is the one that I found huddled on my doorstep one cold winter morning meowing piteously. I took it in, cared for it, and became attached. This is the cat I love. Of course, attachment may open one's eyes to some intrinsic goodness, hitherto unnoticed, of that to which one is attached.

Love as friendship is likewise not characterized by a distinct orientation toward embodied goodness. What characterizes friendship-love is, instead, that it combines love as benevolence, love as attraction, and love as attachment. Friendship love is complex in a way that the other forms of love I have identified are not.

In identifying and naming these five forms of love and pointing to a similarity among three of them, I have assumed that the readers of this essay already have some understanding of these forms of love. If our topic were just love, and not love, justice, art, and liturgy, I would spend the remainder of this essay trying to deepen our understanding of these various forms of love. I will have to forego that endeavor on this occasion.

I have written a good deal about the relation between love and justice.[5] In everything I have written on the topic, it was love as benevolence that I had in mind. My question was always, how is benevolence-love related to justice? Most other discussions of the topic have likewise focused on the relation of benevolence-love to justice. I propose taking a different tack in this essay. I propose exploring the relation between attraction-love and justice. How is loving Schubert's late sonatas related to doing what justice requires?

Attraction-Love

Love as attraction, *eros*, consists of being drawn or attracted to someone or something on account of what one judges to be its intrinsic embodied goodness: drawn to God for God's goodness, to persons, to animals and plants, landscapes, works of art, institutions and groups, projects, ideals, whatever. We love persons and things for something about them that we find good, something praise-worthy. Often it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to put into words what that is. But whether describable or not, it is for some praiseworthy feature of mind, of character, of body, of commitment, of achievement, that we love the person: something about her makes her love-worthy in our eyes. Something about the tree makes it love-worthy, something about the institution makes it love-worthy. The love Plato had in

5. See Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*.

mind in the *Symposium,* and the love Augustine had in mind when he spoke of our love of God, was attraction-love.

As I mentioned above, I will have to forego trying to deepen our understanding of the nature of love as attraction. I confine myself to expressing my disagreement with two well-known theses concerning the nature of such love, one propounded by Plato and one by Kierkegaard, and to calling attention to a distinct species of such love that is important for those of us who are scholars and teachers to take note of.

The situation in Plato's *Symposium* is that Socrates is summarizing the speeches given at a banquet where the participants agreed that they would offer eulogies of the god Love (*Eros*). Each speech proves more elevated than its predecessor. Finally we arrive at the speech Socrates himself gave. He began his eulogy with the declaration that love always has an object. That object, he said, is something the lover wants or desires but lacks:

> "And so," continued Socrates, "a man may be said to love a thing not yet provided or possessed . . ."
>
> "Certainly," said Agathon.
>
> "Then such a person, and in general all who feel desire, feel it for what is not provided or present; for something they have not or are not or lack; and that sort of thing is the object of desire and love?"
>
> "Assuredly," said Agathon.
>
> "Now then," said Socrates, "let us agree to what we have so far concluded. First, is not Love directed to certain things; of which, in the second place, he has a want?" (200E)[6]

Socrates then reported that, in the remainder of his speech, he rehearsed what he once heard a woman named Diotima say on the topic of love. Diotima urged an ascent from love of beautiful things to love of Beauty Itself. By "ever climbing aloft," the lover of beauty arrives at "the Beautiful Itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty" (212A).[7]

Eros, said Socrates, is desire for something one lacks. We should entertain the possibility that what Socrates (and Plato) had in mind by the term "*eros*" is not quite the same as what I am calling love as attraction. But if Platonic *eros* is understood as attraction-love, then what Socrates said seems to me not true. Attraction-love is not to be identified with desire for something one lacks.

6. *Plato* (trans. Lamb), 171.
7. *Plato* (trans. Lamb), 207.

Start with Socrates' identification of attraction-love (*eros*) with desire. Distinguish between *occurrent* desires and *dispositional* desires. Though I love Schubert's late piano sonatas, I do not now have the desire to listen to them; that is not among my present, occurrent, desires. I do, however, have the disposition to desire listening to them at some time in the future. So might my attraction-love of Schubert's late sonatas be identical with that dispositional desire? And in general, might attraction-love for someone or something be identical with the dispositional desire to be in some sort of gratifying contact with that person or thing? Socrates (Plato) did not distinguish between occurrent and dispositional desires; but if we understand him as having had dispositional desires in mind, is his thesis true, that attraction-love (*eros*) for something is identical with the dispositional desire to be in some gratifying relation with that thing?

I think not. I have twice seen Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Fallingwater house in western Pennsylvania. I love it. But I am not disposed to desire to see it again. Twice is enough. I love it without being disposed to desire at some time in the future to see it.

Neither is Socrates (Plato) correct in holding that the object of attraction-love (*eros*) is always something one lacks. If that were true, then Socrates' lover of beauty would, ironically, no longer love beauty when she finally apprehends The Beautiful Itself. Whatever may be true of Socrates' lover of beauty, my attraction-love for Schubert's late sonatas does not disappear when I am actually listening to them. I love them both when I am listening to them and when I am not.

In *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard argues that every form of love other than agapic love is a form of self-love; in particular, erotic love and friendship-love. This was obscured from the ancients, he says, by their failure to recognize agapic love, that is, "love for the neighbor." They contrasted erotic love and friendship with self-love, which they found "abhorrent." "But Christianity, which has made manifest [agapic love], divides otherwise: self-love [and erotic and friendship] love are essentially the same, but love for the neighbor—that is love."[8] I must refrain from fleshing out Kierkegaard's argument for this claim.

Perhaps what Kierkegaard had in mind by "erotic love" is not quite the same as what I call "attraction-love." But it makes no difference, since his thesis is that every form of love other than agapic love is, at bottom, a form of self-love. That thesis seems to me clearly false. My attraction-love of Schubert's late sonatas has those sonatas as its object, not myself. My

8. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love,* 53.

attraction-love of last night's display of the *aurora borealis* had that flashing display in the northern sky as its object, not myself.

If one identifies attraction-love (erotic love) with desire, then there is some plausibility in regarding attraction-love as a form of self-love, since, on that understanding, attraction-love is for the gratification of one of one's desires; and that might plausibly be regarded as a case of self-love. But as we saw above, attraction-love is not to be identified with desire. It may be accompanied by desire for gratifying contact of some sort with the thing loved; but it is not identical with any such desire, since the desire may cease while the love remains.

As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, I want to call attention to a form of attraction-love that is especially important for those of us who are scholars and teachers to take note of, namely, love of learning. It would distract from the flow of my argument to do so here, however. So let me conclude my essay with that discussion, and turn here to justice.

Treating One's Fellows as Justice Requires

Justice, as Aristotle already recognized, comes in two main forms; let me call them *first-order justice* and *second-order justice*. First-order justice consists of justice in our ordinary interactions with each other: teachers and students treating each other justly, merchants and customers treating each other justly, receptionists and applicants treating each other justly, etc. Second-order justice becomes relevant when there has been a violation of first-order justice, when someone has wronged someone. It consists of responding to a violation of first-order justice with punishment, reprimands, reparations, fines, and the like. If the receptionist violates first-order justice by insulting an applicant, then second-order justice in the form of a reprimand becomes relevant.

Following Aristotle, these two forms of justice have commonly been called *distributive* justice and *corrective* or *rectifying* justice.[9] None of the terms seems to me apropos. First-order justice does often consist of the just distribution of benefits and/or burdens, but not always. If someone invades my privacy for prurient reasons, I have not been treated as justice requires; I have been wronged. But if I never learn about it, and if it has no effect on how he and others treat me, there has been no distribution of benefits and/or burdens, and hence no mal-distribution. And as for second-order justice:

9. These latter two terms are the terms that W. D. Ross uses to translate Aristotle's Greek terms in his translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*.

though some of it does consist of correcting or rectifying what was done, it doesn't all consist of that. A reprimand is not plausibly thought of as correcting or rectifying what was done.

Second-order justice has also often been called *retributive* justice. But that too seems to me not apropos. Retribution is pay-back: answering harm with harm. A reprimand is not plausibly thought of as pay-back, nor is punishment aimed at reform of the wrongdoer plausibly thought of as pay-back.

When I claim that there is a deep affinity between justice, on the one hand, and attraction-love, art, and liturgy on the other hand, it is especially first-order justice that I have in mind.

In the Western tradition, two ways of understanding first-order justice are dominant. One comes from Aristotle. Justice, said Aristotle, consists of equity in the distribution of benefits and/or burdens. The other understanding comes from Ulpian, a jurist of late-Roman antiquity (ca. 170–223). Justice (*iustitia*), said Ulpian, is a steady and enduring will to render to each person his or her *ius,* that is, his or her right or due (*suum ius cuique tribuere*). That's a definition of the *virtue* of being a just person. The definition implies that the *action* of treating someone justly consists of rendering to that person his or her right or due, and it implies that the *property* or *quality* of justice characterizes our social relationships insofar as we each render to others their right or due.

It will be evident from what I said above that I do not regard Aristotle's definition as satisfactory. Not all cases of justice are cases of some distribution of benefits and/or burdens, and so, of course, not all are cases of an equitable distribution. Ulpian seems to me to have gotten it right. All cases of treating someone justly are cases of rendering to them what is their right or due; and all cases of treating someone unjustly are cases of failing to render to them what is their right or due.

But this, by itself, doesn't tell us much. Now we have to know how to think about rights. What are rights? And what accounts for our having the rights we do have? As all readers of this essay will know, the answers to these questions are matters of deep controversy among philosophers. To the best of my knowledge, all parties agree that a right is a morally legitimate claim to something. A right is an entitlement. Beyond that, however, there is little agreement. Here I must confine myself to presenting my own account; I cannot engage alternative accounts.[10]

Begin with the fact that that to which one has a right always is, or implies, a way of being treated. My purchase of a ticket gives me the right to a seat on the plane; and that, obviously, is not a way of being treated. However,

10. In my *Justice: Rights and Wrongs,* I do deal at length with alternative accounts.

what is implied by my right to a seat on the plane is that I have a right to the airline officials allowing me to take a seat on the plane; and that is a way of being treated. Throughout our discussion, "being treated" should be understood as including *being permitted.* The right to the free exercise of one's religion is the right to be *permitted* to exercise one's religion freely.

A way of being treated to which one has a right is always a good in one's life, never an evil, never a harm. Rights are, in that way, intrinsically connected to goods. I do not have a right to someone's breaking my leg, period. In case I am in a car accident, I might have a right to someone's breaking my leg in order to extricate me from the wreckage. But then it is to that complex good, of which breaking my leg is a component, that I have a right.

Though that to which one has a right always is, or implies, some life-good of being treated a certain way, the converse is not the case: there are many ways of being treated that would be a good in one's life to which one does not have a right. A whimsical example that I have given in some of my writings is this: it would be a great good in my life if the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam gave me Rembrandt's great painting, *The Jewish Bride,* to hang on my living room wall, along with a security force to stand guard. But I don't have a right to the life-good of the museum treating me that way; I am not wronged by their not giving me Rembrandt's painting.

So what accounts for the fact that one has a right to some ways of being treated that would be a good in one's life whereas, to other such ways, one does not have a right?

Some of our rights have been conferred, by law or social practice, on all those of a certain standing. I have a right to receiving a monthly Social Security check from the U.S. government because the U.S. Social Security legislation confers that right on all who have the standing of being U.S. citizens, of being sixty-five or over, etc. Such rights have traditionally been called *positive* rights.

By no means are all rights positive rights, however. Our department secretary has a right to being treated courteously by faculty and students. That right has not been conferred on her by law or social practice; it is not a positive right. We have some of our rights just by being the sort of creatures that we are and by standing in the sort of relations in which we do stand. It is such rights that are commonly called *natural* rights.

So what accounts for our non-positive, natural, rights? To explain the difference between those good ways of being treated to which one has a natural right and those to which one does not, we have to bring into the picture two fundamental facts about human beings.

One is the fact that every human being has worth, dignity, goodness, excellence in certain respects and to certain degrees; every human being is praiseworthy in certain respects, estimable. Not only is it the case that our *lives* are praiseworthy or regret-worthy in certain respects and to various degrees; *we ourselves* are praiseworthy in certain respects and to various degrees on account of some achievement on our part, some capacity that we have, some property we possess, some relationship in which we stand. The most fundamental of these relationships is that each and every one of us has the worth of bearing the image of God and of having the honor of being someone whom God wants as friend. This worth is ineradicable. And like much, if not most of our excellence, it is intrinsic, non-instrumental. We human beings are not just tools—though all too often some human beings have regarded others as nothing but tools and have treated them accordingly.

The other fact about human beings that has to be brought into the picture is that we can treat others in ways that befit their worth and in ways that do not befit their worth. If you are a student in a course I am teaching and you have the worth of having done topnotch work, then what befits your worth is that I give you an A for the course; what does not befit your worth is that I give you a C.

Using these ideas, I can now explain how I understand rights. You have a right to the good of my treating you a certain way just in case, if I did not treat you that way, I would not be treating you as befits your worth; I would not be treating you with due respect for your praiseworthiness. Rights are what respect for worth requires. If you are a student who has the worth of having done topnotch work in my course, then you have a *right* to the good of my giving you an A; if I give you anything less, I am not treating you as you have a right to be treated. And that is true even if some substantial good could be achieved by giving you a C rather than an A.

Here is a weightier example of the point: we each have a right not to be tortured as a means of punishment, because being tortured as a means of punishment does not befit the ineradicable worth that each of has on account of bearing the image of God and of being someone whom God wants as friend. I would not be treating you as befits your worth if I tortured you.

Essential to this way of thinking about rights is the distinction between the goodness or praiseworthiness of states and events in one's life—such as having friends, being employed, and having good health—and the praiseworthiness of the person herself—such as being considerate, being consistently just in how she treats others, and having done top-notch work in a course.

The affinity of treating others as justice requires with having attraction-love for someone or something, is now obvious: these are two modes of acknowledging embodied goodness.

Absorbed Attention to Some Work of the Arts

In the spring of 2007, the distinguished American poet Donald Hall paid a two-day visit to the University of Virginia. On the afternoon of the first day he read some of his own poetry to a large appreciative audience; the next morning he led a small seminar for students aspiring to be poets. Though I was neither a student nor an aspiring poet, I was invited to attend as an observer.

In the seminar, Hall frequently illustrated some point he was making by referring to changes he had made in some of his own poems between earlier drafts and the final version. One of his examples was this: in an earlier draft of one of his poems he had spoken of a dog wagging its tail; in the final version, he spoke instead of the dog *swinging* its tail.

A student asked why he made the change. He replied, "because it made it a better poem." Since all of Hall's poems are lyric poems, I assume he meant that it made it a better *lyric* poem. He did not explain why the change made it a better poem. The student who asked the question did not ask him to explain.

It would not be implausible, for those who were not present at the seminar, to interpret Hall's remark as a brush-off. But the remark came near the end of an hour in which he had been talking and fielding questions; and, given what I had discerned of his character in this hour, it never crossed my mind that he had given the student a brush-off. He meant no more and no less than what he said: he changed the line because it made it a better poem. My guess is that everyone in the room felt that *of course* it made it a better poem. It is a cliché to describe a dog as wagging its tail; it is not a cliché to describe a dog as swinging its tail. Lyric poems are better, in general, for not containing clichés. That is why the change made it a better poem. Might the sound of "swinging" as opposed to "wagging" also have contributed to making it a better poem? I don't know.

I was probably the only person in the room sufficiently struck by Hall's remark to remember it. Let me explain why it struck me. The dominant view in present-day philosophy of art as to what gives worth to a work of the arts is that the act of engaging it as an object of absorbed attention is a gratifying aesthetic experience. Gratifying aesthetic experiences are assumed to be *intrinsically* good. Certain works of the arts, when appropriately engaged, are

instrumental to such intrinsically good experiences; that is what gives them their worth as works of art. Their worth is like the worth of a tool. Hammers are tools for driving nails. If you want to find out whether a certain hammer is a good hammer, try swinging it in the right way at some nails and take note of whether it is effective for driving nails; if it is, it is a good hammer. Works of the arts are for gratifying aesthetic experiences. If you want to find out whether some work of the arts is a good work of the arts, try engaging it as an object of absorbed attention and take note of whether it is effective for making one's attention a gratifying aesthetic experience; if it is, it is a good work of the arts. That is the dominant idea.

Now return to Hall's comment. He did not say that he made the change because he judged that readers would find reading the changed line a more gratifying aesthetic experience than reading the original line. He made no reference whatsoever to what he anticipated would be the experience of readers. His explanation was of a different order altogether. He said he made the change because it made it a better *poem*, that is, a better *lyric poem*. He implicitly identified the genre of his work, namely, lyric poem; and he said that the change made it a better example of its genre. Often, when we evaluate something, we have a certain genre in mind and we evaluate it as an example of that genre. That is what Hall was doing, the genre in his case being a literary genre. Instead of referring to anticipated reader experience, he implicitly brought the literary genre *lyric poem* into the picture.

I suggest that what Hall described himself as having done is typical of artists in general. They don't just make something and then afterwards classify it as a lyric poem, a symphony, or whatever. They have some artistic genre in mind and aim to make an excellent new example of the genre. Associated with each artistic genre is the social practice of creating and engaging works of that genre; and intrinsic within each such social practice are criteria for evaluating works of that genre. These criteria change over time; criteria that were once commonly employed fall into disuse, new criteria emerge to take their place. And, typically, some of the criteria are contested. Poet or critic *A* holds that *X* is a better poem than *Y* because it has a feature ø that *Y* lacks; poet or critic *B* disagrees that that makes it a better poem.

Attached to some artistic genres are criteria for excellence that make reference to audience response. That is true, for example, of the genre *music for easy listening*. The excellence of examples of the genre is determined, in part, by whether most of those who listen have a gratifying easy-listening experience. Possibly some of the criteria attached to the literary genre *lyric poem* also make reference to some sort of audience response. But suppose that Hall did in fact change the line because he wanted to avoid clichés. The property of containing no clichés is not a functional property.

That suggests this question: was Hall implicitly regarding his poem as having, at least in part, *intrinsic* goodness? Do lyric poems have intrinsic, non-instrumental, goodness? If so, then, by the same token, sonatas, symphonies, sonnets, short stories, abstract sculptures, and the like have intrinsic goodness.

Before we draw the conclusion that lyric poems, along with examples of these other artistic genres, do have intrinsic goodness, we should take note of the following. Though in his explanation of why he changed the line as he did, Hall made no reference to anticipated reader response, we can nonetheless assume that he had composed his poem *to be* engaged by the public in a certain way; he composed it *for* a certain public function, namely, absorbed attentive reading by the literary public. And we can assume that he hoped or expected that the literary public would find it gratifying to engage his poem in this way. If they did not find it gratifying, they would not give it a second reading, and no poet is content with that as the fate of his or her work.

Let me note, parenthetically, that the activity I am calling *absorbed attention* has customarily been called, by philosophers of art, *disinterested contemplation*. That term came into common usage in the eighteenth century when writers were trying to identify the way of engaging works of the arts that had recently become prominent and to praise and recommend that mode of engagement. The term "contemplation" carries connotations of passivity, the term "attention" does not. That is why I prefer the latter term "attention"; reading a novel, to take just one example, is not a passive act of contemplation. And as to the term "disinterested," often among the reasons one has for reading a novel is that one expects to be presented with insight into human nature; many novelists want their work to be read in that way. But to read a novel thus is not to read it disinterestedly, that is, for the sake of the activity itself of reading; it is to read it for the sake of one's interest in something that the activity causes, namely, insight. Such reading, though not disinterested, is nonetheless reading with absorbed attention. That is why I prefer the term "absorbed" to the term "disinterested."

End of parenthesis. If Hall wrote his poem with the aim that the literary public would engage it as an object of absorbed attention, and in the hope that a significant number of them would find it gratifying to engage in that way, would that aim and that hope not have guided his evaluations and choices? And if so, would he not implicitly have been taking the excellence of his poem to be grounded in its being instrumental to the public's gratifying experience of reading the poem with absorbed attention? But then, what are we to make of his claim that he changed the line because it made

it a better lyric poem—a better thing of its kind? Didn't he *really* change it because he thought readers would like it better than way?

Let me propose an answer to this puzzle. Suppose that Hall's poem is in fact an excellent lyric poem; and suppose that a good many members of the literary public find reading the poem with absorbed attention a rewarding experience. The poem is not an excellent lyric poem because members of the literary public find reading it with absorbed attention a rewarding experience; rather, members of the literary public find reading it with absorbed attention a rewarding experience because it is an excellent lyric poem. And it is an excellent lyric poem because it meets the standards for excellence associated with that genre. Readers revel in its excellence—or more precisely, they revel in those features of the poem that contribute to making it excellent, those features being mostly, if not entirely, non-functional features such as freshness of language.

My conclusion is that lyric poems do indeed have intrinsic goodness, and that reading such poems with absorbed attention is a mode of acknowledging that goodness. (It may also be a way of finding out whether they possess that goodness.) And now to generalize: not only lyric poems, but a great many other works of the arts, possess intrinsic goodness. The action of absorbed attention to such a work, on account of what one judges to be its goodness, is a way of acknowledging that goodness.[11]

The affinity of paying absorbed attention to some work of the arts on account of its intrinsic excellence with having attraction-love for someone or something and with treating someone justly is now obvious: these are all modes of acknowledging intrinsic embodied goodness.

Liturgy

Down through the ages, human beings have assembled to enact their religious rituals. They have done so for many different reasons. Sometimes they have thought that the gods were angry with them for what they had done and that the rituals, when done properly and well, would propitiate or appease the gods; the rituals would distract the gods from the people's wrongdoing or would compensate for their wrongdoing. Sometimes the thought was not that the gods are presently angry but that they might become angry. The rituals serve to forestall their anger; when done properly and well they serve to keep the gods well-disposed. Whether the rituals are performed to

11. A further generalization beckons: not only works of the arts but other things as well are the objects of absorbed attention on our part for the sake of what we judge to be their intrinsic excellence. Mathematical proofs come to mind, and scenes in nature.