Which of the two possibilities then are we to accept: are we to agree that we need to distinguish the B Minor Sonata by Chopin from its many performances or alternatively that this distinction is not justified?

Looking more closely into the matter, we are led to the conviction that this distinction has to be regarded as proper, although at this stage we do not prejudge the question of whether we need to accept the existence of the musical work and its particular performances. For the moment we are suggesting only that a work and performances are not all one and the same, even should they all turn out to be merely a fiction.

The thesis that the musical work is not the same as its various performances is justified by the fact that certain valid judgments about specific performances turn out to be false with reference to the musical work itself (say, the B Minor Sonata by Chopin) and vice versa—that judgments seeming to be true of the sonata itself turn out to be false with reference to its specific performances. We can point to some features of performances of the sonata that do not belong to that sonata, and in turn to features of the sonata that do not belong to its performances. In asserting this, I am not prejudging the issue of whether the sonata, or its performances exist. I am claiming only that if something like that sonata were to exist, it would not possess all of those properties associated
Performance

with its specific performances—should they exist—and vice versa. Thus:

1. Each performance of a certain musical work is a certain individual occurrence (process) developing in time and placed in it univocally. A performance begins at a specific moment, lasts for a given and measurable period of time, and ends at a specific moment. As a process, every specific performance of a musical work can take place only once. When completed, the performance can neither continue nor repeat itself. It may be followed by another completely new performance in a different time span—different even if remarkably like the first performance—for example, a second playing of the same record on the same gramophone. Such a “repetition” of “the same” performance with the aid of a gramophone creates certain theoretical difficulties. We will disregard them here and confine ourselves to “live” performances. These differ not only in being placed at different times but also in many purely musical details even when the performer tries very hard to perform a particular work in the same way. The realization that doing so verges on the impossible prevents the finest artists from performing any particular work twice at the same concert and this especially so when the performance has been close to perfection.

2. Each performance of a musical work is above all an acoustic process. It is made up of a certain cluster of succeed-

1. There are three types of objects temporally determined: objects subsisting in time (things, people), processes (race, war, the development of an organism), and finally, events (someone's death, the start of a specific performance of the B Minor Sonata). These three types of temporally determined objects differ among themselves both as to the mode of their existence and their form, and with regard to their possible properties. I have discussed this fully in my Does the World Exist?, chapter 6 of volume 1, chapter 5, section 59, volume 2.