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Laudatio

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Laudatio

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Very honored Professor Goodman,

It is a rare privilege for me personally and as a representative of the Department of Philosophy of the Universität des Saarlandes, while participating in this conference dedicated to your work, Professor Goodman, to have the opportunity of expressing our gratitude that you have honoured us by your presence. We have never forgotten the impact of your talk you have delivered at our department in Saarbrücken many years ago, and which gave rise to an even more intensified study of quite a number of important points you have raised in connection with becoming aware of the many tools we engage in devising world versions. If you permit, I may add some more general remarks with respect to the important change in looking at the task of philosophy which is mainly due, I think, to your efforts, Professor Goodman.

We all, at least on the continent, have been raised in the tradition that philosophy is basically concerned with the two famous questions: what can we know and what shall we do. The bifurcation in philosophy of the natural sciences and philosophy of the moral sciences with its additional tools of logic, mathematics and ethics, left no room for the important third area in the original Aristotelian triad of epistemai: theoria or theoretical sciences, praxis or practical sciences, and poiesis or poetical sciences. Yet, without asking: what are we able to do, we will never find qualified answers to the other two questions: what can we know and what shall we do. Now, pragmatism has eventually taught us this lesson concerning experimental techniques in their relation to scientific knowledge, but to ask for artistic knowledge still remained something strange. The arts, concerned neither with reasons for theoretical knowledge, hence: with truths, nor with aims of practical knowledge, hence: with values, seemed to be of minor philosophical importance — and, in fact, there are still quite influential schools which either relegate the arts to antechambers of truth-seeking enterprises or to endeavors for acquiring moral standards. Without your lifework, Professor Goodman, we would have hardly learned the lesson, and certainly not as convincingly as you have taught us, and now I would like to quote from your work literally, "that the sciences as distinguished from technology, and the arts as distinguished from fun, have as their common function the advancement of understanding". Thank you, Professor Goodman.