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Texts around Theatre

Theatre's Impact on Wilhelm Meister

Now, this harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied me by birth, is exactly what I most long for. Since leaving thee, I have gained much by voluntary practice: I have laid aside much of my wonted embarrassment, and can bear myself in very tolerable style. My speech and voice I have likewise been attending to; and I may say, without much vanity, that in society I do not cause displeasure. But I will not conceal from thee, that my inclination to become a public person, and to please and influence in a larger circle, is daily growing more insuperable. With this, there is combined my love for poetry and all that is related to it; and the necessity I feel to cultivate my mental faculties and tastes, that so, in this enjoyment henceforth indispensable, I may esteem as good the good alone, as beautiful the beautiful alone. Thou seest well, that for me all this is nowhere to be met with except upon the stage; that in this element alone can I effect and cultivate myself according to my wishes. On the boards a polished man appears in his splendor with personal accomplishments, just as he does so in the upper classes of society; body and spirit must advance with equal steps in all his studies; and there I shall have it in my power at once to be and seem as well as anywhere. If I further long for solid occupations, we have there mechanical vexations in abundance: I may give my patience daily exercise.

From: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels*, Vol. I (of 2), Book V, Chapter 3. Translated by Thomas Carlyle, The Project Gutenberg eBook - http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/36483/pg36483.txt - 2.12.2012

In this rubric we present various perspectives on theatre – historical and contemporary, intercultural and culture-specific, unexpectedly weird, unusually suspenseful, disturbedly gripping, fascinatingly enigmatic . . .

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